Parental Representations of Electronic Games (A Field Study)

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Abstract

This article presents a field investigation on the subject of social representations held by university professors regarding video and electronic games, based on their observations of their children's practices of these games. In order to uncover the semantic field specific to these representations, the structural approach to social representations was adopted in accordance with the theory of Abric (2003), which relies on hierarchical or ranked structure analysis using the word association technique in response to a stimulus phrase (Vergès, 1992). The EVOC 2006 software was also employed to determine the central core of these social representations. The results of the field investigation revealed that the central core of the representations consists of a set of fundamental concepts including discovery, skill development, adventure, visual and auditory violence, and conflict. In addition to this central core, peripheral elements closely related to it were identified, involving concepts such as addiction, time-wasting, cultural role, and curiosity.

التمثلات الوالدية للألعاب الالكترونية ـ دراسة ميدانيةـ

ملخص

هذا المقال تحقيقا ميدانيا حول موضوع التمثلات الاجتماعية التي يحملها الأساتذة الجامعيون تجاه ألعاب الفيديو والإلكترونية، وذلك من خلال ملاحظاتهم لممارسات أبنائهم لهذه الألعاب. بهدف الكشف عن الحقل الدلالي الخاص بهذه التمثلات، تم اعتماد المقاربة البنيوية للتمثلات الاجتماعية وفقاً لنظرية(Abric,2003)، والتي تعتمد على تحليل البناء الهرمي أو التراتبي باستخدام منهجية تداعي الكلمات المناسبة للعبارة المحفزة. (Verges,1992).كما تم توظيف برنامجEVOC.2006لتحديد النواة المركزية لهذه التمثلات الاجتماعية. أظهرت نتائج التحقيق الميداني أن النواة المركزية للتمثلات تتكون من مجموعة مفاهيم أساسية تشمل الاكتشاف، تنمية المهارات، المغامرة، العنف المرئي والصوتي، والصراع.بالإضافة إلى هذه النواة المركزية، تم الكشف عن عناصر محيطية قريبة منها تضمنت مفاهيم مثل الإدمان، تضييع الوقت، الدور الثقافي، وحب الاطلاع.

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I- Introduction :

Electronic games have long been a subject of ongoing controversy due to the familial, social, and ethical concerns they raise among parents and communities at large. Various organizations, associations, and media outlets continue to issue warnings regarding the potential negative impacts of such games on individuals and societies. These concerns frequently stem from the nature of the content presented in these games, which at times resembles that of other audiovisual or digital media. The games may include behaviors or themes that conflict with social values and promote moral deviations.

From this perspective, it becomes evident that the visual product often contains violent and chaotic scenes and behaviors that may contribute to the dissemination of unethical ideas and the promotion of ideologies that threaten family stability. These games frequently reconstruct new manifestations of violence, harassment, and bullying, which may lead to an increased state of social anxiety.

Based on the above, researchers in the social sciences have shown considerable interest in the ethical issues surrounding electronic or video games, as well as the ethics of the players themselves, relying on philosophical conceptions. It has been noted, however, that only a limited number of researchers are able to distinguish between ethics as content and ethics as behavior in the player. This is due to the fact that the commercial and cinematic nature of the electronic game industry is overwhelmingly dominant. Game companies are primarily focused on generating substantial profits without taking into consideration the inculcation of values and ethics that are assumed to guide children and adolescents toward a morally sound path aligned with the values, ethics, and beliefs of the society.

Video games, or what is commonly referred to as electronic games, are considered a recreational tool and a social hobby that continues to evolve. Their importance increased significantly during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the extended lockdowns, children and adolescents were compelled to seek entertainment within the confines of their homes. As a result, video games became one of the primary activities occupying long hours without the need to leave the house due to fear of infection. Consequently, platforms dedicated to streaming and downloading electronic games witnessed a considerable surge in usage rates, from 2020 until the present day.

Despite the widespread nature of this phenomenon in our country, there remains a lack of accurate data or statistics that illustrate the extent to which children consume these games. However, through observations in certain shops and specialized venues, it is evident that many of our children are intensively downloading these games from free electronic stores such as Google Play and App Store. It is worth noting that these platforms are beyond the reach of any local regulatory oversight, such as that which might be imposed by specialized bodies like the High Council for Audiovisual Media or associations for the protection of children and adolescents.

In light of this, a logical question arises among parents: How can we protect our children from falling into the trap of addiction to these electronic games? And are there effective alternatives or therapeutic plans for those who have already become captive to this form of audiovisual entertainment?

It is also important to acknowledge that there exists an opposing viewpoint among some parents, who believe that these games offer educational, contemplative, and technological benefits to their children.

Amidst this divergence and variety in social understanding and perception of electronic or video games, we aim to explore parental perceptions of this phenomenon. Our objective remains to shed light on the content and structure of this subject, as well as to identify the potential risks that may threaten the health of children and adolescents as a result of these practices. We also aspire to understand the amount of time dedicated to playing these games, and the main locations or environments in which they are typically played.

I.1. Social Representations According to Some Scholars:

The term "social representation" is attributed to the renowned scholar Émile Durkheim, who introduced it in 1898. He aimed to highlight the characteristics of collective thinking as opposed to individual thought (01). Durkheim believed that the individual acts through the group and regarded social representation as an influence of societal elements on individual behavior. While individual representation is a purely psychological phenomenon, social representation extends beyond individual perceptions within society. Thus, representation consists of both psychological and social phenomena, requiring a separation between individual and social dimensions and a distinction between cognitive and mental components of collective action.

Serge Moscovici defined representation in the preface of his book on psychoanalysis (1976) as "a particular kind of knowledge," and later described social representation as "a set of organized scientific rules and one of the psychological processes through which individuals can make psychological and social reality intelligible and comprehensible" (02).

Similarly, D. Jodelet stated: "The term social representation refers to a particular type of knowledge—a shared meaning... In general, it is a form of social thought." It is a mental and intellectual process that occurs when an individual engages with a subject, be it a person, event, idea, or theory, whether real or imaginary (03). According to Jodelet, representation is a socially constructed and shared cognitive form with an applied function that aims to establish a shared reality specific to a social group (04).

L. Vygotsky focused on how words develop in children, particularly in his writings about the relationship between language and thought. He introduced the concept of mental representation and discussed two types of concepts: "spontaneous or everyday concepts" and "scientific concepts." The former are formed through symbolic processes, while the latter emerge from structured systems (appareil). According to Vygotsky, natural psychological processes develop through meaningful external structures, which vary cognitively between individuals and contribute to the formation of mental representations (05).

H. Wallon concentrated on the formation and functioning of representation. He argued that representational processes begin at birth and must be studied in relation to overall behavior. Wallon's foundational concept in this regard was the conditions under which relationships between the individual and reality are formed. He emphasized the importance of adopting and analyzing various forms of representation that guide processes in both applied and theoretical fields. Wallon highlighted the role of representations in forming psychological processes, particularly through their sensory-motor implications. He therefore addressed the process of internalizing forms of representation that shape action, from schemata to complex symbolic operations (06).

Jean Piaget, n the other hand, linked representation directly to mental imagery (07). He praised the way representations form in children, with practical representations tied to action logic that begins with early motor schemata and continues through the development of cognitive operations (08).

I.2. Characteristics of Representation:

I.2.1. Cognitive and Perceptual Nature:

Representation possesses a dual character: it is both cognitive and perceptual. Perception originates from sensory stimuli, whereas the cognitive process is abstract in nature. To represent something is to mentally recall it in awareness or consciousness, even in its physical absence. This duality is supported by Moscovici, who stated: "Representation allows for the transition from the sensorimotor phase to the cognitive phase, from perceiving an object from afar to apprehending its dimensions and forms" (09).

I.2.2. Structural and Symbolic Meaning:

Each representation has a dual structure (form and meaning) which are inseparable. According to Moscovici, every representation consists of two sides, like a coin: the structural (formal) side and the symbolic (semantic) side. Representation is thus both shape and meaning, based on the principle that every shape carries meaning and every meaning has a shape (10).

I.2.3. Mental Construct:

Representation is fundamentally a constructive process that sets it apart from other psychological functions. It involves mental construction and organization by the individual. Therefore, it is not merely a process of repetition or passive reproduction of a subject, but rather the building of components of the environment in which behavior takes place. Representation is not solely a mental construction process, but also a way of connecting the objects within the field of thought. Mental construction, then, is a cornerstone of representation, it is always an act of constructing or reconstructing the representation (11).

I.2.4. Social Dimension:

Social factors that influence representation cannot be overlooked, as representation arises through them. It is shaped by the structure of the society in which it evolves. Gilly stated: "Every representation is described as social because it is the result of individual interaction, which responds under the influence of various social factors." This feature reveals the influence of concrete societal factors (values, beliefs, rituals, and group affiliations) on representation, which in turn

facilitates communication. Representations always contain social content, and the categories that organize them stem from shared cultural sources (12).

I.3. Mechanisms of Social Representation:

Moscovici explained that the process of representation involves a transformative activity of knowledge through two primary mechanisms:

I.3.1. Objectification (L'objectivation):

Farr noted in 1984: "Through the process of objectification, what is inexplicable becomes self-evident" (13). The goal of objectification is to move from abstract theoretical elements to tangible images. For Moscovici, it involves gradually shifting excess meaning by embodying it, leading to direct, non-inferential observation. Representations become interchangeable between perception and meaning, drawing abstract concepts from images and providing concrete forms for ideas. Objectification involves two movements: one from theory to image, and the other from image to social construction.

I.3.2 Anchoring (L'ancrage):

Anchoring transforms the unfamiliar into something familiar, it renders things understandable and clear (14). Its purpose is to integrate new knowledge into an existing cognitive framework. Anchoring refers to the integration of models within representations in the social field and their transformations. It raises questions such as: How is the new subject integrated? How does anchoring utilize social representations?

Three forms of anchoring (ancrage) can be observed when studying social representations.

The first form relies on general beliefs or values, for instance, beliefs in a world governed by equality, which structure symbolic relationships with others. Labeling these beliefs as "general" does not imply universal agreement, but rather that they influence many social evaluations and relationships.

The second form concerns the overlapping of social representations, particularly in how individuals perceive relationships between situations and social categories, such as gender relations.

The third form is analyzed when researchers link social representations to specific social affiliations or positions individuals occupy. It is based on the hypothesis that every shared social integration produces exchanges and specific experiences that shape appropriate representations (15).

Core Structure of Representation:

First: Central Core:

The central core of a representation consists of key meanings that give it significance and serve a dual function: organizing the representation's meaning and determining the relationships among its elements. The central core is the most stable component, most resistant to change, and the essential element in any representation. For two representations to differ, their central cores must differ. According to Abric, a genuine transformation in social representation requires a shift in its central core. Thus, understanding and analyzing a social representation necessitates identifying its central core.

Second: Peripheral Elements:

These elements complement the central core and are arranged in a hierarchical fashion. Peripheral elements may be closer or farther from the central core, but they play an essential role in materializing and clarifying the representation's meaning. They are directly linked to the central core because they help determine the level of representations. These elements embody repeated information and translate symbolic judgments suggested by the subject and its context (16).

The dual-structured organization of representation helps clarify the role of context:

The central system of representation is directly shaped by the ideological and historical context of the group. It is necessarily influenced by collective memory and the system of norms it belongs to, though it is less affected by the immediate social field.

The peripheral system, which enables the central core to anchor itself in reality, is more sensitive and reactive to the specific features of the immediate context. If contextual elements challenge the core's internalized values, what Flament called "strange schemata" (schémasétranges) may appear (17).

Flament provided a detailed description of these schemata in 1987. They enable the integration of new elements into a representation, potentially destabilizing it while still offering group-accepted justifications. From a cognitive strategy perspective, this process is crucial because it preserves what is essential in the representation while allowing for the incorporation of new elements (18).

II– Methods and Materials:

II. Tools:

The study aimed to explore the structure of social representations of electronic games among university professors in the departments of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Constantine 2. To achieve this, a questionnaire was used, which is a classical tool in the study of social representations (Abric, 2003). It relies on the elicitation or free association of words in response to a stimulus phrase. The objective of this questionnaire is to "identify the content and structure of the social representation regarding electronic games" by asking participants to spontaneously produce five words or phrases that come to mind. The free association method is notable for its ability to reveal implicit or deep elements that may be hidden or embedded within the discourse produced.

The instructions provided were as follows: In your opinion, what are the five words or phrases that come to university professors' minds when they are asked or think about electronic games?

The second stage focused on prioritization, where each individual was asked to rank their own responses according to the importance they attributed to each word or phrase. The instructions were: Now rank the words or phrases according to the priority you assign to them. Place number 1 in front of the most important, then number 2, and so on, continuing in descending order until you reach number 5. To determine the structural elements of the central core and peripheral elements, two potential criteria were relied upon:

Frequency	Importance	
	High	Low
High	Square 1: Central core	Square 2: Peripheral 1
Low	Square 3: Contradictory elements	Square 4: Peripheral 2

Table 01: Hierarchical Evocation Analysis (Vergès, 2000)

Square 1: This square contains the most common elements that emerge and represent the central focus of the subject, as well as the most significant elements in the minds of the university professors participating in the interviews. Its content revolves around synonyms and prototypes associated with electronic games. As Abric explains, "not everything in this box is central, but the central core is found within it."

Square 2: This square includes the most important peripheral elements.

Square 3: This square contains elements and terms discussed by a small number of individuals (low frequency) but which they consider highly important. This square is called "the area of contradictory elements" and reflects the presence of a subgroup that represents different ideas. It may complement peripheral Square 1 or contain a representation that contradicts the central core, making it a potential source of change.

Square 4: This square represents the extreme periphery of the representation and includes elements that are neither prominent nor of great importance.

Lexicon:
The creation of the lexicon involves the process of classifying semantically related words under a particular term, where semantically close elements are grouped and minor spelling errors corrected to obtain a set that reflects all the vocabulary belonging to the same context. The aim is to facilitate the organization and analysis of the words in line with the defined objectives. In this research, data were analyzed to achieve the intended goals, where the data were entered and coded in a way that enabled their automatic processing using the EVOC2006 software. A comprehensive descriptive analysis was conducted to present a clear picture of the results derived from the study.

Based on this, we are driven by curiosity to investigate parental perceptions in order to understand how they construct the idea of electronic games, and to what extent these representations influence their family practices. In this context, the study aims to answer the following central question:

What representations do parents construct regarding their children's use of electronic and video games?

II.2. Objective:

This research aims to achieve several main objectives, which are as follows:

Addressing the phenomenon of the spread of electronic games within the family as a subject of social perception among children and adolescents based on the perspectives of parents.

Uncovering the structure of parental representations regarding their children's use of electronic and video games.

II.3. Sample:

The study sample was selected in line with the research objectives. It consists of 29 professors from the university, affiliated with the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. The sample includes professors working in the departments of Psychology, Educational Sciences, and Speech Therapy (Orthophony), with extensive teaching experience in various specializations:

Percentage	Number	Responses	Characteristics
31.03%	09	Men	**Gender**
68.96%	20	Women	
10.34%	03	Under 30 years old	**Age**
34.48%	10	31 to 40 years	
41.37%	12	41 to 50 years	
10.34%	03	51 to 60 years	
3.44%	01	Over 60 years	
20.68%	06	Less than 10 years	**Seniority**
51.72%	15	Between 11 and 20 years	
17.24%	05	Between 21 and 30 years	
10.34%	03	More than 31 years	
10.34%	03	Single	**Marital status**
89.65%	26	Married	
00	00	Widowed	
00	00	Divorced	
41.37%	12	Psychology	**Specialization**
34.48%	10	Educational Sciences	
24.13%	07	Speech Therapy	
100%	29	**Total**	

Table 02: Characteristics and Features of the University Professors

The university professor sample is distributed as follows: 31.03% men and 68.96% women, with 29 total participants. Responses were received from 9 male and 20 female professors. Regarding age groups, the majority fall within the middle-aged category (41.37%), while only 3.44% are above 65 years old. Concerning family characteristics, most of the sample are married (89.65%). In terms of academic departments, 41.37% of the surveyed professors belong to the Psychology department, 34.48% to Educational Sciences, and 24.13% to the Speech Therapy department.

II.4. Discussion of Results in Light of the Questions:

The structural approach (Abric, 1994) was adopted to understand the essential qualitative features of the social representations of the topic of electronic games from the perspective of university professors at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. The responses and expressions provided by the study sample were compiled, resulting in a theoretical total of 145 words (29 professors × 5 free associations each). This lexicon was simplified as much as possible through semantic grouping, classifying similar or synonymous words under a single term and excluding unwanted entries such as spelling errors or unreadable terms. For data analysis, the technique of hierarchical or rank-ordered evocation was applied according to P. Vergès' methodology (1992) using the EVOC program to identify the central core of the social representation. According to Vergès, three main indicators can be used to clarify the structure of the social representation:

- The frequency of associative responses among the sample,

- The average order of appearance of the words or expressions in the associative sequence,

- The average importance of the words as rated by the participants.

Most salient elicited expressions	Number of elicited and repeated words	Average importance ranks	Frequency × Average importance
Discovery	14	3.21	44.94
Skill development	13	3.15	40.95
Adventure	10	3.60	36.00
Visual and auditory violence	09	2.11	18.99
Conflict	09	3.22	28.98
Learning	08	2.12	16.96
Curiosity	08	3.25	26.00
Entertainment	07	2.42	16.94
Interaction	07	4.28	29.96
Euphoria	06	2.00	12.00
Dependency	06	3.16	18.96
Pleasure	06	2.33	13.98
Addiction	05	3.60	18.00
Waste of time	04	2.50	12.50
Imagination	04	2.25	09.00
Culture	04	3.00	12.00
Moral deviation	04	3.25	13.00
Joy	04	3.50	14.00
Shock	04	4.25	17.00
Exploration	03	4.33	12.99
Simulation	03	3.00	09.00
Self-image	03	2.66	07.98
Gratification	03	4.00	12.00
Sensory damage	03	3.33	09.99

Game	02	2.00	04.00
Growth	02	1.00	02.00
Innovation	02	2.00	04.00
Imaginary character	01	4.00	04.00
Enchanting visuals	01	5.00	05.00

Table 03: Distribution of Elicited and Cited Expressions

II.4.1 Analysis of Hierarchical Sequential Evocations by University Professors:

Frequency	Significance	
	High Strong	**Weak**
Strong Frequency (≥ 14)	Discovery (14), 3.21	Information Seeking (3), 4.33
	Skill Development (13), 3.15	Simulation (3), 3.00
	Adventure (10), 3.60	Self-image (3), 2.66
	Visual and Auditory Violence (09), 2.11	
	Conflict (09), 3.22	
Weak Frequency (≤ 14)	Addiction (5), 3.6	Learning (8), 2.12
	Wasting Time (4), 2.5	Curiosity (8), 3.25
	Imagination (4), 2.25	Entertainment (7), 2.42
	Culture (4), 3.00	Interaction (7), 4.28
		Euphoria (6), 2.00
		Pleasure (6), 2.33

Table 04: Hierarchical Analysis of Social Representations on the Topic of Electronic Games

III-Results and discussion

The number of terms used by the professors to refer to electronic games totaled 101 words or expressions, produced by 29 professors within a theoretical context. It is worth noting that similar or synonymous words were grouped under a single term, and repeated words used by the same individual were removed, reducing the number from over 200 words.

Through the results of the concept recall test related to this subject (which involved university professors who are parents of children aged between 6 and 15) we were able to identify a central core consisting of a group of essential factors. This composite central core includes concepts such as discovery (14), skills development (13) with an importance score of 3.21, adventure (10) with a score of 3.15, visual and auditory violence (9) with a score of 3.60, and conflict (9) with a score of 2.11. In addition to the central core, the peripheral elements close to it included other concepts such as addiction (5) with a score of 3.6, wasting time (4) with a score of 2.5, imagination (4) with a score of 2.25, culture (4) with a score of 3.00, exposure (3) with a score of 4.33, simulation (3) with a score of 3.00, and self-image (3) with a score of 2.66.

To clarify the objectives of this study, it can be stated that it aims to explore the social representations related to electronic games among university professors, as well as the impact of these representations on their interactions and relationships with their children who engage in these games. To achieve this objective, it was necessary to adopt a multi-method approach to data collection, which contributes to enriching and clarifying the results obtained. The research was divided into two phases: the first phase relied on a qualitative methodology aimed at analyzing the social representations

of university professors regarding electronic games. This process was carried out through content analysis of their discourse, which was derived from the words and expressions they used.

According to Moscovici (1992), social representations are a form of social cognitive organization that revolves around a central core composed of a very limited number of elements. These elements emerge within the framework of social interactions and provide shared symbols for communication and interaction. These representations also play a specific role in distinguishing social groups from one another.

We now turn to analyzing the central core of the representations related to electronic games, as well as the peripheral elements surrounding it, based on the relationship or free recall test associated with the first question of the questionnaire, characterized by spontaneity:"What do electronic games mean to you?"

According to Abric (2003), the spontaneous nature of this type of test (being less influenced by conscious control) helps to quickly and easily reach the elements that constitute the semantic world of the word or concept (the stimulus or object under study). The majority of university professors interviewed reflected a perception that sees electronic or video games as tools that help children and adolescents in discovery, development of psychomotor and educational skills, and provide opportunities to embark on adventures filled with diverse images, including visual and auditory violence. These audiovisual images often act as triggers for the emergence of various forms of conflict, whether at the level of the individual with oneself or with others, including family members or guardians.

The results revealed that the social representation of electronic games did not show any notable differences between the specialties of professors affiliated with different departments of the faculty, whether psychology, education sciences, or speech therapy (orthophony). Despite the differences in the academic backgrounds of these professors, there was consensus among them in identifying the components of the central core and the surrounding elements according to the recall test.

This can be interpreted as the professors having responded to the questionnaire or stimulus words from their roles as fathers and mothers, rather than based on their academic affiliations. Their social experience was clearly reflected in their representations, providing us with a transparent view of the true perceptions of "mothers and fathers" regarding their children. This interaction occurred without any attempt to impose a scientific or academic tone on their responses in the questionnaire.

Regarding electronic games and addiction, excessive use of electronic games can lead to addiction, which negatively impacts mental and physical health. This addiction may result in social isolation and reduced interaction with others, and it also affects academic performance through neglect of duties and school achievement.

Violence and aggression stem from the inclusion of violent scenes in some adventure games, which may influence players' behavior,particularly children and adolescents—encouraging aggressive behavioral patterns. One must not forget the health problems such as prolonged sitting in front of screens during gameplay, leading to physical issues like neck and back pain, eye strain, vision impairment, and unhealthy weight gain.

This is especially evident in the case of online networked games. Reported cases of addiction or excessive use are predominantly associated with this type of game, unlike traditional games that rely on consoles or personal computers. A prominent example of such addiction appears in certain first-person shooter (FPS) games, sometimes compared to "Doom"-like games. In this genre, the player is presented through a direct perspective (often an arm holding a weapon) navigating an immersive 3D environment with the goal of eliminating enemies and avoiding defeat. Sessions are typically very short, lasting only a few minutes, even when team-based cooperation is involved in achieving victory. Enthusiasts of FPS games often regard this genre as a distinct sporting discipline in its own right.

As with physical sports, achieving mastery in video games requires significant investment of time and effort. The intensity of competition plays a central role in reinforcing addiction, supported by a sense of control and mastery provided by these interactive experiences. In massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), another aspect poses a particular challenge for some individuals: emotional immersion in an alternate world.

At the theoretical level, video game enthusiasts can be conceptualized as belonging to two categories:
The first category includes individuals who escape into the virtual world as a means to alleviate their fears related to "real life", such as social phobia, excessive shyness, or irrational fear of competition.
The second category finds in this virtual world a space to channel tendencies that might be considered dangerous or socially unacceptable in the real world. For instance, some may satisfy their excessive ambitions for power without producing any negative societal consequences. Moreover, those who exhibit extreme enthusiasm in this virtual environment are less harmful than actual sexual offenders in the real world. It is evident that these behaviors tend to grow alongside the increasing number of internet users, following mechanisms resembling epidemic spread: as the number of

regular users increases, so does the proportion of those with psychological or social problems. Nonetheless, it must be noted that these phenomena are still in their early stages and do not yet constitute a widespread societal concern.

At present, the individuals most commonly affected by online gaming addiction are typically neurotic and introverted (C. Olievenstein), rather than mentally ill or antisocial. This tendency is partly linked to social factors influencing players' choices. The social and cultural context plays a decisive role alongside other factors. Among adolescents and youth, gaming addiction is often associated with family issues, such as unstable family dynamics, increased tensions, or even parental separation. In such cases, games become a means of escape from familial conflict, allowing individuals to avoid making difficult decisions. However, when attention to games becomes excessive, additional problems begin to surface, such as an inability to regulate playtime, reflecting a lack of authority or imbalance in the family environment (Marty F, 1998).

As for adult players, the context leading to addiction can be more surprising. Often, the tendency toward addiction appears during periods of personal crisis, such as divorce, job loss, or deep psychological distress. Initially, games are seen as a simple source of entertainment or psychological relief, but they eventually transform into a substitute for social interaction. In this case, their role is similar to that of certain addictive substances like alcohol, though addiction to video games is generally less destructive than addiction to alcohol or other drugs.

IV-Conclusion

Most members of the study population do not differ significantly from educational and psychological researchers regarding the presence of risks and negative consequences associated with engaging in electronic games and hobbies. At the same time, parents find it difficult to keep their children away from these games or to prohibit them, relying on arguments that span both the positive and negative aspects of these games, whether in terms of types or content.

Our field investigation has highlighted a wide semantic space of positive representations in which some view tangible benefits of electronic games, such as improving cognitive abilities, enhancing sensory and motor skills, developing decision-making abilities, and solving problems faced by children and adolescents. The results we obtained confirm the centrality of these positives, which appeared with a frequency of 14 and an average importance score of 3.21.

On the other hand, a number of university professors indicated that electronic games have negative effects on mental and physical health, such as addiction, sleep deprivation and insomnia, obesity due to excessive screen time, as well as psychological disorders related to violence, isolation, and depression. The field results also confirmed the presence of negative representations of these games, where the number of expressions indicating such effects reached 7; addiction was the most prominent among them, with a frequency of 5 and a medium importance score of 3.6, followed by wasting time with 4 occurrences and an importance score of 2.5.

Nevertheless, the apparent contradiction in opinions tends overall to highlight the positive connotations of electronic games (see Box 3 on the left). It can be said that playing electronic games, like other forms of play, brings feelings of joy and euphoria and stimulates a love of discovery. Despite the cognitive services offered by these games, they may pose risks to our children's health. Therefore, the role of parental supervision and educational accompaniment has become more necessary than ever.

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