

Summary

Internet Gaming Disorder in Children and Adolescents: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Today, the internet has become an indispensable part of life, serving various purposes such as accessing information, communication, and entertainment. According to the Global Internet Report 2024, 66.2% of the world's population has (Kemp, 2024). This prevalence has led to an increase in online gaming behavior, particularly among children and adolescents, making the concept of Internet gaming disorder a crucial research topic in clinical, psychological, and educational fields (Paulus et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2023). Internet gaming disorder, as defined in the DSM-5-TR and ICD-11, is characterized by loss of control over gaming, development of tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms (APA, 2022; WHO, 2019). Epidemiological data report an overall prevalence of Internet gaming disorder of 3.3%, with approximately 10% among adolescents (Kim et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2022). Internet gaming disorder is associated with problems such as depression, anxiety, aggression, academic failure, and loneliness (Brunborg et al., 2014; Coyne et al., 2020; Sarda et al., 2016). The increased digital addiction following the COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the importance of this issue (Putra et al., 2023). This study aims to identify gaps in the literature and future research directions by examining scientific trends, leading researchers, journals, and thematic orientations in the field of internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents through bibliometric analysis (Zheng et al., 2025).

Method

Research Design

In this study, bibliometric analysis was used to comprehensively evaluate academic publications on internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents. Bibliometric analysis examines scientific production in a specific field using statistical and mathematical approaches to reveal research trends, influential authors, institutions, and collaboration networks (Durieux & Gevenois, 2010). This approach can guide new research by systematically mapping the knowledge base in the literature and provides the opportunity to identify knowledge gaps (Donthu et al., 2021).

Data Sources and Literature Review

Within the scope of this study, studies published between 2014 and 2024 on internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents were retrieved from WOS on November 22, 2024. Our study used the keywords TS = ("internet game disorder" OR "internet gaming disorder") AND TS = ("child*" OR "adolescent*" OR "youth" OR "young"). Furthermore, no time restrictions were applied to the results obtained from the keywords we used in WOS, and articles and review articles published in English were selected. Exclusion criteria included books, book chapters, and letters to the editor. In this study, a total of 1382 articles, including article types and citations, were identified from the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) using our search terms. Using inclusion and exclusion criteria, the data were narrowed down to 990 articles for bibliometric analysis.

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Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using VOSviewer (v1.6.17) and the bibliometrix R package (v4.0.5) (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020). These software tools were used to visualize scientific networks and conceptual clusters the intellectual, social, and thematic structure of the research field.

Results

Basic Data Statistics

This study analyzed 990 articles published between 2014 and 2024 on internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents. The publications appeared in 239 different journals, with a total of 3,394 authors contributing to them. The annual growth rate was 22.28%, and the average number of citations per article was 32.17. The international collaboration rate was determined to be 32.63%.

Publication Output and Journals

Publications on internet gaming disorder showed a steady increase from 2014 onwards, while the downward trend in 2024 was attributed to the data collection period. The most productive journals were the *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, and the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. According to Bradford's Law analysis, six journals formed the core cluster.

Cited Articles and Authors

The most cited articles are studies that developed measurement tools based on DSM-5 diagnostic criteria (Petry et al., 2014; Pontes & Griffiths, 2015) and research examining the relationship between social media and psychopathology (Andreassen et al., 2016). The most prolific authors include Mark D. Griffiths, Marc N. Potenza, and H.M. Pontes.

Institutions and Countries

The most productive institutions are the Catholic University of Korea, Yale University, and Beijing Normal University. The countries with the most publications are China, the United States, and South Korea.

Keywords and Themes

The most frequently used keywords are "internet gaming disorder," "addiction," "adolescents," "depression," and "anxiety." Research conducted after 2015 has highlighted themes such as neuroimaging, impulsivity, and inhibitory control, while recent years have seen a focus on gender, mediation, and psychosocial variables.

Discussion

This study is the first comprehensive bibliometric analysis conducted to reveal scientific trends regarding internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents. The study examined 990 articles published between 2014 and 2024 development trends, leading authors, countries, institutions, and thematic orientations in this field of research.

Key Findings and Trends

The analysis results show that research on internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents has steadily increased since 2014 and gained significant momentum, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in online gaming during this period has directed researchers' attention to the relationship between the psychological well-being of children and adolescents and digital addictions. The high average number of citations per article indicates that the field is rapidly gaining academic visibility.

Academic Productivity and Journals

The most productive journals include the *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, and *Addictive Behaviors*. According to Bradford's Law, these journals form the core cluster and focus on addiction behaviors, psychiatric disorders, and the effects of digital technologies through interdisciplinary research. These journals are important publications that translate theoretical developments in the field into practical applications in clinical practice.

Highly Cited Studies and Scientific Contributions

The most highly cited articles have focused on the development of measurement tools in line with DSM-5 criteria (Petry et al., 2014; Pontes & Griffiths, 2015) and the relationship between social media and psychopathology (Andreassen et al., 2016). This indicates that methodological advances in the diagnostic validity and measurability of internet gaming disorder form the basis of the field.

Authors, Institutions, and International Collaboration

The field has been shaped by the work of pioneering researchers such as Mark D. Griffiths, Marc N. Potenza, and H.M. Pontes. At the institutional level, Korea Catholic University, Yale University, and Beijing Normal University are highly productive. The countries with the most publications are China, the United States, and South Korea, and the research policies in these countries appear to be state-supported.

Popular Topics and Future Trends

Keyword analysis has shown that in recent years, the relationship between internet gaming disorder and psychiatric variables such as depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and attention deficit has come to the fore. The increase in neuroimaging studies reflects the interest in the biological basis of the disorder. Overall, this study suggests that internet gaming disorder is a growing public health concern among children and adolescents, that research is expanding with a multidisciplinary approach, and that future efforts should focus on developing prevention and intervention strategies.