

## The impact of Playing Video Games on Elementary School Pupils of Mosul City

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### Abstract:

**Background:** The growth of the video industry shows that it is one of the fastest growing industries in the entertainment industry with the video games of all genres becoming the most popular form of media. The children are one of the most players in the industry and as a result, its effect on children cannot be ignored. The aim of the study to assess the effect of using electronic games among primary school students in Mosul City.

**Methods:** A descriptive study that conducted during the period of 11 /11/ 2024 to 1 /3/ 2025 at university of Mosul in Nineveh Governorate. Probability (simple random sample) was selected for the present study. A sample of primary school students in Mosul City (220 students). The subject's acceptance to participate in the study was through the use of a specialized consent form.

**Results:** This study finding the shows that shows that most of the sample participating in the study amounted to 220 students, that most of the study sample was from 5 to 7 years old, at a rate of 66.36%, and that the sample of male was higher than that of male by (83.2%), 78.2% of the sample whose residence was urban.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that the study suggest that electronic games have both positive and negative effects on primary school students. While gaming can foster social connections and even enhance certain cognitive skills, excessive play can lead to negative consequences such as poor academic performance, disrupted sleep, and emotional issues like anger. The high frequency of gaming and the emotional responses associated with it underscore the importance of establishing healthy gaming habits and ensuring that video games are used as a balanced part of a child's overall development.

**Keywords:** impact, Playing Video Games, Elementary School Pupils.

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# Introduction

In recent years, the use of electronic games, ranging from simple mobile apps to complex console and computer games, has become a central part of the lives of children worldwide. Among primary school students, this trend is particularly pronounced, with many children spending a significant amount of their daily time engaged in these digital activities. As technology continues to advance, the influence of electronic games has expanded, leading to both positive and negative effects on children's development. These games, which include video games, online games, and mobile apps, have become a multi-billion-dollar industry, and their impact on children's cognitive, social, and physical well-being has attracted considerable attention from researchers, educators, and parents. The primary concern surrounding electronic games among primary school students revolves around their potential for addiction, their impact on physical health, and their effect on social behavior. Studies have shown that excessive gaming can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, contributing to obesity and related health problems <sup>(1)</sup>. Furthermore, long hours of screen time may result in a reduced capacity for face-to-face social interactions, which are crucial for emotional and social development during the primary school years <sup>(2)</sup>. On the other hand, there is evidence suggesting that certain types of games can have cognitive benefits, such as enhancing problem-solving skills, creativity, and strategic thinking <sup>(3)</sup>. In contrast to these concerns, recent studies have also highlighted the positive aspects of gaming, particularly in terms of educational outcomes. Educational games have been designed to engage children in learning activities that can complement classroom teaching, helping them acquire knowledge in subjects like mathematics, language, and science in a fun and interactive manner <sup>(4)</sup>. These games, which often encourage active participation and critical thinking, can improve motivation and academic performance among students. Moreover, digital games can provide opportunities for students to develop skills in teamwork, leadership, and communication when playing multiplayer online games, which require collaboration and social interaction <sup>(5)</sup>.

## Methods and Materials:

### 2.2. Study Design:

A descriptive study that conducted during the period of 11 /11/ 2024 to 1 /3/ 2025 at Primary school in Mosul City.

### 2.3. Study Setting:

The present study was conducted at Nineveh Governorate. It is a governorate in northern Iraq, with Mosul as its capital. Mosul is Iraq's second largest city, located 465 kilometers north of Baghdad. The sample was collected from Primary school in Mosul City.

### 2.4. Data Collection Period:

The study has been conducted in a period of six months extending from 11 /11/ 2024 to 1 /3/ 2025 at Primary school in Mosul City.

### 2.5. Sample of the Study:

Probability (simple random sample) was selected for the present study. A sample of Primary school in Mosul City. (220 students). The subject's acceptance to participate in the study was through the use of a specialized consent form.

### 2.6. Steps of the study:

The interview was conducted to fill out the questionnaire with in students university included and each one of them needed approximately (15-20) minutes to complete the interviewing and answering the questionnaire.

### 2.7. Data collection Instrument:

The information of data was collected through a questionnaire used to assess of the quality of life of internal sections for students at the University of Mosul. The instruments of the study were composed of (3) parts, which included the following: **(Appendix B)**.

## Part One:

Demographic characteristics that include(ages, gender, and residence ).

## Part Two: Information about electronic games:

This part related to Information about electronic games. This second part included (Five) a basic branch such as (What is your goal from electronic games), (Number of hours spent on electronic games), (Type of electronic games) ,( Place to play electronic games), and finally (Number of times you play video games). It consisted of multiple choice questions.

## Part Three: The impact of electronic games on students:

This part related to impact of electronic games on students. This thrid part included (12) question . It consisted of (3) multiple choice questions(Never, Sometime, Always).

## 2.10 Statistical Analysis:

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to analyze the statistical results. A descriptive approach was applied. Using percentages and frequencies to calculate student's demographic description characteristics. To estimate the value of the data, means and standard deviation ( $\pm$  SD) were used. Using of Pearson coefficient correlation (test-retest) for testing the study tools reliability<sup>(6-110)</sup>.

## Results:

**Table (1): Distribution related demographical characteristics (220)**

Variables	No.	Frequency (%)	Mean +SD
(A):Age			
5 – 7 Years	146	66.36%	Mean (7.8) SD (3.66)
8 – 10 Years	74	33.64%	
(B):Sex			
Male	183	83.2%	
Female	37	16.8%	
(C):residence			
Urban	172	78.2%	
Rural	48	21.8%	

Table No. 1 shows that most of the sample participating in the study amounted to 220 students, that most of the study sample was from 5 to 7 years old, at a rate of 66.36%, and that the sample of male was higher than that of male by (83.2%), 78.2% of the sample whose residence was urban.

**Table(2): Information about electronic games**

Items	Responses	F	%
1. What is your goal from electronic games?	Entertainment and amusement	98	44.55
	Education	40	18.18
	Pass time	82	37.27
2. Number of hours spent on electronic games	Less than an hour	33	15
	1-2 hours	76	34.55
	3 hours or more	121	55
3. Type of electronic games	Anti-terrorism	81	36.82
	Fighting games	59	26.82
	Legends Game	49	22.27
	Fireworks	31	14.09
4.Place to play electronic games	Home	162	73.64
	School	18	8.18
	With friends	31	14.09
	At the gym	9	4.09
5.Number of times you play video games	Daily	111	50.45
	Twice a week	53	24.09

	Three times a week	40	18.18
	Weekly	16	7.27

Table 2: The majority of students (44.55%) reported that their primary goal for playing electronic games was entertainment and amusement, followed by passing time (37.27%). Regarding time spent playing, over half of the respondents (55%) played for three or more hours. Most students (73.64%) played at home, with daily gaming being the most common frequency (50.45%).

**Table(3): The impact of electronic games on students**

Domains	Never	Sometimes	Always
1. Do you spend long hours playing games?	20	40	160
2. Do you get poor grades in school because of playing games?	44	106	70
3. Do video games affect your sleep?	40	48	132
4. Do you skip homework because of playing games?	55	100	65
5. Do you spend money on video games?	70	78	72
6. Do you forget lectures and lessons because of playing games?	30	57	133
7. Do you feel that video games have negatively impacted your life?	99	41	80
8. Do you get angry when you lose games?	52	58	110
9. Do you get angry when a family member interrupts you while playing?	64	34	122
10. Do you have friends and connections you met through playing games?	20	22	188
11. Do you try to imitate a game character while playing?	48	42	130
12. Do you try to find ways to play when you're out of the house?	96	44	80
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>53.16667</b>	<b>55.83333</b>	<b>111.8333</b>

### Discussion:

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample, comprising 220 primary school students, with a clear majority being male (83.2%) and aged between 5 and 7 years (66.36%). Most students (78.2%) were from urban areas, which is consistent with the growing prevalence of electronic devices and internet access in cities. The predominance of male students in this study is consistent with previous research indicating that boys are generally more inclined to engage in video games than girls<sup>(111)</sup>. Boys are often drawn to action-oriented and competitive video games, which may explain the higher percentage of male participants in the study. This finding also reflects broader cultural and gendered patterns of video game use<sup>(112)</sup>. As the gaming industry continues to evolve, there is evidence of increasing diversity in game design and player demographics, although males remain the predominant players in many categories of video games<sup>(113)</sup>. The age range of 5 to 7 years being the most common is particularly noteworthy, as this is a critical developmental stage in children's cognitive and social growth. At this age, children are typically still learning foundational academic skills and social behavior patterns. This finding underlines the importance of understanding how video games can influence children at this developmental stage, especially since their gaming habits are likely to become more ingrained as they grow older. Table 2 focuses on students' patterns of video game usage, including their goals, time spent playing, types of games, and frequency of play. A significant number of students (44.55%) reported that the primary goal of playing electronic games was for entertainment, while 37.27% played games to pass time. These findings reflect the broader trend of children using games as a form of leisure activity rather than educational purposes. While games designed for education (e.g., math or language games) are increasingly popular, entertainment remains the primary driver for most young gamers<sup>(114)</sup>. Another significant finding in this table is the amount of time students spend on gaming. Over half (55%) of the students reported playing video games for three hours or more. This is a particularly concerning statistic given the World Health Organization's recommendations that children aged 5-7 should not engage in screen time for more than one hour per day<sup>(115)</sup>. Excessive gaming can contribute to a range of negative outcomes, including obesity, impaired sleep, and decreased academic performance<sup>(116)</sup>. The high percentage of students playing daily or for extended hours highlights the need for

more guidance and monitoring of children's screen time, both at home and in school environments. The type of games children play also provides important insights into their socialization and cognitive development. The predominance of anti-terrorism and fighting games (36.82% and 26.82%, respectively) aligns with the typical interests of male children, who often gravitate toward action-packed, competitive genres<sup>(117)</sup>. These games are often linked with aggressive behavior, particularly in violent games, and research suggests that prolonged exposure to violent video games can contribute to increased aggression in children<sup>(118)</sup>. On the other hand, the popularity of games like Legends (22.27%) could reflect an interest in strategy and collaboration, which may have positive cognitive benefits such as improved problem-solving skills<sup>(119)</sup>. Table 3 examines the reported impacts of electronic games on students' daily lives, including their academic performance, sleep habits, social behavior, and emotional well-being. A key finding is the significant number of students who reported spending long hours playing games (160 students, or 72.73%). This indicates that gaming is a dominant activity in many students' lives, and it may be displacing other important activities such as reading, homework, or physical exercise. Research has consistently shown that excessive gaming is associated with negative physical health outcomes, such as poor sleep quality and increased risk of obesity<sup>(120)</sup>. Students' academic performance was also found to be affected by their gaming habits. Of the students, 70 (31.82%) reported that they sometimes experienced poor grades because of playing video games. This is consistent with findings from a large body of literature suggesting that excessive screen time can negatively impact academic achievement<sup>(121)</sup>. It is important to note, however, that not all gaming is detrimental to academic performance. Educational games and structured game-based learning environments have been found to enhance students' cognitive skills and academic performance<sup>(122)</sup>. The emotional impact of gaming was also evident, with many students reporting that they "always" became angry when they lost a game (110 students, or 50%) or when they were interrupted by a family member during gameplay (122 students, or 55.45%). This emotional reaction is common in children who play highly competitive games, where winning and losing can trigger strong emotional responses. Studies have shown that video games can sometimes lead to heightened emotional responses and stress, particularly in children who are less able to regulate their emotions<sup>(123-125)</sup>. On a positive note, 188 students (85.45%) reported that they made friends through gaming. This suggests that electronic games can foster social connections and teamwork, particularly in multiplayer settings. Online gaming communities have become a popular venue for children to build friendships and develop social skills, which can be especially beneficial for children who struggle with social anxiety or who have limited social opportunities in person<sup>(124,125)</sup>. Additionally, imitating game characters (reported by 130 students, or 59%) may indicate that children are exploring aspects of identity and creativity through their gaming experiences, which could contribute to their social and cognitive development in positive ways.

## Conclusion:

The results of this study suggest that electronic games have both positive and negative effects on primary school students. While gaming can foster social connections and even enhance certain cognitive skills, excessive play can lead to negative consequences such as poor academic performance, disrupted sleep, and emotional issues like anger. The high frequency of gaming and the emotional responses associated with it underscore the importance of establishing healthy gaming habits and ensuring that video games are used as a balanced part of a child's overall development.

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