

A Study on the Relationship Between Adult Videogaming and Wellbeing, Health, and Labor Supply

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Abstract : There has been a growing concern in recent years over the economic and social effects of adult video gaming. It has been estimated that the number of people who played video games during the COVID-19 pandemic is close to three billion, and there is evidence that this form of entertainment is here to stay. Many people are concerned that this growing use of time could crowd out time that could be spent on alternative forms of entertainment with family, friends, sports, and other social activities that build community. For example, recent studies of children suggest that playing videogames crowds out time that could be spent on homework, watching TV, or in other social activities. Similar studies of adults have shown that video gaming is negatively associated with earnings, time spent at work, and socializing with others. The primary objective of this paper is to examine how time adults spend on video gaming could displace time they could spend working and on activities that enhance their health and well-being. We use data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, to analyze the effects of time-use decisions on three measures of well-being. We pool the ATUS Well-being Module for multiple years, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2021, along with the ATUS Activity and Who files for these years. This pooled data set provides three broad measures of well-being, e.g., health, life satisfaction, and emotional well-being. Seven variants of each are used as a dependent variable in different multivariate regressions. We add to the existing literature in the following ways. First, we investigate whether the time adults spend in video gaming crowds out time spent working or in social activities that promote health and life satisfaction. Second, we investigate the relationship between adult gaming and their emotional well-being, also known as negative or positive affect, a factor that is related to depression, health, and labor market productivity. The results of this study suggest that the time adult gamers spend on video gaming has no effect on their supply of labor, a negligible effect on their time spent socializing and studying, and mixed effects on their emotional well-being, such as increasing feelings of pain and reducing feelings of happiness and stress.

Keywords : online gaming, health, social capital, emotional wellbeing

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