



Peer Influence and PUBG Play: A Study of Pakistani Gamers

Zaheer Khan

PhD Scholar,
AIOU, Islamabad.

zaheerjadoon2013@gmail.com

Babar Hussain Shah

Assistant Professor,
AIOU, Islamabad.
babar.hussain@aiou.edu.pk

Saqib Riaz

Chairman/Professor
AIOU, Islamabad.
saqib_riaz@aiou.edu.pk

Abstract

The online game Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) has gained popularity all around the world, including in Pakistan. The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between PUBG and peer influence. The social influence theory serves as the study's theoretical foundation. The study's demographic, Pakistani gamers, was selected using the snowball sampling technique. The study's findings revealed a strong link between PUBG and peer influence. According to the study's findings, peer influence is a major factor in Pakistani gamers' preference for PUBG. The study suggests more investigation into the causes of Pakistani gamers' significant reliance on their peers for gaming advice.

Keywords: *Peer Influence; PUBG Play; Pakistani Gamers; Social Influence Theory*

Introduction

Internet gaming has gained popularity all around the world, including in Pakistan. Player Unknown's Battlegrounds is one of Pakistan's most played online games (PUBG). Parents and policymakers are concerned about the potential harm that the popularity of PUBG may have on children's mental and physical health. Consequently, it is crucial to look at the elements influencing PUBG's acceptance among gamers in Pakistan. One aspect that may have a significant impact on how Pakistani players choose their games is peer pressure (Li, Chen, & Chen, 2021; Malik & Fatima, 2020).



Basically, video games have developed into a significant source of entertainment for society; players work together in teams and separately to complete missions. The majority of online video games are played on social media sites like Facebook, which encourages participation in and successes in online gaming. Typically, one receives a gaming invitation from a buddy. Players can make requests for their friends to join them in a game. Requests are communications sent by a player to one or more friends that always contain a call to action for the game. The beneficiaries can be either new or existing players.

An individual becomes inspired to play the game when he observes that several of his buddies are already engaging in this enjoyable activity. Almost 70% of video gamers play with a friend, competing against or working as a team, according to a research invitation from social circles ("Social development as a benefit of playing video games," 2021). The social circle and growth may be enhanced by playing video games in groups with other alliances while acting responsibly.

The players engage in social interaction with others in their immediate surroundings or form teams with players from around the globe. Hence, the young players who participated in these kinds of multiplayer games formed close relationships with other players they met online. Playing video games is fun to make fun of and connect with others over, and this kind of activity can also be utilized as a conversation starter and a powerful tool for social skill development. Online video games allow players to form teams and alliances, which can foster social skills like collaboration and compassion. Most online video games, including PUBG, encourage player interaction, which enables people to collaborate with others for better outcomes. But as the participants get more bonded over time, they become more difficult to stop for good.

The process by which people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are influenced by their peers is known as peer influence. It is a widespread societal phenomenon that has an impact on people of all ages and from many cultural backgrounds. It has been demonstrated that peer influence has a major impact on a variety of areas of human behaviour, such as risk-taking, substance misuse, and decision-making. Peer pressure in the context of online gaming could influence young people's preference for particular games (Hussain, Griffiths, & Baguley, 2012).

Video game players' interactions with others while playing have an impact on their relationships in real life. Both prosocial and antisocial effects may result from this type of influence, but in the majority of cases, the primary concern stated by detractors is that society's morale has generally degraded (Kol., 2022). The media has reported on a few social cases involving PUBG gaming and social interaction.



Dua Zahra, a 14-year-old girl, was reported missing from Karachi in April 2022. Suddenly, there was a heated debate on social media and in the news media to support the recovery of this young child. Police located her in the Pakpattan neighbourhood of the Punjab District, where Zahra acknowledged that she had married Ahmed of her own free will and had no desire to go back to her parents' house (Ansari, 2022). Zahra used PUBG extensively, spending more than eight hours a day playing the game, and she met Ahmed when she was playing the game, according to the case's further investigation (Ansari, 2022). She may have sparked a new discussion regarding the marriage age limit because, according to her parents, she is only fourteen years old, but the critics also emphasized the importance of parental supervision.

The players' contact was not limited to this one instance; several others have been documented so far. A distressing incident involving a PUBG friend who lured a woman to Lahore with false promises of marriage and employment was revealed. According to the police complaint, she met Haris while playing PUBG, who persuaded her to fly from Karachi to Lahore and then allegedly took advantage of her by having her stay with him for three days (Shahzad, 2021).

In another occurrence, a boy and a girl were both detained as they tried to flee their house. They admitted to falling in love while playing PUBG and wanting to get married when they were taken into police custody, but the father of the girl has filed a lawsuit against the guy alleging that he is going to kidnap his daughter (Shah, 2021). The research mentioned above demonstrate that playing PUBG may have begun with a friend's request, and that once a person begins to play, they come into touch with other players. The practice of players working together to overcome their adversaries is another popular trend in the game. A closer bond between gamers and their real-life friends or new friends they meet while playing the game may result from communication while playing.

Rationale for the Study

Although there has been research on the effects of online gaming on young people, there has been little investigation into how peer pressure affects Pakistani players' gaming preferences. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look into how PUBG and peer influence interact among gamers in Pakistan (Gao, Li, & Zhang, 2020; Nawaz & Ilyas, 2021).

Theoretical Background:

The social influence theory, which contends that individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are impacted by the people around them, serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. Three different social influences—conformity, compliance, and obedience—are identified by this theory. The tendency to modify



one's attitudes and behaviours to match those of the group is known as conformity. Obeying authority figures' directives is referred to as obedience, whereas complying with others' requests is referred to as compliance (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Kelman, 1958).

Objective of the Study:

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between peer influence and PUBG among Pakistani gamers.

Research Question:

The research question for this study is as follows:

1-Is there a significant relationship between peer influence and PUBG among Pakistani gamers?

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis for this study is as follows:

Peer influence has a significant relationship with PUBG among Pakistani gamers (Błachnio, Przepiórka, & Pantic, 2019; Hadi & Al Dhanhani, 2020).

Materials and Method:

Gamers who play PUBG from Pakistan make up the study's demographic. A snowball sampling technique was utilized in the study to choose participants. Data from the participants were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire for the study. The survey asked questions about peer influence, gaming habits, and demographic data. Using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, the participant data were examined (Nawaz & Ilyas, 2021; Wang et al., 2021).



Results:

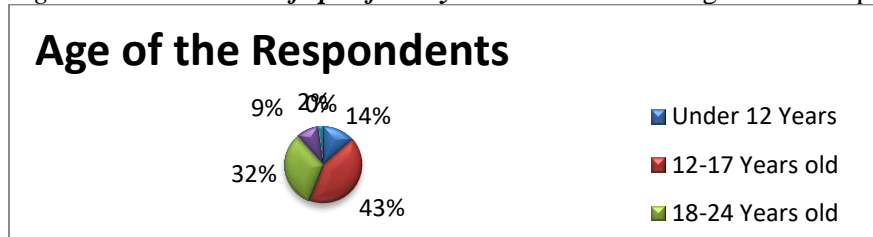
The first item on the socio-demographic questionnaire was used to gather information on the respondents' gender distribution. Males were coded as 1, females as 2, transgender people as 3, and prefer not to say as 4.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document..1: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	804	80.4
Female	128	12.8
Prefer not to say	68	6.8
Total	1000	100

Table 4.2 displays the gender-specific traits in terms of frequency and percentage. 804 men and 128 women made up the sample, whereas 68 players would rather not disclose their gender. Male respondents outnumbered female respondents in the category of gender by an 80.4% to 12.8% ratio. 6.8% of all respondents said they would rather not reveal their gender.

Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..1: Age of the Respondents



The majority of PUBG players who responded are between the ages of 12 and 17 (43%), while the next largest age group is between 18 and 24 (32%). And in the third category, 14% of the population, or responders, were under the age of 12 years old. The bulk of PUBG players who took part in this study are between the ages of 12 and 17; this age range accounts for about 43% of the responses.



Table Error! No text of specified style in document..2: Descriptive Statistics of Peer Influence Item Wise

Descriptive Statistics of Peer Influence					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
My game playing started with friend's invitation	1000	1	5	3.50	1.077
I prefer to play PUBG with the real-life friends	1000	1	5	3.58	1.097
I make friends easily while playing the PUBG	1000	1	5	3.62	1.096
My online friends in the game become offline friends too	1000	1	5	3.66	1.077
I think leaving the PUBG means losing communication with offline/online friendship	1000	1	5	3.75	1.031
Valid N (listwise)	1000				

This table provides descriptive statistics for five items related to peer influence in the context of playing the game PUBG. The sample size is 1000, and the descriptive statistics include the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation for each item.

The first item "My game playing started with friend's invitation" has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, with a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 1.077. This item measures the extent to which the respondents' game playing started with a friend's invitation.

The second item "I prefer to play PUBG with real-life friends" has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, with a mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 1.097. This item measures the preference of the respondents to play PUBG with their real-life friends.

The third item "I make friends easily while playing PUBG" has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, with a mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of



1.096. This item measures the ease with which the respondents make friends while playing PUBG.

The fourth item "My online friends in the game become offline friends too" has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.077. This item measures the extent to which the respondents' online friends in the game become their offline friends as well.

The fifth item "I think leaving the PUBG means losing communication with offline/online friendship" has a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5, with a mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.031. This item measures the extent to which the respondents think that leaving PUBG would mean losing communication with their offline and online friends.

The "Valid N (listwise)" is the number of valid cases for all items, which is 1000 in this case.

Table 1.3: Test of the Correlation Peer Influence and Playing PUBG Game

Correlations		Peer Influence	PUBG Play
Peer Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1000	1000
PUBG Play	Pearson Correlation	.267**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1000	1000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This table provides Pearson correlation coefficients between two variables: Peer Influence and PUBG Play. The sample size is 1000, and the correlations are measured at the 0.01 level of significance (two-tailed).

The first row and column show the variable names for Peer Influence and PUBG Play. The Pearson correlation coefficient between Peer Influence and itself is 1.00, as expected since this represents the correlation of the variable with itself.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Peer Influence and PUBG Play is 0.267, with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between the two variables at the 0.01 level of significance (two-tailed). In other words, there is a moderate positive association between Peer Influence and PUBG Play. The direction of the correlation suggests that as Peer Influence increases, PUBG Play also tends to increase.



Overall, this table shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between Peer Influence and PUBG Play in the sample of 1000 respondents.

Discussion: According to the conclusions of the study, a significant correlation exists between peer pressure and the addiction to PUBG that is experienced by Pakistani gamers. This result is in line with those found in other research that looked at the influence of peers on addiction to online gaming (Gao et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). Peer pressure was found to be a significant factor in the development of addictive behaviours among Chinese college students who participated in online gaming, according to research conducted by Li et al. (2021).

According to conceptual frameworks such as the compliance, identification, and internalization model (Kelman, 1958) and the social influence theory, the influence of one's peers could be a contributing factor in the development of an addiction to online gaming (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). According to these theoretical frameworks, in order for individuals to be liked and accepted by their contemporaries, they may mimic the norms and behaviours of their respective groups. This could imply that people engage in addictive behaviours in the context of online gaming, such as playing the game excessively or putting off other commitments, in order to blend in with their gaming group. Some examples of these behaviours include playing the game too much or putting off other commitments.

Findings: The findings of this research have important implications for the treatment of PUBG addiction among players in Pakistan. It's possible that therapies that work to mitigate the negative impacts of peer pressure on gaming behaviour have contributed to a decrease in the prevalence of PUBG addiction. Gamers, for example, could benefit from education on the dangers of excessive gaming and support of good gaming practices as a means of combating the pressure from peers to engage in addictive behaviours such as drug or alcohol abuse.

Limitations: It is also essential to bring attention to the fact that the recently conducted research had a number of limitations. The sample included of gamers from Pakistan and was selected using a snowball sampling method. These factors suggest that the results cannot be generalized. The results of future study might benefit from being able to be generalized better if they make use of larger populations, a wider variety of people, and other sampling methods. In addition, longitudinal studies might be conducted to investigate how the influence of peers affects PUBG addiction over the course of time.



Conclusion: In conclusion, this research makes a significant contribution to the expanding body of evidence regarding the role that peers play in the development of an addiction to online gaming. The findings highlight the need for interventions that are aimed to minimize the adverse impact that peer influence has on gaming behaviour and imply that additional study is required to fully understand the mechanisms that underlie the connection between peer influence and PUBG addiction.



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