

Media Literacy in the Gaming World: Empowering Youth in the Digital Age

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Abstract. In the digital age, games have become an indispensable media form in young people's lives. This article aims to provide an in-depth look at media literacy in the gaming world in order to enable adolescents to participate more fully in the media environment in the digital age. By clearly defining media literacy, we analyze the nature of games as a special medium, and explore the benefits of media literacy for teenagers and the challenges faced by the digital age. This article first introduces the concept of media literacy, then analyzes the unique characteristics of games as a medium, and then explores the positive impact of media literacy on young people's mental development and social skills. It also examines the impact of mobile game convenience and game mode on time. Management challenges. The study finds the urgency of developing media literacy in the digital age, with particular emphasis on the need to give adolescents more power and control. Through this strategy, young people can be stimulated to think creatively, develop their ability to think independently, and better understand and respond to the impact of digital entertainment. This study provides insights for future media literacy research, highlighting that giving adolescents more power and control is a necessary way to promote their overall development in the digital age.

Keywords: game world; media literacy; teenagers.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background introduction

With the rapid development of the digital age, the role of media in our daily lives has become increasingly significant. Among these, gaming, as an emerging form of media, has attracted substantial participation from adolescents. From social media to online multiplayer games, the interactive nature and engagement of adolescents in the digital entertainment sector continue to rise. This trend not only draws attention to media literacy but also underscores the urgency of understanding the significance of media literacy in the gaming world. The diverse information encountered by adolescents in gaming necessitates the cultivation of comprehensive media literacy, encompassing the ability to understand information, think critically, and actively participate [1].

1.2. Research purpose

The objective of this review is to delve into media literacy in the gaming world, revealing its importance for adolescents in the digital age. We will first analyze the definition of media literacy, focusing on core concepts such as understanding information, cultivating critical thinking, and fostering active participation. By exploring gaming as a unique form of media, we will investigate the impact of interactivity on literacy and the distinctive nature of virtual social interaction and communication in gaming [2]. The study will concentrate on the benefits of media literacy for adolescents' cognitive development and social skills, addressing its role in critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and the positive influence of virtual social interaction.

Moreover, the study will address challenges arising in the digital age, such as the potential time management issues posed by the convenience of mobile gaming and the impact of gaming patterns on players' lives [3].

By deeply examining media literacy in the gaming world, this research aims to propose practical enhancement strategies, including educational approaches, family support, and community

involvement, meeting the media needs of adolescents and empowering them with more control and influence in the digital era. Ultimately, the study will summarize its significance and suggest future research directions.

2. Overview of media literacy in the gaming world

2.1. Definition of media literacy

Media literacy is not just about understanding information but is a comprehensive ability required to navigate a complex media environment. It involves understanding various media forms, including text, images, audio, and video, while demanding an individual's capacity for critical thinking to independently analyze and evaluate the authenticity and value of media content. Emphasizing active participation, media literacy requires individuals to engage proactively in media activities rather than passively receive information. In the digital age, media literacy highlights the understanding and application of new media, particularly digital media, encompassing proficient use of the internet, social media, and the ability to create and share digital content. Additionally, media literacy includes awareness of the media's impact on society and culture, along with the ability to maintain active participation and moral judgment in the media environment [4].

2.2. The special nature of games as a media

Gaming, as a distinctive form of media, possesses captivating interactivity, providing participants with a sense of engagement and immersion surpassing traditional linear media. Its uniqueness lies not only in the presentation of information but also in the player's role-playing and decision-making capabilities within the game. Interactivity transforms players from mere spectators into active participants, allowing them to create, explore, and influence the storyline within the virtual environment.

Virtual socialization and communication further distinguish gaming media. Players can establish virtual communities within games, engaging in real-time cooperation or competition and fostering communication through gaming platforms. This virtual socialization expands social circles and cultivates teamwork skills. Additionally, games often revolve around storytelling, using role-playing and plot development to evoke players' emotional resonance, providing an emotionally rich and profound experience within the gaming world [5].

Recognizing gaming as a unique form of media necessitates a reevaluation of the scope of media literacy, as the knowledge and skills covered by traditional media literacy often fall short in fully addressing the nuances presented by gaming as an emerging medium. Therefore, understanding the distinctive attributes of gaming as media is crucial for cultivating a more comprehensive media literacy for adolescents.

3. The benefits of media literacy to young people

3.1. Mental development

Media literacy has a profound impact on the cognitive development of adolescents within the gaming world. Firstly, through the cultivation of media literacy in the gaming realm, adolescents can hone their ability for critical thinking. In games, they are not just consumers but active participants, required to make decisions in complex scenarios. This proactive engagement fosters their ability to analyze problems, comprehend diverse information, and independently judge, providing robust support for the development of critical thinking. Secondly, media literacy contributes to enhancing adolescents' problem-solving and decision-making skills[6]. In games, players often encounter various challenges and puzzles that demand finding solutions through thought and practice. This active involvement nurtures their ability to address practical problems, instilling confidence and efficiency when facing challenges in daily life.

3.2. Enhancement of social skills

The cultivation of media literacy in the gaming world extends beyond the cognitive level and profoundly involves the improvement of social skills. Through virtual socialization and teamwork in games, adolescents can establish and expand social relationships. In multiplayer online games, players need to collaborate with others, share strategies and resources, thereby developing communication, cooperation, and teamwork skills. This not only enhances social skills but also nurtures their ability to work in a collective environment.

The interactivity of virtual socialization provides adolescents with a platform to practice social skills, enabling them to learn effective communication, understand different perspectives, and manage conflicts. These social skills established in virtual environments often find practical applications in real-life, aiding adolescents in better adapting to societal interactions. Additionally, media literacy can foster cross-cultural understanding as gaming worlds typically include players from diverse global cultural backgrounds.

4. Challenges in the Digital Age

4.1. Convenience and time management of mobile games

The convenience of mobile gaming makes adolescents more susceptible to time management challenges. Unlike traditional games, mobile games can be played anytime, anywhere, leading to a potential overcommitment and disrupting time allocation. This convenience may make it challenging for them to accurately perceive the passage of gaming time, increasing the risk of game addiction [7].

The challenge of time management not only reflects in gaming involvement but also extends to various aspects of daily life. Adolescents may cut down on academic, social, and sports activities due to excessive mobile gaming, adversely affecting their overall development. This behavior may also lead to family conflicts, exacerbating tensions with parents.

4.2. Game mode's control over players

The design of game patterns often possesses guiding and rewarding elements, leading players into a continuous gaming behavior that may evolve into a form of labor under capital control. Some games employ reward mechanisms, virtual items, leaderboards, and other elements to stimulate players to invest continuous time and effort in pursuit of higher gaming achievements [8]. This pattern may result in excessive immersion, ineffective time management, and negative impacts on academic, social, and physical health.

Furthermore, the dominance of game patterns may alter players' daily life routines. Excessive gaming can disrupt normal sleep patterns, learning progress, and social activities, potentially adversely affecting physical health. This dominance may lead to psychological health issues such as tension and anxiety in real-life situations, impacting the overall quality of adolescents' lives.



Figure 1. Game mode's control over players

5. Strategies to improve media literacy

5.1. School education

(1) Integrate media literacy education curriculum

School education plays a crucial role in improving media literacy among adolescents. The primary focus should be on integrating media literacy education courses to ensure comprehensive coverage within the school curriculum. These courses should not only encompass the fundamental concepts of traditional media literacy but also delve deep into media literacy within the gaming world [9]. This includes understanding the interactivity of games, cultivating critical thinking skills, and exploring the impact of games on social skills and cognitive development [10].

When integrating these courses, emphasis should be placed on practical case studies and interactive learning. Students should engage in activities such as participating in games and analyzing game content to gain an in-depth understanding of the core concepts of media literacy. Educators should encourage active participation in classroom discussions, sharing personal experiences to enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations [11].

(2) Promote positive values in games

In the strategy to enhance media literacy, emphasizing the advocacy of positive values in gaming is crucial. Educators and parents should guide adolescents to recognize the rich positive elements in the gaming world, viewing it not merely as an entertainment tool. This includes acknowledging the promotion of cognition, learning, creativity, teamwork, and social skills within games [12].

To achieve this, educators can incorporate educational games and simulation games into teaching, providing meaningful gaming experiences. This helps stimulate students' interest in subjects and fosters problem-solving and collaborative skills within the gaming environment. Simultaneously, parents should comprehend the diversity of games, actively participate in adolescents' gaming experiences, and share interesting and educational aspects of games with them.

5.2. Family support

Nokia is a highly anticipated failure case that failed to successfully transform in the digital age. The main lessons learned are as follows:

(1) Parents' understanding of game content

Active parental involvement is crucial for improving adolescents' media literacy. Firstly, parents should have an in-depth understanding of the content of games played by adolescents. This involves

grasping the themes, gameplay, interactive nature, and potential influences of the games. By experiencing the games personally or consulting game reviews, parents can accurately assess the appropriateness of games, ensuring they match the age and developmental level of adolescents [13].

Parents should also pay attention to game classification and rating systems, understanding whether games contain adult content or excessive violence. Through understanding game content, parents can better guide adolescents in choosing suitable games and exercise targeted supervision when necessary. Additionally, by sharing gaming experiences with adolescents, parents can promote communication and gain insights into adolescents' experiences and feelings in the gaming world [14].



Figure 2. Parents' understanding of game content

(2) Establish reasonable game time regulations

To ensure adolescents have good media literacy in the digital age, parents need to establish clear and reasonable regulations on gaming time. This requires creating personalized plans based on adolescents' age, academic workload, and daily activities. Parents can negotiate gaming time allocation with adolescents, fostering their abilities in self-management and time management [15].

Importantly, gaming time regulations should balance entertainment with academics, social activities, and other aspects of life. To achieve this, parents can set specific gaming time periods, ensuring sufficient time for adolescents to engage in academics, outdoor activities, and family interactions. This not only helps maintain a balance in daily life but also ensures that media consumption does not negatively impact other essential areas.

(3) Pay attention to the mental health of young people and encourage mental health education

In the strategy to enhance media literacy, focusing on adolescents' mental health is paramount. Parents and educators should engage in regular open discussions with adolescents regarding their emotional experiences in the gaming world. This includes paying attention to signs of negative emotions, anxiety, or depression during gaming. By building a trusting relationship, parents can better understand and address potential mental health issues adolescents may encounter during gaming experiences.

Mental health education should also be incorporated into media literacy development. Schools can introduce mental health courses to help students understand and manage emotional experiences related to digital entertainment. Such courses not only provide cognitive tools for students to better understand themselves and others but also teach skills to cope with emotional challenges arising from media content.

5.3. Community participation

(1) Promote community discussion in the digital age

Community discussions are an effective approach to enhancing media literacy among adolescents. Educational institutions and community organizations can establish digital age community platforms, encouraging adolescents and parents to participate in media education discussions. These platforms can provide professional guidance, share experiences, and offer resources, creating a space for community members to learn from each other and provide mutual support. Community discussions not only share the latest information on media literacy within the gaming world but also exchange successful educational experiences and problem-solving methods. Through this collaborative learning model, community members can gain a comprehensive understanding of digital media trends and collectively explore how to better guide adolescents' growth in digital entertainment.

(2) Media literacy activities and workshops that focus on meeting the emotional needs of young people

Conducting media literacy activities and workshops is another effective strategy to promote media literacy among adolescents. These activities aim to guide adolescents to a deeper understanding of the impact of digital entertainment through practical experiences and discussions. In these activities, special attention should be given to meeting adolescents' emotional needs, encouraging their active participation and learning interest. Workshops can be designed in the form of games, allowing adolescents to experience the core concepts of media literacy through practical operations and collaboration. Simultaneously, workshops should include emotional exchange sessions, encouraging adolescents to share their emotional experiences in digital entertainment. This helps establish a supportive learning atmosphere, making adolescents feel understood and respected.

Media literacy activities can also incorporate artistic and creative elements. Through painting, music, writing, and other forms of expression, adolescents can communicate their perceptions and feelings about digital entertainment. This not only satisfies their emotional needs but also enhances their overall understanding of media literacy.

(3) Encourage the development of supportive social networks and emphasize the importance of teamwork and shared experiences

To promote healthy media literacy among adolescents in the digital age, there is a need to encourage them to establish supportive social networks. This includes participating in teamwork and sharing experiences in digital entertainment. By engaging in multiplayer online games or digital social platforms, adolescents can connect with peers, share gaming experiences, and deepen their understanding of digital entertainment.

Social networks are not just entertainment platforms but are also communities for mutual learning and support. Educators and parents can encourage adolescents to participate in social groups related to digital entertainment, where they can share insights, clarify doubts, and collaboratively explore methods to enhance media literacy. The establishment of such social networks helps adolescents gain different perspectives from the community, fostering open-minded thinking and critical analysis abilities.

6. Conclusion

6.1. The importance of media literacy in the gaming world

Media literacy holds particular significance in the gaming world, as digital entertainment has become an integral part of the daily lives of adolescents. Games serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as powerful media tools that shape cognition, influence values, and directly impact social interactions. Therefore, cultivating media literacy among adolescents in the gaming world not only contributes to raising their digital literacy levels but also enhances their rational understanding of

digital entertainment. In the gaming world, media literacy goes beyond understanding digital entertainment; it involves critically analyzing information, adapting to digital social interactions, and prioritizing mental health. Adolescents need to learn to identify the boundaries between the virtual and real in games, understand the impact of games on cognition and emotions, and recognize the role of games in social interactions. Additionally, media literacy involves making ethical judgments about game content and values, fostering responsible attitudes toward digital entertainment.

6.2. The need to give young people more power and control in the media environment of the digital age

In the digital age, the complexity and diversity of the media environment make it crucial to empower adolescents with more power and control. Adolescents are no longer passive recipients of media information but rather creators and participants in the digital age. Providing them with more power and control can stimulate creativity, cultivate independent thinking, and enhance rational use of digital media. Empowering adolescents with more power and control includes encouraging their involvement in creating and sharing digital content, as well as developing their abilities to filter and evaluate digital information. Through participating in the creation of digital entertainment content, adolescents can unleash their imagination and creativity while understanding the production process, increasing awareness of media literacy. Additionally, cultivating their ability to filter and evaluate digital information helps them identify valuable content in the sea of information, avoiding exposure to false information and negative influences.

6.3. Directions for future research

In the ever-evolving digital age media environment, research on media literacy still faces many unknown areas and challenges. Future research should delve deeper into adolescents' digital media literacy in the gaming world, including but not limited to the following directions:

- (1) Research could focus on the development of social skills in gaming, analyzing the actual impact of virtual interactions on adolescents' social interaction abilities. Understanding the mechanisms of virtual socialization and how teamwork in games promotes the cultivation of social skills can contribute to better designing educational strategies and family support mechanisms.
- (2) Future research can explore the influence of the convenience of mobile gaming on adolescents' time management and the long-term effects of game modes on players' mental health. This will provide important references for developing more targeted educational and intervention measures.
- (3) With the continuous development of technology, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality also play a role in shaping the gaming experience and media literacy. In-depth exploration of how these technologies shape game content, interaction modes, and their potential impact on adolescents' cognition and behavior provides broad prospects for future education and research.

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