MEANING OF VIDEO GAMES FOR INTERACTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY

Valentina Novak[1], Zoran Zoričić[2], Jelena Pejić[3]
[1]University North, 104. brigade 3, 42 000 Varaždin, Croatia
[2]Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital Center, Vinogradska cesta 29, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
[3]Faculty of Medicine, University of Mostar, Zrinskog Frankopana 34, 88 000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Received on 9 January 2026. Revised on 18 March 2026. Accepted on 4 May 2026.

ABSTRACT

Video games carry different meanings for adolescent gamers and their parents, stemming from differences in knowledge, experience, and communication styles, which often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts within the family. The aim of this qualitative study was to gain deeper insight into the socio-cultural phenomenology of generational perspectives on video games. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 gamers aged 16–30 and 9 parents of gamers aged 41–67. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles of voluntariness and anonymity, with written informed consent obtained from all participants.

The findings indicate a generational discrepancy in knowledge and attitudes towards video games, arising from differences in the life knowledge structures of parents and children. Parents express concern about gaming, while gamers report frustration and regret over parental misunderstanding. These differences result in conflicts rooted in parents' attempts to maintain authority on the one hand and gamers' resistance to that authority and need for autonomy on the other.

The generational gap in the perception of video games reflects the complexity of intergenerational relationships. Differences in generational forms of knowledge do not necessarily lead exclusively to conflict. Targeted interventions such as education and joint gaming may foster understanding, strengthen family connectedness, and support healthier patterns of video game use.

Keywords: video games, generational gap, knowledge, education

Corresponding author: Valentina Novak, vanovak@unin.hr

INTRODUCTION

Play is a form of learning and communication that supports the development of thinking, autonomy, and creativity, and it plays an important role in cognitive, physical, and emotional maturation. It fosters socialization and the acquisition of rules, and it enables individuals to confront fears and insecurities. Technological development expands overall knowledge and accelerates the need for learning (1), a process further supported by the integration of games and information and communication technologies into educational practices. The gamification of learning can improve learning experiences and outcomes by making educational processes more engaging, increasing interest and motivation, and contributing to academic achievement (2,3), which is partly associated with online environments in which young people feel understood and accepted (4).

Young people most often use video games for entertainment and socializing, and research indicates a high prevalence of gaming, ranging from approximately 70% (5) to more than 90% (6). Nevertheless, video games frequently raise parental concerns. Although positive effects of gaming on cognitive, motivational, emotional, and social competencies have been documented (7), public attitudes toward video games are generally negative (8). In media portrayals, video games are associated with violence, including mass shootings (9), poorer school performance (10), and the development of problematic gaming (11). Problematic gaming is recognized as a public health issue due to similarities in brain and behavioral changes with substance addictions and gambling (12,13). In ICD-11, a pattern of problematic behavior related to video games is described as persistent or recurrent gaming that leads to significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, or occupational functioning, and includes impaired control, prioritizing gaming over other activities, and continuation or escalation despite negative consequences (14).

Parental attitudes toward video games are ambivalent. Some parents emphasize risks to health and development, while others recognize potential benefits such as faster learning and improved emotional regulation (15). Parents identify risk factors such as early access to media, social pressure, and lack of control (16), and they express fear of "missed" life opportunities related to education, socialization, and/or employment (17). Insufficient understanding of video games can result in ineffective parenting approaches and conflict with children, which makes parent education an important preventive measure (18). Informed parents more readily recognize when it is necessary to seek help and involve professionals (17). In addition, parental digital literacy is associated with better regulation of children's gaming habits, which may reduce the risk of developing problems (19).

Prior research has largely focused on the health, social, and educational effects of video games on users, while fewer studies have addressed generational differences in perceptions of video games (20,21). Knowledge is crucial in preventing problematic gaming, particularly knowledge about prevention strategies and early intervention. Understanding problematic gaming behavior can encourage proactive screening in settings such as primary health care and schools and can increase the reach and effectiveness of preventive measures (22). Accordingly, this study focuses on the meaning of video games for gamers and parents, taking into account generational differences in knowledge and acceptance of digital media.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Interactive processes in social life depend on an individual's accumulated and acquired knowledge: every social engagement is shaped by what we have learned and experienced throughout life. The internalization of knowledge is not only the acquisition of sociality through socialization, but also an understanding of how that knowledge can be used. For this reason, Touraine (1995) rejects the concept of socialization in favor of sociability, emphasizing the individual as an active actor capable of manipulating knowledge, even though the individual does not act outside social structure but rather finds an authentic place within it (23). Similarly, Berger and Luckmann (1992) view socialization as a dialectical relationship between primary and secondary actors and factors: individual authenticity emerges through a constant tension between what we learn from "significant others" (e.g., parents) and what we acquire experientially in the broader social sphere.

For Berger and Luckmann, temporality is an intrinsic property of consciousness: we act rationally while continually aware of the passage of time. This time can be differentiated into multiple dimensions. Drawing on Ahlheit's (1988) and Giddens's (1987) elaborations, Hartmut Rosa (2013) distinguishes three levels: the time of everyday life (the short-term organization of action), life time (awareness of finitude and longer-term planning), and generational time, or epochal time, which exists independently of the individual and sets the limits of what is possible for the first two levels (24,25).

For the present topic, generational time is key because it organizes the forms of knowledge available to the individual. Knowledge is collective and internalized within the individual, but its interpretation depends on the epoch: what we "know" acquires meaning through the ways in which, at a particular generational moment, we relate to that knowledge. This may appear deterministic; however, generational knowledge primarily provides a framework for navigating social compromise and a sense of common sense, close to Schütz's "lifeworld" (1932) (26). Horizons of knowledge change with new situations in everyday life; therefore, the knowledge of one generation is not identical to that of another.

For Mannheim, a generation is bounded by time and determines interpretive frameworks for knowledge; he is more concerned with generational relations than with an overarching process of civilization, which makes his work relevant for understanding generational differences in the meanings of video games (27). Mannheim (1952) describes generation in terms of shared presence in a historical moment and shared lived experiences, wherein the meanings of events differ depending on the accumulation of prior experience (e.g., a 50-year-old and an 18-year-old do not interpret the same event identically). Moreover, the faster the pace of social life, the greater the likelihood that groups occupying a particular generational location will more rapidly form their own knowledge structures (28). Although Mannheim originally linked generations to roughly 30 years, accelerated social development narrows this period; generations closer in time share more similar experiences and more synchronized knowledge structures (28).

Within this framework, the study problematizes cohesion and interaction between generationally distant groups (parent–child) through the phenomenon of video games. Video games have their own continuity, but the meaning attributed to them depends on generational knowledge

structures; therefore, at the level of everyday life, generational tensions may be observed, especially between children and parents, produced by different ways of constructing meaning in everyday life. The central research question is: can generational tensions in the formation of knowledge be observed in the phenomenon of video game play, and if so, how do they manifest in parent–child interaction?

METHODS

The primary task was to define a sample capable of adequately capturing the core phenomenology of generational perceptions of video games. Two participant groups were therefore considered—gamers and their parents. The sample was selected based on the researcher's judgment regarding which individuals from both groups to include. A purposive judgment sample was chosen due to the pervasiveness of the gaming phenomenon and the heterogeneity of the gamer population. Accordingly, it was important—drawing on theoretical knowledge of video gaming—to assess which characteristics prospective interlocutors should possess.

Inclusion criteria for gamers were: playing video games for more than five years and more than 10 hours per week, with a predominance of online multiplayer games (MMORPG), action games, strategy games, and/or role-playing games (RPG), which researchers associate with the development of excessive gaming (28). Specifically, rich gaming experience and affiliation with gamer subculture were sought. Given the population's heterogeneity, both sexes and diverse employment/study statuses (pupils, students, employed, unemployed) were taken into account. For participants drawn from the parent population, the sole inclusion criterion was being a parent of a gamer.

In total, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the gamer population, and 9 semi structured interviews were conducted with participants from the parent population. The research conceptualization initially planned for 11 interviews with participants from both groups, but saturation of the data was observed after the eighth interview in the parent group, and the interviews ended with the ninth participant. The average duration of the interviews was approximately twenty minutes. The research sample included locations from all over Croatia. In the gamer group, the study included 9 men and 2 women, as the inclusion criteria (a longer gaming history, higher frequency of play, and predominantly online competitive genres such as MMORPGs/action/strategy/RPGs) are more commonly met by men., whereas in the parent group, there were 4 men and 5 women. The age distribution included two minor gamers, three aged 18-21 years, two aged 22-25 years, and one aged 30 years. Three of them were employed, two were unemployed, three were university students and two were high school students. All of them play more than 4–10 hours a day and have been playing since the lower grades of primary school. The sample was defined as the 16–30 age group because, according to Mannheim's theory of generations (1952), a generation is formed through a shared presence in the same socio-historical moment and similar lived experiences, especially during the formative phases of late adolescence and early adulthood. In the context of video game play, people aged 16–30 share a generational location marked by the simultaneous availability and normalization of digital entertainment (online gaming, social platforms, esports, mobile gaming, streaming), as well as similar pathways into gaming culture through peers,

school/university, and early work obligations. Also central are the shared experiences typical of this life stage—intense peer socialization, identity formation, and a sense of belonging to communities—which are often realized through gaming practices (cooperation, competition, communities, communication). Therefore, this age group can justifiably be examined as a single generational cohort.

The research participants from the parent population consisted of 4 males and 5 females. They were aged between 41 and 67 years, were married, 7 were employed, and 2 were retired. All of them are married, mostly have a secondary school education, and have 1–3 children.

The study was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration and the Ethical Code of the University of Mostar. Before the commencement of the research, the participants were informed about the basic objectives, purpose, and subject of the study, as well as the principle of voluntary and anonymous participation. They were asked for consent to record the interviews and were introduced to the methods of safeguarding their personal data. The participants were also informed about how the data collected through the interviews would be used in further data analysis. The participants emphasized that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Before the interviews began, it was clearly stated that this research did not assess the gaming habits or any aspects of the upbringing or relationship between parents and gamers, with the aim of avoiding biases and stigmatization or obtaining socially desirable responses. Before each interview, a brief introductory segment was conducted in which the aim and purpose of the study, as well as the main themes and questions, were explained in detail. This was followed by a short pause to allow participants time to reflect on their responses, which resulted in rich and complex accounts. However, among parents, responses quickly became similar and repetitive, indicating that data saturation had been reached.

The identity of the participants is known only to the researcher, as are the audio and video recordings of the interviews. During the transcription process, personal data that could lead to the identification of the participants were once again verified and concealed. Personal data are stored on the researcher's computer and are protected by a password.

RESULTS

The interaction between the two generations regarding video gaming is evident across several thematic areas. First, it is necessary to consider how parents and their children define the meaning of video gaming. Next, the interactional relationship between parents and children needs to be examined with regard to issues related to gaming. Furthermore, the concept of well-being emerged as one of the principal elements of generational differences concerning video games. It is precisely in the domain of well-being that the most salient generational tensions arise, warranting dedicated elaboration within these results.

"They play some Spider-Man, basketball, that sort of thing"

The meaning and understanding of video games differs depending on whether one is speaking with parents or with their children. Among parents, a superficial grasp of the games their child encounters is evident. This superficiality manifests in common-sense, first-glance descriptions of what the parent observes the child doing. Since parents rarely delve into the content aspects of video games, a first generational difference arises—divergent understandings of what video games mean.

It's mostly some Spider-Man stuff, shooters; there's also a part that has to do with sports, soccer or basketball… (P1).
…I don't know what she plays today; I see she's now in one room, the boy's in another room on a laptop and they're playing the same thing, but I don't know what. (P7).

By contrast, as expected, gamers are familiar with different types of video games and, having grown up with them, have developed a distinct linguistic register that deepens the semantic gap relative to parents.

I started with Counter-Strike, back when I was in 4th–5th grade, then Call of Duty, and then around 2010–2011 when League of Legends came out I kind of got hooked on it; I've been playing it since then with some breaks here and there when it gets on my nerves. Alongside that I play games like Apex Legends, Overwatch when it was popular… (G10).
…I mostly play offline RPGs and shooters… (G3).

Mentions of terms such as RPG, MMORPG, LoL, and WoW were commonplace among gamers, whereas their parents generally met them with incomprehension. While these terms denote specific categories for gamers, for parents they are typically typified under the umbrella of "playing games."

"Parents don't get it"

Video gaming does not only concern leisure-time use. As the social world is processual, a cultural backdrop has gradually formed around gaming. The world of video games—especially where virtual, social elements are involved—contains interactional and value patterns that can be characterized as a lifestyle. Thus, among interlocutors in this study, motives for gaming can be observed that go beyond mere pastime. For most participants, video games were a site for establishing social contact.

I met a few friends—girls and boys—with whom I stayed close; we met in person and today we're really good friends, so I can say that video games brought us together at the beginning, and later it became a very strong friendship where we can talk about anything. (G2).

On the other hand, video games are also a venue for attempting to build careers. Some interlocutors—gamers—choose to devote both their free and "work" time to gaming, hoping to build a livelihood from it.

…well, if someone plays something and is good at it, that's called esports; there's a whole organization for that, and if someone puts in the effort and gets good at a game, they can earn much more than someone doing a regular job. Much more. Parents care about school. I care about school too, but still… (G10).
I thought about becoming a pro player in CS:GO, but too many hackers and cheaters showed up, so nothing came of it. (G8).

Because such approaches to video games are comparatively new, the knowledge structures of gamers and their parents diverge, generating misunderstanding and at times conflict. Strategies for managing this misunderstanding typically default to suppression and cessation of communication. As evident from G10's quote—"*parents care about school, and I care about school too, but still…"*—there is some deference to parental views, yet it reflects the difficulty of characterizing one's own orientation when it deviates from established social patterns.

My parents are a bit older; I'm the youngest child, so they might have some older ways of thinking. Of course they don't like any of that; I was always supposed to spend more time outside and such things, not to mention studying earlier on… (G9).
They constantly told me to study more; I didn't really pay much attention, as they say, because they couldn't know whether I was studying or

not, they didn't have much influence. They got angry; it's only logical they were angry. (G3). I sometimes talked to my parents about games, but they don't get it at all, so better not. They don't agree that I play; they still don't get it; it's all new. That makes me angry. People just don't get it. (G10).

"We don't understand each other, so I'll do it my way" becomes the default for gamers over the life course when generational synchronization around games fails. The lifestyles of gamers and their parents differ substantially, so approaches to a phenomenon heavily burdened by generational knowledge also diverge.

"As long as they finish school"

From the parents' perspective, not understanding gamers' life interests leads to confusion. Unlike gamers, however, anger appeared less frequently among parents in transcripts. The inability to grasp the meaning of gaming, from the vantage of their generational knowledge, leads to feelings of distance from the child, but not necessarily to pronounced anger. Concern for the child was more prevalent among parents of gamers. Within their knowledge structures, parents prioritize the child's education, future prospects, and socialization, while viewing gaming as an unnecessary obstacle.

Let him finish secondary school, get a regular job, and then in his free time he can play and maybe earn something on the side if possible; then he'll see, but during schooling I don't want to think that way. (P1).

Parents try to direct their children toward a path they deem positive for development. In this sense, parents represent an authority that stands for life to the child. However, the dynamic environment of video games and the new worlds and opportunities within them make it harder to establish the legitimacy of that authority. Consequently, conflict is felt first and foremost by gamers, and then by parents as an inability to provide opportunities for growth. This is evident in gamers' frequent references to parental misunderstanding, and in parents' emphasis on education, social contacts, and romantic life.

I would like him to be outside more, to be freer, not to sit at that computer; I simply don't know—this is really hard for me—because I don't know how to pull him away from it. (P6).

A sense of powerlessness is present for both gamers and parents, but it evolves into anger for gamers (who ultimately must justify themselves to parental authority or oppose it) and into concern for parents (how to guide the child onto the right path that worked in the time of their own self-realization).

"Because of gaming, I met many people"

The generational knowledge gap regarding social reality between parents and gamers is also evident in terms of gaming's positive and negative aspects. Gamers predominantly hold positive perceptions centered on acquiring social contacts—primarily friendships.

I met a few friends—girls and boys—with whom I stayed close; we met in person and today we're really good friends, so I can say that video games brought us together at the beginning, and later it became a very strong friendship. (G2).

As positive aspects I would definitely mention the people one meets while playing; there were quite a few of those friendships. I think I also learned a lot while playing; I'm not sure how to categorize it exactly—"general knowledge"... (G1).

Video games were there, in both hard and good times... and when we play competitive games, we like to get together as a team and compete against others and show that we function at a higher level because we're all connected in real life and understand each other, which gives us a lot of advantages in games. (G5).

Gamers also highlighted negative aspects, notably aggression and anger during play. As these are competitive games, losing can trigger anger, rage, and aggression—most often manifested in breaking mice, keyboards, or headsets.

If I play for fun, I feel relaxed; but if I play some competitive part, then there can be anger—mice flying around, keyboards… I've smashed a mouse before, a PlayStation joystick. (G3).

…as for the negatives, as you know, sometimes one overdoes it and playing drags on, responsibilities get neglected, some aggressiveness can develop, and there can be quite a few arguments. (G2).

"If nothing else, at least they learn English"

Among parents, negative perceptions prevail regarding pros and cons. Video games are primarily seen as a waste of time, and as something that—as noted earlier—leads to lack of prospects and harms physical (and mental) health.

It's a waste of time. You played a game for three hours—what did you achieve by playing for three hours? I don't see anything positive in it. It's not that this is a disastrous use of time, but I don't see much good in it either. When you sit for hours at a computer, pounding the keyboard, all stiff and tense when those are the kinds of games, I'd rather we go outside. (P5).

When it comes to perceived positives for their children, parents most often emphasize acquiring knowledge useful in real life, above all English language proficiency.

A major positive is spoken English. Most gamers are excellent speakers precisely because they play online with teammates or opponents from all over the world. (P2). The good side is that they learn motor skills, speed, reactions—and the most important, most positive aspect of video games for me: perfect spoken English; my son speaks English like an Englishman. Actually, like an American—he speaks American English. (P1).

Parental socialization through games

Regarding mutual interaction involving a social phenomenon such as video games, it is important to note that this interaction takes place in a space dominated by gamers, while parents are guests. In other words, authority shifts to the gamers—that is, the children. Parents allow this in an attempt to build connection with their children, while children (gamers) see such interaction as an opportunity to "socialize" their parents and induct them into their view of games.

We often talked and sometimes all four of us would play together, for example, mom and I versus dad and my brother. These video games helped us grow closer and taught our parents something, helping them realize that video games are not just a waste of time; they can be fun, educational, and useful in many ways beyond simply "taking time." (G2).

I spent a lot of time with him… and his dad. We talked a lot, played together. I tried to play video games, but unsuccessfully… I drove a car and kept flying off the track; it doesn't work for me, and I need good reflexes. … I never controlled him too much… he's a good kid. (P4).

On the other hand, conflicts often arise precisely because of manifestations of aggression during gaming. Notably, the role of "resident critic" is often assumed by mothers. Mothers are the ones who oversee gaming. Fathers are concerned, but tend to see gaming as a passing phase or mere laziness.

I must admit that since turning 16, my son rarely goes on trips with us, but my daughter still likes to go. My husband is actually quite uninterested in the children's lifevents… He's

more on the technical side—buy, drive, bring—but he doesn't talk much with them or spend much time with them. It's mostly "my job." (P2).

Oh yes, I talk about games… especially with my mom. She's interested in what I do, how I do it, who I play with, what the games look like, what I talk about with friends, and how I'm doing. When she's frustrated about my gaming, we argue about it. Sometimes she's afraid I'm addicted. We argue about that. Dad rarely asks anything about games, except when I'll start making money from them. I spend very little time with dad, and about equally with mom and my sister. Since my sister goes to school and my parents work, I'm mostly alone. (G7).

DISCUSSION

The study's findings revealed a generational discrepancy in knowledge and attitudes regarding video games. This outcome was expected given the study's theoretical construct. Because the structures of so-called life knowledge among parents and among gamers differ, a phenomenon such as video games is treated differently. What matters for this work is the interaction between these two forms of knowledge. While parents tend to express concern, gamers report anger and regret stemming from parental misunderstanding. As parents hold socially legitimized authority within traditionally conceived upbringing, conflicts arise either from attempts to resist that authority (which does not understand the new form of knowledge) or from attempts to preserve that authority in a world characterized by fluidity and instability of form. The relationship between gamers and their parents concerning video games is not so much a misunderstanding of one's children or one's parents as it is a misunderstanding of the phenomenon of gaming itself. Yet this does not necessarily mean that misunderstanding produces only conflict. There are attempts at communication and perspective-taking, though among interlocutors in this study such attempts appeared more frequently among parents than among gamers. Parents show a willingness to try to understand the world their children inhabit. Complicating mutual understanding is a communicative gap: gamers use a specific vocabulary and expressions tied to video games, which may sound unfamiliar to parents. This contributes to a sense of isolation among children when parents do not understand their world and hinders open dialogue.

Through Mannheim's generational theory, youth engagement with video games can be analyzed via shared historical experiences and generational forms of knowledge. Young people who have grown up in the digital era share a temporal location marked by rapid technological advancement and the ubiquity of digital devices, setting them apart from prior generations. Their shared presence within this technologically advanced moment shapes their worldview, especially their interaction with video games. This generation experiences video games not merely as entertainment but as an integral component of everyday life that influences socialization, skills acquisition, and potentially professional development—an orientation that parents often do not take seriously.

Indeed, parents frequently view video games through the lens of traditional values, focusing on potential negative effects such as addiction, time loss, or distraction, while placing expectations on education and "going out into the real world" (29). This divergence arises from differences in internalized knowledge and life experience across generations, which can generate tension but also opens space for dialogue to minimize those differences.

Applying Mannheim's theory as an analytical frame for understanding youth–video game relations can inform strategies to prevent problematic gaming. Parents often lack knowledge, which can lead to ineffective parenting approaches (18). Preventive programs that include parent education enable more effective monitoring of children's gaming habits and the promotion of healthier gaming practices among children and adolescents (30,31), alongside adopting strategies to meet children's basic psychological needs. Empowering parents through education helps create supportive environments that foster healthier gaming habits (32). Teachers can collaborate with parents to promote healthy digital routines among children. Joint parent–child gaming has proved effective both for preventing gaming disorder and for strengthening family relationships. Evidence indicates that such activity reduces the generational gap in understanding video games (33) and improves communication and connectedness within the family (34-36). Parents who actively participate in gaming with their children can better understand their needs and interests and provide emotional support. This approach not only reduces the risk of problematic behavior but also strengthens intergenerational relationships. High-quality parent–child relationships - marked by open communication and shared activities - function as a protective factor against problematic gaming (36).

Although no studies were found on education programs for parents and/or teachers run directly by gamers, the generational gap in knowledge and life experiences suggests that gamers - particularly adolescents - could act as intermediaries in narrowing that gap. By sharing lived experiences and insights about positive facets of gaming, gamers could help parents better understand this form of digital culture. Such an approach could enhance intergenerational communication and motivate research evaluating the potential of involving gamers in educational programs for parents.

The study's limitations primarily stem from its qualitative design and the small, purposively selected sample, which means the findings cannot be generalized to the broader population of gamers and parents. In addition, the gamer inclusion criteria (longer gaming history, higher frequency of play, and predominantly online/competitive genres) limit insight into the experiences of occasional ("casual") players, and the uneven age distribution within the 16–30 range may obscure developmental differences. The data are based on self-reports, with a risk of socially desirable responding despite the interviews' explicitly non-evaluative framing.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates a pronounced generational discrepancy in knowledge and perceptions of video games between parents and gamers, rooted in different life experiences and media environments in which these generations grew up. While younger participants experience video games as a normal and socially meaningful part of everyday life, parents more often interpret gaming primarily through potential risks (problematic gaming, wasted time, and poorer academic, occupational, and social outcomes). This mismatch frequently contributes to misunderstanding and conflict and may reduce feelings of acceptance and being understood - factors associated with a higher risk of problematic gaming. Accordingly, parent and teacher education can justifiably be viewed as a preventive activity: strengthening digital literacy, fostering non-judgmental communication, and establishing clear and consistent rules—alongside occasional shared gaming—can support a more supportive

family and school environment and promote healthier gaming habits.

In addition, the findings imply clearer and stronger practice recommendations. For health professionals, it is recommended to systematically incorporate brief, non-judgmental screening about gaming into work with children and adolescents (frequency, content, context, and consequences), with attention to functional impairment and comorbidities (e.g., anxiety, depressive symptoms, sleep problems), and to provide early guidance on balancing responsibilities, sleep, and leisure time; when problematic gaming is suspected, involving the family, providing structured psychoeducation, and referring to appropriate psychological/psychiatric support are indicated. For parents, a shift from control to collaborative guidance is recommended: becoming informed about game types and online risks, setting clear boundaries (time, spending, content), agreeing on priorities (school, sleep, physical activity), monitoring signs of impaired functioning, and encouraging open discussion without stigmatization; occasional shared gaming or showing interest in the child's game may reduce conflict and strengthen relationship quality. For gamers, the findings support actively taking responsibility for gaming habits through self-regulation (time planning, breaks, sleep hygiene), recognizing risk patterns (gaming as the dominant coping strategy, neglect of obligations, withdrawal from relationships), communicating transparently with parents about what they play and why, and being willing to seek help when gaming begins to harm education, work, health, or relationships. Interdisciplinary collaboration among the health system, families, and gamers themselves appears to be a key precondition for narrowing the generational gap and strengthening protective factors for young people's well-being.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript. ChatGPT 5.2 (developed by OpenAI), was used to translate the text into English, and all results were reviewed and edited by the authors. The authors remain responsible for the integrity and originality of the content.

REFERENCES

1. Kurashov VI, Kurashov YV. Dynamics of interaction of natural science and technology in the history of the development of scientific and technical knowledge: philosophical and methodological analysis. Vestn Samara State Tech Univ Ser Philos [Internet]. 2023 Oct 16 [cited 2025 Feb 12];5(3):61–74. doi.org/10.17673/vsgtu-phil.2023.3.6

2. Diaz AF, Estoque-Loñez H. A Meta-Analysis on the Effectiveness of Gamification on Student Learning Achievement. Int J Educ Math Sci Technol [Internet]. 2024 Nov 5 [cited 2025 Feb 12];12(5):1236–53. doi.org/10.46328/ijemst.4185

3. Alamri IKA. Gameful learning investigating the impact of game elements, interactivity, and learning style on student success. Multidiscip Sci J [Internet]. 2024 Sept 25 [cited 2025 Feb 12];7(3):2025108. doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2025108

4. Mitchell B, Co MJ. The impact of Implementing Gamification Elements on Motivation, Engagement and Academic Achievement. Int Conf Educ Res [Internet]. 2024 Nov 21 [cited 2025 Feb 12];1(1):175–84. doi.org/10.34190/icer.1.1.3113

5. Guermazi F, Halouani N, Yaich K, Ennaoui R, Chouayakh S, Aloulou J, et al. Video and Internet Gaming Addiction Among Young Adults. Eur Psychiatry [Internet]. 2017

Apr [cited 2025 Feb 13];41(S1):S203–4. doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2017.01.2158

6. Ghosh A. Game Over: An Analysis of How Video Game Loot Boxes and Advertisements Target Children with Potential Solutions. Europea Ps [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2025 Feb 13]. doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2017.01.2158

7. Paleczna M. Computer games as a subject of psychological research – negative and positive aspects of gaming. Replay Pol J Game Stud [Internet]. 2023 Dec 28 [cited 2025 Feb 12];9(1):11–41. doi.org/10.18778/2391-8551.09.02

8. Copenhaver A, Mitrofan O, Ferguson CJ. For Video Games, Bad News Is Good News: News Reporting of Violent Video Game Studies. Cyberpsychology Behav Soc Netw [Internet]. 2017 Dec [cited 2025 Feb 12];20(12):735–9. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2017.0364

9. Kneer J, Ward MR. With a rebel yell: Video gamers' responses to mass shooting moral panics. New Media Soc [Internet]. 2021 Mar [cited 2025 Feb 12];23(3):497–514. doi.org/10.1177/1461444819901138

10. Drummond A, Sauer JD. Timesplitters: Playing video games before (but not after) school on weekdays is associated with poorer adolescent academic performance. A test of competing theoretical accounts. Comput Educ [Internet]. 2020 Jan [cited 2025 Feb 12];144:103704. doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103704

11. Limone P, Ragni B, Toto GA. The epidemiology and effects of video game addiction: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Acta Psychol (Amst) [Internet]. 2023 Nov [cited 2025 Feb 12];241:104047. doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104047

12. Mohammad S, Jan RA, Alsaedi SL. Symptoms, Mechanisms, and Treatments of Video Game Addiction. Cureus [Internet]. 2023 Mar 31 [cited 2025 Feb 13]; doi.org/10.7759/cureus.36957

13. Zoričić Z, Novak V, Mikulčić M, Šimić J. Gambling Habits Among Video Game Players. Zdravstveni glasnik. 2023;9(2):10-27. https://doi.org/10.47960/2303-8616.2023.2.9.10

14. WHO. Clinical descriptions and diagnostic requirements for ICD-11 mental,behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorders. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2024.

15. Groš N, Bernik A, Radošević D. Attitude Comparison Between Parents and Primary and Secondary School Children Regarding Computer Games and Its Influences. In: Arai K, editor. Intelligent Computing [Internet]. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland; 2023 [cited 2025 Feb 13]. p. 786–800. (Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems; vol. 739). doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-37963-5_54

16. Aierbe A, Oregui E, Bartau I. Video games, parental mediation and gender socialization. Digit Educ Rev [Internet]. 2019 Dec 31 [cited 2025 Jan 23];(36):100–16. doi.org/10.1344/der.2019.36.100-116

17. Russell LLH, Johnson EI. Parenting Emerging Adults Who Game Excessively: Parents' Lived Experiences. Issues Ment Health Nurs [Internet]. 2017 Jan 2 [cited 2025 Feb 12];38(1):66–74. doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2016.1253808

18. Sood A, Chapman JA, Berson CL, Cheng L. Crafting the Right Fort: Increasing Parents' Understanding of Video Games to Improve Parent-Child Rapport and Behavioral Management in the Home. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry [Internet]. 2023 Oct [cited 2025 Jan 23];62(10):S421–2.

19. Türen Ş, Bağçeli Kahraman P. The predictive relationships between children's digital game addiction tendencies and mothers' digital parenting awareness and

digital literacy levels. Educ Inf Technol [Internet]. 2024 Aug 9 [cited 2025 Feb 13]; doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12932-4

20. Commodari E, Consiglio A, Cannata M, La Rosa VL. Influence of parental mediation and social skills on adolescents' use of online video games for escapism: A cross-sectional study. J Res Adolesc. 2024 Dec;34(4):1668-1678. doi: 10.1111/jora.13034.

21. Plaku A, Bratja K. A Theoretical Perspective on Videogame Storytelling and Teacher, Parents, and Students Perception. In 2024 [cited 2025 Feb 18]. p. 613–24. doi.org/10.22492/issn.2758-0962.2024.47

22. Rumpf HJ, Bischof A, Bischof G, Besser B, Brand D, Rehbein F. Early Intervention in Gaming Disorder: What Can We Learn from Findings in the Substance Abuse Field? Curr Addict Rep [Internet]. 2018 Dec [cited 2025 Feb 17];5(4):511–6. doi.org/10.1007/s40429-018-0229-4

23. Touraine A, Macey D, Touraine A. Critique of modernity. Repr. Oxford: Blackwell; 1997. 398 p.

24. Berger, P.L., Luckman, T. Socijalna konstrukcija zbilje. Zagreb: Naprijed; 1992.

25. Rosa H. Social acceleration: a new theory of modernity. New York: Columbia University Press; 2013.

26. Schutz A, Walsh G, Lehnert F. The phenomenology of the social world. Evanston (Ill.): Northwestern university press; 1972.

27. Mannheim K. Essays Sociology Knowledge V 5 [Internet]. 0 ed. Routledge; 2013 [cited 2025 Sept 25]. doi.org/10.4324/9781315005058

28. Liao Z, Chen X, Huang S, Huang Q, Lin S, Li Y, et al. Exploring the associated characteristics of Internet gaming disorder from the perspective of various game genres. Front Psychiatry [Internet]. 2023 Jan 12 [cited 2024 Apr 18];13. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.1103816

29. Novak V, Šimić J. The use of video games as a distractor in children and adolescents. Sestrinski glasnik. 2024;29(1):43-47. https://doi.org/10.11608/sgnj.29.1.8

30. Donati MA, Guido CA, De Meo G, Spalice A, Sanson F, Beccari C, et al. Gaming among Children and Adolescents during the COVID-19 Lockdown: The Role of Parents in Time Spent on Video Games and Gaming Disorder Symptoms. Int J Environ Res Public Health [Internet]. 2021 June 21 [cited 2025 Feb 18];18(12):6642. doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18126642

31. Hidaayah N, Yunitasari E, Kusnanto K, Nihayati HE, Santy WH, Putri RA, et al. Parenting in the Prevention of Internet Gaming Addiction. Open Access Maced J Med Sci [Internet]. 2022 June 25 [cited 2024 June 25];10(G):731–8. doi.org/10.3889/oamjms.2022.7980

32. Musick G, Freeman G, McNeese NJ. Gaming as Family Time: Digital Game Co-play in Modern Parent-Child Relationships. Proc ACM Hum-Comput Interact [Internet]. 2021 Oct 5 [cited 2025 Feb 18];5(CHI PLAY):1–25. doi.org/10.1145/3474678

33. Li L, Niu Z, Song Y, Griffiths MD, Wen H, Yu Z, et al. Relationships Between Gaming Disorder, Risk Factors, and Protective Factors Among a Sample of Chinese University Students Utilizing a Network Perspective. Int J Ment Health Addict [Internet]. 2024 Oct [cited 2025 Feb 18];22(5):3283–301. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-023-01049-3

34. Song I. The Effects of Adolescents' Relationships with Parents and School/Institute Teachers as Protective Factors on Smartphone Addiction: Comparative Analysis of Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels in South Korea. Asian J Public Opin Res [Internet]. 2021 May 31 [cited 2025 Jan 22];9(2):106–41. doi.org/10.15206/ajpor.2021.9.2.106

35. Novak V, Zoričić Z, Ruf V, Brkić S, Neuberg M, Meštrović T, et al. A two-decade bibliometric analysis (2004–2024) of parental factors in the context of internet gaming disorder research. Front. Psychiatry. 2026; 17:1815429. doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2026.1815429

36. Su B, Yu C, Zhang W, Su Q, Zhu J, Jiang Y. Father–Child Longitudinal Relationship: Parental Monitoring and Internet Gaming Disorder in Chinese Adolescents. Front Psychol [Internet]. 2018 Feb 6 [cited 2025 Jan 22];9:95. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00095

ZNAČENJE VIDEOIGARA ZA INTERAKCIJSKE ODNOSE U OBITELJI

Valentina Novak[1], Zoran Zoričić[2], Jelena Pejić[3]
[1]Sveučilište Sjever, 104. brigade 3, 42 000 Varaždin, Croatia
[2]Klinički bolnički centar Sestre milosrdnice, Vinogradska cesta 29, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
[3]Medicinski fakultet, Sveučilište u Mostaru, Zrinskog Frankopana 34, 88 000 Mostar, Bosna i Hercegovina

SAŽETAK

Videoigre imaju različita značenja adolescentnim gejmerima i njihovim roditeljima, što proizlazi iz razlika u znanju, iskustvu i komunikacijskim stilovima te često dovodi do nerazumijevanja i konflikata u obitelji. Cilj ovog kvalitativnog istraživanja bio je steći dublji uvid u sociokulturnu fenomenologiju generacijskog gledišta videoigara. Podaci su prikupljeni polustrukturiranim intervjuom s 11 gejmera u dobi 16-30 godina i 9 roditelja gejmera u dobi 41-67 godina. Istraživanje je provedeno u skladu s etičkim načelima dobrovoljnosti i anonimnosti uz pisanu suglasnost sudionika istraživanja.

Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na generacijsku diskrepanciju u znanju i stavovima prema videoigrama, koja proizlazi iz razlika u strukturama životnog znanja roditelja i djece. Roditelji izražavaju zabrinutost zbog igranja, a gejmeri ljutnju i žaljenje zbog roditeljskog nerazumijevanja. Takve razlike rezultiraju sukobima koji proizlaze iz pokušaja održavanja roditeljskog autoriteta s jedne strane, odnosno otpora tom autoritetu i potrebe za autonomijom s druge.

Generacijski jaz u percepciji videoigara odražava složenost međugeneracijskih odnosa. Razlike u generacijskim oblicima znanja ne moraju voditi isključivo konfliktu. Usmjerene intervencije poput edukacije i zajedničkog igranja mogu potaknuti razumijevanje, povećati obiteljsku povezanost i podržati zdravije obrasce korištenja videoigara.

Ključne riječi: videoigre; generacijski jaz; razlika u znanju; edukacija
Osoba za korespondenciju: Valentina Novak, vanovak@unin.hr