

The stimulus material below is based on a research article.

Adolescents spend an increasing amount of time on the internet. For some adolescents, playing online games is particularly attractive and research shows that it may be one of the most addictive activities on the internet. Excessive use of online games may have a negative impact on aspects of psychological health, academic work and interpersonal relationships.

The aim of this study was to investigate psychological motivation to participate in online games, in order to produce a more detailed picture of possible factors influencing online gaming addiction. Five adolescents found in an internet café in a large city were asked if they were willing to participate in the qualitative research. They gave the names of five other participants who also agreed to take part. All participants were between the ages of 14 and 16. They said they spent approximately 48 hours playing online games per week and they had an average of three years' experience of online gaming. The researchers obtained informed consent from all participants.

Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews and each interview was recorded. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed using inductive content analysis.

The content analysis showed that participant motivation could be categorized into four major or higher-order themes:

- excitement and entertainment (for example, playing for fun, arousal when participants are about to win or lose)
- emotional coping (for example, trying to escape loneliness and boredom)
- escaping from reality (for example, homework and chores)
- interpersonal and social needs (for example, making friendships, playing with other adolescents instead of playing alone).

Most of the participants said that their lives would be really boring if they could not play online games but two of them expressed some concern that they spent so much time online. The participants did not see themselves as “addicted” to online gaming although most of them said that they could not resist the temptation to play games and that this had become the main focus of their life.

The researchers argued that the explanations that these adolescents reported for participation in online gaming were probably biased, since addiction is a sensitive topic. The researchers concluded that online gaming had the potential to be addictive. This was particularly the case when it was used to escape from reality and to cope with emotional problems.

[Source: Adapted from: summary of findings in Wan, C-S. and Chiou, W.-B. (2006). “Why Are Adolescents Addicted to Online Gaming? An Interview Study in Taiwan”. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, volume 9, number 6, pp. 762–766.]

*Answer **all** of the following three questions, referring to the stimulus material in your answers. Marks will be awarded for demonstration of knowledge and understanding of **qualitative** research methodology.*

1. Explain **two** ethical considerations relevant to this study. [10 marks]
2. Discuss the use of semi-structured interviews in this study. [10 marks]
3. Describe the use of inductive content analysis (thematic analysis) in this study. [10 marks]