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Hyerin Kwon

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Gaming is bad for society?: Online gaming, social skills, and civic and political perceptions among adolescents

Hyerin Kwon
Communication & Journalism
University of New Mexico

The goal of this research is to establish the relationship between online game use and interpersonal skills and political awareness among adolescents.

Previous studies have found that the political awareness is often shaped and transformed by media consumption. As online gaming is one of the most appealing media to young people, it is expected that online game has a significant impact on their political awareness. However, few studies have questioned the relationship between online game use and political awareness.

According to the uses and gratification perspective, some users have motivations to interact with other players, which can lead to interpersonal relationships. This study expects that online game use for relationship building will be positively related to interpersonal skills. Also, researchers have found that massively multi-player online games are so competitive that the online game can lead to players' aggressive attitude in life communication, and thereby genre/type of games will be related to interpersonal skills. In addition, social capital often accompanies those with strong interpersonal skills, which can provide more opportunities to exchange ideas and engage in reflexive conversations about public affairs and political behaviors. Therefore, this study expects high interpersonal skills will be positively related to political awareness.

The total number of respondents was 900. This study conducted hierarchical regression analyses to establish the relationships between motivation of online game, the types of online games, interpersonal skills and political awareness. The results suggest that online game players with a motive for relationship building are more likely to have high interpersonal skills. In addition, individuals who play competitive games (e.g. role playing, shooting, and etc) are less likely to have high interpersonal skills, compared to non-competitive game players (e.g. puzzle, board, and etc). Also, adolescents with high interpersonal skills are more likely to have high awareness of political behaviors. Thus, the findings of the study support the hypotheses.