



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Leisure gamers

A course designed to help teenagers struggling with excessive video game usage

Þráinn Skagfjörð Héðinsson

Lokaverkefni til BA-prófs

Október 2023

DEILD HEILSUEFLINGAR, ÍPRÓTTA OG TÓMSTUNDA

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Lokaverkefni til B.A.prófs í Tímstunda- og félagsmálafræði

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Ritgerð þessi er 10 eininga lokaverkefni til B.A. prófs
í Tómsunda- og félagsmálafræði við deild heilsuefningar, íþróttar og
tómstunda
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Ritgerðina má ekki afrita nema með leyfi höfundar.

Abstract

This paper is written to help compose a course formula created to help teenagers who are experiencing issues as a result of excessive video game usage. This paper delves into what constitutes leisure and how it can benefit the individual in terms of their well-being and social life. Furthermore, leisure education is investigated, both in terms of its definition and what it seeks to provide for individuals. Informal, non-formal, and formal education are examined to explore what educational form best suits the course in question. Group work will also be a focus as the course is designed for a group of ten teenagers. Finally, this paper shall explore video games and what effects their use can have on the individual and those around them, specifically their family and friends.

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Preface

I wrote this paper because I myself have struggled with excessive video game use, which created a lot of distress for my mental health, but also in my relationship with my parents. Therefore, I got the idea of making a course that can help teenagers understand the outcomes of playing too much of video games and give them the platform to learn about other leisure activities and why leisure is important in the life of human beings.

I would like to thank my teachers, especially Árni Guðmundsson, who guided me through this assignment, and helped me calm my nerves when I felt overwhelmed by the project itself. I would also like to thank my co-students, especially Friðbjörg Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Guðjón Snær Magnússon, Jóhanna Gréta Hafsteinsdóttir, who proposed that we should use my idea in a group assignment for another course, which gave me inspiration, ideas and good references to use in this project. A thanks also goes out to my family and friends, who have supported me through this and pushed me to do my best when I was feeling hopeless and had difficulties focusing on the project.

I hope you will enjoy reading my paper and hopefully it can be beneficial for our society. Now all that is left to do is transform this course into our reality, to help those that are struggling with excessive video game usage.

Þetta lokaverkefni er samið af mér undirrituðum. Ég hef kynnt mér *Síðareglur Háskóla Íslands* (2003, 7. nóvember, <http://www.hi.is/is/skolinn/sidareglur>) og fylgt þeim samkvæmt bestu vitund. Ég vísa til alls efnis sem ég hef sótt til annarra eða fyrri eigin verka, hvort sem um er að ræða ábendingar, myndir, efni eða orðalag. Ég þakka öllum sem lagt hafa mér lið með einum eða öðrum hætti en ber sjálf(ur) ábyrgð á því sem missagt kann að vera. Þetta staðfesti ég með undirskrift minni.

Reykjavík, 08. September 2023

Þráinn Skagfjörð Héðinsson

1 Introduction

Technology is an indisputable force in our global society, constantly expanding and dictating the lives of human beings (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). Video games are a product of what has been called the 'Digital Revolution' or the 'Third Industrial Revolution.' Since achieving mainstream popularity in the 1970s and 80s, video games have been the subject of much debate, criticism, controversy, and contradiction. Some studies have shown video gaming to be associated with behavioural issues and negative well-being (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023), while others have demonstrated that video game use can lead to improved cognitive functions (Fabio et al., 2022). The question, as yet unanswered, bears repeating: are video games beneficial or detrimental for human well-being?

This paper is constructed around the idea of designing a course for teenagers struggling with excessive video game usage and structured to help them take agency in their leisure choice of video gaming, as well as teach them about the positive and negative aspects of video gaming, both for themselves and the people around them. Additionally, the course is designed to create speculations through discussion about how the individual can find other leisure opportunities to accommodate their video gaming as their leisure choice.

2 Leisure

2.1 What is leisure?

In order to analyse the benefits of leisure and leisure activities, a definition of the term must first be given. However, this has shown to be no simple task, as many leisure scholars have had difficulty finding consensus in defining exactly what leisure is and what it entails. The reason for this is that leisure is a construct that is rather abstract in its form with various perspectives to take into consideration (Sigurgeirsdóttir, 2010). For example, Leitner and Leitner (2004) defined leisure as the free time an individual experiences when they are not at school/work or doing other obligatory tasks, whilst Shiver (1981), another leisure scholar, defined leisure as simply all the free time a human experiences.

Icelandic leisure scholar Vanda Sigurgeirsdóttir (2010) wrote an article seeking to define the term 'leisure' and used five aspects of the concept to help clarify the term. The five aspects she described are leisure as time, activity, quality, attitude, and function (Sigurgeirsdóttir, 2010). However, none of these five approaches are on their own sufficient enough to define what leisure is and Sigurgeirsdóttir finds flaws within each, but by using these five approaches collectively, a definition of leisure becomes more accessible. With the help of the aforementioned approaches, Sigurgeirsdóttir defined leisure as the following: *"Leisure mainly takes place during free time but to qualify as leisure the action or behaviour must be seen as leisure by the participant, it must be his or her own choice, it must be pleasurable and a positive experience"* (Sigurgeirsdóttir, 2010, p. 1).

Leisure can be divided into two forms according to Leitner and Leitner (2012) which are the following:

Serious leisure: This form of leisure is explained as the kind where the individual goes all out with passion and commitment in their leisure activity and treats it as a sort of "career" in their own free time. This can happen when people find their jobs to be meaningless and therefore search for meaning through other means, such as leisure activities. Stebbins (1982, 1997) defined this term through six characteristics: perseverance, following a "career," personal effort, benefits to the individual, identification with the activity, and ethos of the activity (Leitner & Leitner, 2012).

Casual leisure: is, as its name suggests, of a more casual nature than serious leisure. Stebbins (1982, 1997) also found six characteristics to describe what casual leisure is: play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversations, and sensory

stimulation. What all casual leisure activities have in common is the sense of pleasure the individual derives from it.

2.2 Leisure education

Leisure education is a means to help people gather valuable information about leisure and how they can use it to maximise their well-being. Leisure education courses can be taught in various scenarios such as elementary school, university, and even in the workplace. Though it seems beneficial for human beings to learn such leisure skills, leisure education is still questioned by parts of our society (Leitner & Leitner, 2012).

Leisure education first began appearing in schools and universities in 1918 (Leitner & Leitner, 2012). Now, in the 21st century, leisure education has been advocated by a world conference of ministers responsible for youth to be included into school curriculums (Leitner & Leitner, 2012). Leitner and Leitner (2012) claimed that schools must implement leisure education into the curriculum for kids at an early age, to provide the following benefits:

- Experiencing leisure can help the individual to utilise the skills they are taught in schools.
- Incorporating leisure activities into the school curriculum can result in students having more energy and therefore help them concentrate better in classes.
- Leisure activities can provide the individual with intrinsic motivation and help the students to have more confidence in their skills.
- Leisure experiences can help students understand the world and our society better.
- Leisure education can help our society in the sense of teaching our future generations of the importance of leisure and how it can define their future.

Additionally, Leitner and Leitner (2012) promoted another perspective of why leisure education is important by calculating how much time is spent on various activities and obligations for an average human in the span of sixty years (from the age of eighteen to the age of seventy-eight).

Table 1 *Years Spent in Life Activities, Ages 18-78.*

Number of Years	Life Activities
18.08	Leisure, including retirement
17.80	Sleep (@7 hours/night)
8.33	Work (40 years @36 hours/week)
1.0	Formal education
7.12	Personal care (includes some eating)
5.34	Family and other obligations
1.53	Commuting
0.80	Miscellaneous
<hr/>	
60 Years (ages 18-78)	

Note. From *Leisure enhancement* (4th ed.) (p. 21), by M. J. Leitner and S. F. Leitner, 2012, Sagamore Publishing LLC.

This table shows that more of our time is spent on leisure than any other life activity, corroborating the notion that leisure education is important (Leitner & Leitner, 2012).

2.3 Benefits of leisure activities

Leisure activities have been proven to improve the quality of life for many persons, with the results of such activities for example leaving the individual feeling recharged and refreshed (Bum et al., 2022). It has been stated that the benefits of leisure activities can be psychological, social, and physiological in nature (Bum et al., 2022). Furthermore, leisure activities can be a tool to relinquish work-related stress and help the individual to create or improve their social network (Bum et al., 2022).

3 Educational forms that correlate with the course

What does it mean to learn? Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith (2005) use the phrase “*You are learning all the time*” to explore the idea of the individual trying to make sense of and learn about the world around them through their network of thoughts that resides within their own minds. However, it is when a person becomes aware of one’s thought that they start to understand and consciously try to make sense of that thought (Jeffs & Smith, 2005). For example, imagine a person walking the same path to work every day where they would encounter the same store each time. Then suddenly, one day, the store sign and everything within the store is no longer there. Here some people might start to speculate what had become of the store and what might be put in its place. John Dewey (1933) once stated “Thinking begins in what might be called a forked road situation that is ambiguous, that presents a dilemma that proposes alternatives.”

In learning, thinking is an important factor. There are two different ways of learning according to Alan Rogers (2003), those being ‘acquisition learning’ and ‘learning conscious.’ The former kind is when someone is given a task, and they are aware of said task but not the fact that learning is part of it, while the latter form of learning is when there is a task, and the person is aware of the task and the learning that is involved in it. In the case of informal learning, which shall be analysed in more detail later, the educator tries to create an environment that facilitates acquisition learning (Jeffs & Smith, 2005).

When the focus is on education, the educators seek to develop growth within their students. As mentioned before, thinking can often take place unconsciously, yet education happens in the conscious mind. This can be done through activities that are designed to stimulate certain thoughts and reactions. Often when educators teach, they also learn themselves through conscious debates or activities (Jeffs & Smith, 2005).

In the perspective of Jeffs and Smith, education must maintain certain values or there is a danger of it overlapping into the concept of indoctrination. They bring forth certain values that they deem fit for the term of education and is the following:

- Respect for persons.
- The promotion of well-being.

- Truth.
- Democracy.
- Fairness and equality (Jefferies & Smith, 2005).

3.1 Informal and non-formal teachings

Within mainstream educational discussions, three different forms of education have been widely accepted: informal education, non-formal education, and formal education. According to Jakob Frímann Þorsteinsson (2017), these three forms of education are however not sufficient enough to define the complicated concept and can cause confusion. Furthermore, the aforementioned terms have been found to be defined inconsistently by educational scholars whereas different proposals of the terms have been set (Þorsteinsson, 2017). With that being said, it is more the definitions of informal and non-formal education that have resisted consensus, whereas the definition of the term of formal education has been widely accepted. Because of the difficulty and confusion in properly defining informal and non-formal education, some researchers have avoided using these terms altogether (Þorsteinsson, 2017).

Stuart et al. (2015) defines each of the educational formats as the following:

Formal learning: This kind of learning takes place within elementary schools, high schools, and universities. There is a set curriculum and a teacher teaching students through said curriculum with a certain goal in mind. The narrative of the learning is focused on the teacher having full agency over what is taught.

Informal learning: Here there is no curriculum and therefore the learning itself is often unpredictable. Informal learning often has no set environment, in contrast to formal learning, and can therefore happen almost everywhere.

Non-formal learning: This type of learning works as a kind of middle way of the two aforementioned learning types. There is no specific school environment as there is in formal learning, however there is often a certain goal in which the facilitator strives to reach with his or her 'students'.

In the book *Evaluation Practice for Projects with Young People: A Guide to Creative Research*, Kaz Stuart, Lucy Maynard, and Caroline Rouncefield (2015) present a table to clarify the differences of the three learning types in the perspective of various aspects.

Table 2 *The key differences between formal, non-formal and informal learning.*

TableData

Table 1.1 The key differences between formal, non-formal and informal learning

	Formal Learning	Non-formal Learning	Informal Learning
Role of the teacher/ educator/facilitator	Teachers	Facilitators	No adult role
Role of the learner	Students	Young people	Self-directed learner
Type of planning	Set curriculum and lesson plans	Flexible session plans	No plans
Who has responsibility for planning	Teachers have responsibility for learning	Joint responsibility for learning	Learner directed
Type of learning	Passive, transmission	Active	Active
Setting	In school or formal setting	Outside of school or formal setting	No setting – can happen anywhere
Evidence of achievement	Attainment targets Qualifications	Outcome based	None

Note. From *Evaluation Practice for Projects with Young People: A Guide to Creative Research* (p. 5), by K. Stuart, L. Maynard, and C. Rouncefield, 2015, SAGE Publications Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473917811>

3.2 Group work

Johnson and Johnson (2013) defined a group as a collective of two or more people, either in a real life setting or connected virtually. The group consists of a narrative where those involved are aware of their involvement in the group and share a mutually determined goal and therefore are interdependent upon each other. Groups can gather in various ways which can be due to both internal and external conditions or needs. Group formations can be due to social situations or personal interests, and participation in groups often reveals individuals’ motivations and personalities. Most people belong to some kind of group, which can be defined as a collection of people that get together and are aware that they do so. People often spend a high amount of time in groups; thus, groups play a big part in the lives of human beings. Most people belong to many groups without realising it (Gladding, 2020).

According to Gladding (2020), there are many things to consider when setting up group work. The most important aspect of healthy group work is simply communication. Therefore, good and healthy cooperation within a group is important for the group to perform well. Working with various projects is a big part of group work. In these projects, there will often be proposed dilemmas and arguments. Therefore, it is not healthy if the cooperation and communication becomes negative which can result in unfinished projects. However, group work is not all about the result; it is more important that everyone is performing at their best and feel like they are a part of the team. Working as a team or as a whole is what makes collaboration beneficial. An example of an unhealthy group dynamic is when there are one or more individuals that seize control of the co-operation or communication which can result in others having their output reduced, which reduces the output and health of the group as a whole.

Gladding (2020) wrote that there are often individuals within group work who take a break, and this can be for many different reasons. The most important thing is to take care of the reticent ones, thus not ignoring them and their feelings. Sometimes, when starting group work with a new group, the individuals do not know each other. Thus, it is important to notice that those within the group are not forced to be friends or like each other. Rather, more effort should be made to ensure that everyone in the group respects each other. Group work involves leading a group to a set common goal, which is often accompanied by a leader within the group. In order to lead a group sensibly, it is beneficial to have a clear path that the group intends to use (Gladding, 2020). In the table below, various forms of group development are presented which indicate the different stages the group dynamics can go through.

Table 3 Stages/Transitions of Group Development according to Eight Group Experts.

Stages/Transitions of Group Development according to Eight Group Experts

Group experts	Stage/Transitions
Tuckman & Jenson	1) Forming 2) Storming 3) Norming 4) Performing 5) Adjourning
Kormanski & Mozenter	1) Awareness 2) Conflict 3) Cooperation 4) Productivity 5) Separation
Trotzer	1) Security 2) Acceptance 3) Responsibility 4) Work 5) Closing
Ward	1) Power 2) Cohesiveness 3) Working 4) Termination
Gazda	1) Exploration 2) Transition 3) Action 4) Termination
Gladding	1) Formation 2) Transition 3) Performing 4) Closing
Yalom	1) Orientation 2) Conflict 3) Cohesiveness
Corey	1) Formation 2) Orientation 3) Transition 4) Working 5) Consolidation 6) Evaluation

Note. From *Groups: A Counseling Specialty* (8th ed.) (p. 82), by S. T. Gladding, 2020, Pearson.

4 Video gaming

4.1 Origins

The early computer systems of the 1940s and 1950s were perceived by the public as confusing given most people had a limited understanding of what computers were and what kind of mathematical process they could produce (Smithsonian Institution, n.d.).

Furthermore, computers were physically enormous and very expensive, and were primarily used by universities or companies. However, even back then, programmers found ways to play games on these technical instruments, not only to entertain themselves, but also to further their own understanding of computer programming. In October 1958, physicist William Higinbotham created the first video game, *Tennis for Two*. However, it would be almost another thirty years before video games found their place in the mainstream consciousness with the release of the Nintendo Entertainment System (or NES) in 1985 (Smithsonian Institution, n.d.).

4.2 Effects of video gaming

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, many people were advised to physically isolate themselves in the interest of public health. As a result, people were forced to engage in considerably more communication over the internet and thus via video games as well (Kaplan et al., 2022). This pandemic acted as a catalyst in severely restricting many people's abilities in participating in leisure activities. Hence, a lot of individuals turned to using their phones and computers online as their means for communication with other people. Additionally, electronic devices such as gaming consoles, phones, computers, and TVs became the primary formats for entertainment, and many parents did not have the capability to restrict or control their children's usage of such devices. This resulted in children and teenagers being online for more hours each day (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023).

Surveys have indicated that people's choice of video games is to some extent related to their personality traits and social skills (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). Those who are the most open to new experiences are most fond of adventure games; they also demonstrate success

in these games, which subsequently increases their self-efficacy and thus they tend to stay in their selected games for a longer period of time. Others who prefer games based on teamwork and a high skill level are the ones who have high conscientiousness, and playing these types of games gives them feelings of accomplishment and a sense of self-reliance. Those who demonstrate low self-esteem, openness, and/or modesty prefer games of the violent nature and show aggressiveness and even signs of psychopathic traits in their gaming habits (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023).

Video games are widely used as a way to avoid loneliness, as their user can connect with anyone in an instant without having to get up and go out into the real world. However, research suggests that the lower the level of self-control and autonomy when spending an excessive amount of time playing video games, the greater the risk of enhancing certain negative aspects of the individual (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). Additionally, it ought to be mentioned that children and teenagers who find it difficult to manage the time they spend on video games have a higher risk of developing a gambling addiction (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). Moreover, personality traits such as aggression and narcissism show strong correlations with video game addiction (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). Excessive video game usage has also been connected to undesirable behaviours such as stress, mood swings, aggressive behaviour, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. The frequency of playing video games also plays a role in other behaviours such as acting rude, loneliness, and low self-esteem. In an educational setting, those who play video games excessively do worse in their studies, and this can be supported by the fact that video games have an effect on academic performance (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023).

In the United States of America, a study was conducted that examined video game usage and its effects on adolescents. This study produced reports that concluded that boys in particular exhibited negative behaviours related to video game playing, and those who exhibited these behaviours were significantly more likely to play the video games over a PC rather than a console or phone (Kaplan et al., 2022). Additionally, the study revealed that the aforementioned adolescents exhibiting negative behaviours had significantly more video game usage throughout the week than that of their peers. Thus, the researchers speculated and showed concerns about what other leisure activities and obligatory tasks were sacrificed in order to maintain this amount of video game usage (Kaplan et al., 2022). The results also

indicated that the gamers did not watch any less television as a result of their video game usage, but rather cut down on their time spent doing homework. Hence, their academic performance was affected together with the results of the SAT test in US schools.

Furthermore, the study concluded that there was a gender variable in excessive video game usage that showed that the girls had a higher percentage when it came to depression and negative subjective well-being, with a ratio of 65% of girls versus 42% of boys (Kaplan et al., 2022).

According to the results of this study, those who showed excessive gaming usage also reported that they felt more sleepiness throughout the day than their peers who did not play as much video games. The same group of video gamers also reported more snoring, and studies have shown that irregular breathing during sleep can lead to health changes such as poor cognitive function and hyperactivity in children (Kaplan et al., 2022). In addition, there are other aspects of health that are affected by excessive video game usage such as dopamine production, long-term vision and dizziness from watching screens, headaches, stress on bones and muscles from using the body incorrectly, and problems such as obesity since the individual is less prone to be physical active (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023).

For many people, video games can act as a way to reduce anxiety and avoid negative emotions (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023). This effect on the video game player often results in them turning on their video games when they experience such negative emotions; they will therefore prioritise video games over other activities that can help them deal with such emotions (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023).

As mentioned, video games can have negative effects on its users; however, researchers have speculated and examined if there are also positive effects to be had. The latest meta-analysis of cognitive improvement for video gamers has indicated that for healthy adults, video game training has resulted in some degree of cognitive improvement, and that video gamers score higher performing in various cognitive tasks than those who do not play video games (Fabio et al., 2022). Furthermore, a study revealed that the commercial use of video gaming as entertainment is positively associated with skills such as problem solving and improved attention (Choi et al., 2020).

A study was conducted in Italy in 2022 to examine the short term and long term effects of video gaming on the cognitive mind. The results indicated that for the short term,

video gaming enhanced executive functions, problem solving, and attention within the individual. As for the long term, video gamers outperformed non-video gamers in all aspects of their cognitive tests (Fabio et al., 2022).

4.3 The effect on video gaming on family and friends

Teen computer use can not only be harmful for the teenager themselves, but it can also have a profound effect on their family members and friends. Teenagers who immerse themselves deeper into the world of video games may begin to exhibit certain addictive behaviours (Young, 2009). For them, the video game has become more important than anything else, whilst they don't think that they themselves play a lot of video games. In reality, they lose interest in other hobbies in order to be able to play more video games, and there is less contact with family and friends as they use video games as a means of escape from the real world (Young, 2009). As mentioned before, excessive video game use has also been shown to increase the risk of depression and anxiety, negative effects on school attendance, physical activity, and sleep (Schneider et al., 2017).

The daily life of a family can drastically change when a teenager stops participating in daily activities with their family in order to play more video games (Young, 2009). They often have the perspective that their family and friends are taking away quality time that the teenager could have spent playing video games. The first remedy that comes to parents' minds is to restrict the use of video games by the teenager, which often only results in the teenager becoming angry, irritable, and potentially even violent. The longer the teenager is away from the game, he or she can feel a sense of loss, which later leads to depression and anxiety (Young, 2009).

A problem for parents is that they are often not aware of their teen's behaviour and what causes it, they don't know that their teen's video game use is out of control, and they simply don't know what to do (Schneider et al., 2017). There is some evidence that indicates that parents are actually pushing their children into this kind of behaviour, such as communication difficulties between parents and children, restrictions, the nature of parents' marriage, and the economic status of the family (Schneider et al., 2017). It is important to

know the symptoms that can occur when a teenager plays too many video games and when their usage of said electronics becomes an addiction. Young (2009) provided the following examples:

- The teenager is busy playing, neglecting his friends and school as the game takes priority.
- Lies about or hides his video game usage, lies to parents about what he is doing on the computer, spends day and night playing video games.
- Losing interest in other things; the video game has become so important that everything else seems boring.
- Social withdrawal. Some people experience a personal change the more they play; if a person has friends, they are usually other players.
- Defensiveness and anger. A person becomes defensive if someone mentions video game addiction or excessive usage and becomes angry when they are denied playing video games.
- Psychological withdrawal. Those who cannot play their video game feel lost and like they have to play since that's all they can think about.
- Using video games as an escape and/or a safe place to deal with their problems; they feel harmony and acceptance within the game rather than in the real world.

Teens who live with a single parent or step family are more likely to have excessive video game usage rather than a teen who lives with both parents (Schneider et al., 2017). The reason for this is that the situation at home can be problematic, and the teenager is using video games to escape from that situation. Furthermore, a teenager with a single parent tends to experience loneliness as the single parent struggles to take care of the teenager socially due to their work (Schneider et al., 2017). It is important for parents to learn specific interventions and techniques to help and counter this addictive behaviour in their teen.

Young (2009) offers the following examples:

- There needs to be a clear time limit for video game use.
- The teenager must rest tired muscles and eyes; it is good to take small breaks (approx. every 20 min) to prevent too much stimulus and strain on their vision.

- Find a new positive source of energy that gives the teen similar levels of energy when they play video games.
- Establish whether there is a connection with the school. How is the teenager doing at school? If things aren't going as expected, it can be a cause of heavy video game use.
- Family therapy: it is important that the whole family takes part in helping the teenager exhibiting addictive behaviour.

Communication between the parents and the teenager is extremely important in helping with this kind of behaviour (Young, 2009). If there are problems in the home or communication difficulties between parent and child, the teenager may turn to the world of video games, where they can talk online about the problems that occur at home (Young, 2009). Parents must work together with the adolescent, as well as show mutual respect to overcome this life chapter together (Schneider et al., 2017).

However, video game use does not always relate to having a negative effect on the individual, as studies have shown that normal levels of video game use have benefits such as a positive effect on a person's relationship with their family and peers, and promoting rational behaviour (Schneider et al., 2017).

5 Discussion and conclusion

The idea to make this course came to me since I myself struggled with excessive use of video games in my teens. Back then, I wish I had had the opportunity to learn to balance my use of video games, and access to some kind of platform where I could attain knowledge about the importance of leisure and therefore having the tools to improve my leisure choices in a more variable way. In my personal opinion, these leisure educational tools would definitely have improved my quality of life and overall well-being. That is why I am passionate about creating a platform for teens, who are now suffering from the same issues I did at their age, where they can learn about these issues and how excessive video game usage can be a detrimental factor to their life and well-being. However, this course is not created to belittle or derogate their video game usage, but rather to help them understand when it can cause issues in their life, and to give them the education they need to balance their video game usage and find other activities to supplement their leisure.

When we analyse excessive video game usage from the perspective of leisure, we can determine that it can be categorised as serious leisure. People with video gaming as a serious leisure go all in on video gaming in terms of time spent on video gaming (Kaplan et al., 2022), as well as the financial aspect. They see video gaming as something of a career, which is how serial leisure is defined (Leitner & Leitner, 2012).

Another aspect of the course is to provide teens a safe place where they can express themselves freely without being judged; open discussions about selected topics will therefore be a reemerging activity throughout the course.

Additionally, I hope that through these discussions and other activities, the teens will form social relationships with their peers in the course. As mentioned before, loneliness is related to excessive video gaming (Lérida-Ayala et al., 2023) and therefore this course will be designed to encourage the kids to create social bonds.

As mentioned, leisure activities are proven to be able to influence people's well-being and can help negate stress and anti-social behaviour. By participating in a leisure activity, one can detach from work-related stress and find new social relationships (Bum et al., 2022). Therefore, a course like this can help the teens and give them the tools to fight these issues.

For our future generations, I believe that it is necessary to address the issues presented by excessive video gaming usage with understanding and education rather than demoralising the concept through mainstream media. As this paper has indicated, video gaming in itself is not necessarily detrimental to our well-being; it all depends on how it is used and in what amount.

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