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MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF INTERNET GAMING DISORDER: A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract
This study examines the phenomenon of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), a condition characterized by excessive and compulsive use of internet-based games, leading to significant disruptions in an individual's life for at least 12 months. Since its inclusion in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), IGD has gained increasing attention in the global mental health field. The aim of this research is to investigate the development trends of IGD research through a bibliometric analysis, focusing on publication volume, authors, institutional affiliations, and geographical distribution. The method used in this study is bibliometric analysis utilizing data from the Scopus database. This research includes 2,055 articles published on IGD from 2005 to 2025. By searching titles, abstracts, and related keywords, the study identifies significant publication trends, characteristics of the countries and institutions involved, and factors contributing to the IGD phenomenon. The results of the study reveal a significant surge in IGD publications since 2015, coinciding with the growing awareness of the impact of internet gaming addiction on mental health. Countries with advanced technology such as China and the United States have made the largest contributions to this research, while other countries, including several in Asia and Europe, have also played an important role in expanding the understanding of IGD. These findings highlight the importance of international collaboration in understanding IGD, focusing on developing more standardized diagnostic criteria and a more objective research approach for the future.

Keyword: Internet Gaming Disorder; Bibliometric; Global Research Trends

INTRODUCTION

Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is a condition characterized by excessive and compulsive use of internet-based games, leading to significant impairment or distress for a minimum duration of 12 months (Carbonell, 2020; Rokkum, Blanco-Herrera, Faulhaber, & Gentile, 2018). Since its inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), as a condition warranting further study, IGD has attracted increasing attention in the global mental health field (Kuss, Pontes, & Griffiths, 2018; Pearcy, Roberts, & McEvoy, 2016; Rokkum et al., 2018).

Research on IGD has experienced rapid growth, driven by the need to better understand its prevalence, risk factors, and reliable diagnostic criteria (Gupta et al., 2024; Kochuchakkalackal & Reyes, 2020; Mihara & Higuchi, 2017). Studies indicate that IGD is more common among adolescent males, particularly in East Asian countries, with prevalence rates varying significantly across populations (Carlisle, 2021; Gupta et al., 2024; Mihara & Higuchi, 2017). These variations are influenced by demographic factors such as age, gender, and geographic location.

Beyond prevalence, IGD is often associated with various psychological issues, including depression, anxiety, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Gupta et al., 2024; Singh & Raut, 2022; Torres-Rodríguez, Griffiths, Carbonell, & Oberst, 2018). Other contributing factors include poor social skills, dysfunctional family relationships, and significant life stressors (Torres-Rodríguez et al., 2018; King & Delfabbro, 2020; Nalwoga et al., 2024). These comorbidities suggest that IGD is not merely a behavioral issue, but one rooted in complex psychological vulnerabilities.

The impacts of IGD are multidimensional, affecting physical health, psychological well-being, and social functioning. Individuals with IGD frequently experience sleep disturbances, deterioration in interpersonal relationships, and academic challenges (Abdallat et al., 2024; Nalwoga, Kizito, Kigongo, Atwine, &

Kabunga, 2024). In addition, IGD can negatively affect job performance and eating patterns, indicating that its consequences extend across various aspects of daily life (Abdallat et al., 2024)

Conducting a bibliometric study on Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is essential in the current context due to the increasing prevalence of the disorder and its potential impact on mental health, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Recent bibliometric analyses reveal a significant growth in IGD-related publications, reflecting heightened global concern and research attention toward the condition (Oraon, Saikia, & Verma, 2025). These studies consistently highlight that adolescent males are particularly vulnerable to IGD and often exhibit comorbid symptoms such as anxiety and impaired brain function (Oraon et al., 2025; Shahi, Baral, & Mishra, 2023). Prevalence rates for IGD vary widely across studies, ranging from 0.7% to 27.5%, with notable differences by gender and age (Mihara & Higuchi, 2017). Moreover, longitudinal data suggest a strong reciprocal relationship between IGD symptoms and mental health challenges like anxiety and hyperactivity (Meng et al., 2024). Bibliometric research also identifies multiple contributing factors to IGD, including demographic characteristics, social relationships, personality traits, psychiatric comorbidities, and physical health conditions (Meng et al., 2024; Mihara & Higuchi, 2017). Despite these contributions, limitations persist—most notably the lack of standardized diagnostic criteria and methodological inconsistencies across studies (Zhou et al., 2024). These issues present challenges for comparative research and the development of effective intervention strategies. Furthermore, existing studies often rely on self-reported data, which can introduce recall bias (Meng et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). Nonetheless, bibliometric analyses have proven valuable for informing public health policy, guiding clinical classification, and identifying key predictors such as educational level and gaming frequency (Karasneh et al., 2021). In sum, bibliometric studies not only shed light on the scope and nature of IGD but also underscore the need for comprehensive, standardized approaches to address this emerging public health issue.

Based on the background above, this study aims to summarize and present the emerging trends in research on Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) by addressing the following Research Questions (RQ): (1) Does the exploration of Internet Gaming Disorder remain a significant subject for future scholarly studies? (2) To what extent has research on Internet Gaming Disorder been allocated? (3) What are the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of future research?

METHOD

This study uses bibliometric analysis to uncover the distribution patterns and trends of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) usage in scientific literature. Bibliometric analysis is a reliable technique often used to explore the relationships between key concepts within a research field, as well as to identify emerging topics (Hood & Wilson, 2001). This method relies on citation mapping and analysis to identify the progress and dynamics of research on a particular topic. Bibliometric analysis can provide deeper insights into research performance by mapping the contributions of authors, institutions, and countries involved in a specific research topic. Moreover, this method also helps identify the development and trends of emerging topics over time. The mapping allows researchers to see the connections between concepts in the literature and reveal thematic trends within a particular field.

The initial exploration began using the Scopus database through the query strategy outlined in Figure 1. Scopus was chosen because it has a broader reach compared to other databases such as Web of Science, ProQuest, and IEEE. Its advanced features facilitate the retrieval and collection of academic references. Scopus is also known for its comprehensive indexing from leading publishers such as Springer, Elsevier, Emerald Insight, ACM, Taylor and Francis, and IEEE, ensuring a high level of credibility and trustworthiness.

The search focused on titles, abstracts, and keywords using a comprehensive set of terms related to "INTERNET GAMING DISORDER," resulting in a total of 2,761 entries as of June 18, 2025. The inclusion criteria for this study can be seen in Figure 1.

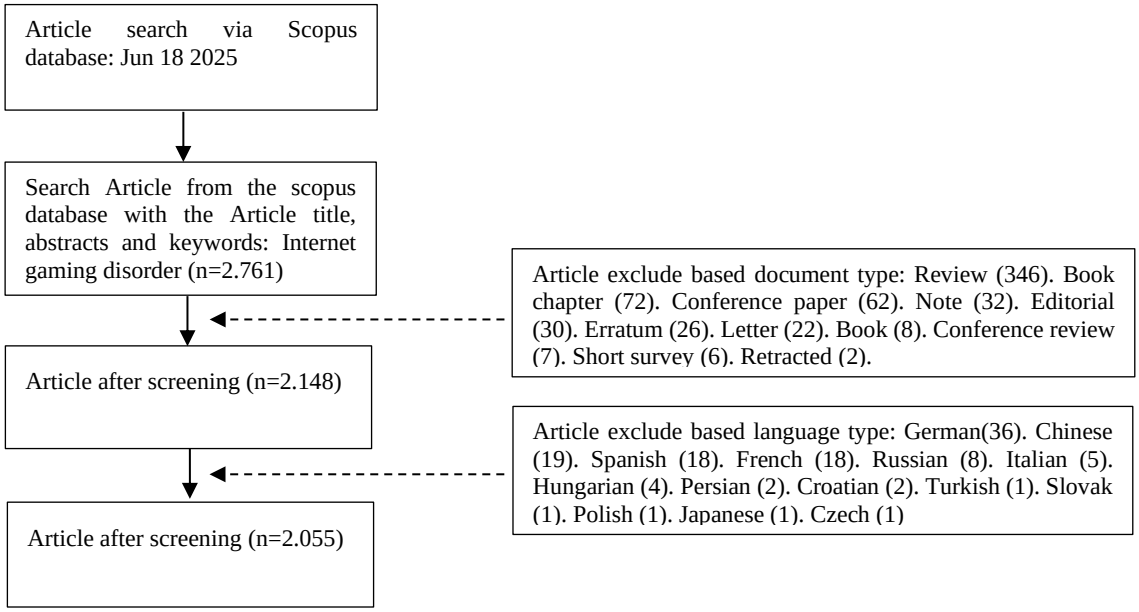

Figure 1. Overview of The Study Selection Process

The table above illustrates the article selection process used in this study for the bibliometric analysis of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). The process began with a search of articles in the Scopus database using the keyword "Internet Gaming Disorder," yielding 2,761 articles. Subsequently, screening was carried out based on document type, excluding articles categorized as reviews, book chapters, conference papers, and other irrelevant document types, reducing the number of articles to 2,148.

Next, further screening was conducted based on language, where articles written in languages other than English, such as German, Chinese, Spanish, and others, were excluded from the selection. After this exclusion, the final count of articles eligible for analysis was 2,055. This process ensures that the articles used in this study are relevant, high-quality, and written in the appropriate language for a more thorough bibliometric analysis.

RESULTS

The results of this study focus on findings from 2,055 articles in the Scopus database regarding Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). This set of data was obtained by identifying the number of articles published, publications over the years, and journal sources. This study will also highlight the most influential elements related to Internet Gaming Disorder, including authors, affiliations, and countries involved.

RQ1: Does the exploration of Internet Gaming Disorder remain a significant subject for future scientific study?

According to data taken from the Scopus database, the trend in the number of publications on the topic of "Internet Gaming Disorder" (IGD) by year can be seen in Figure 2.

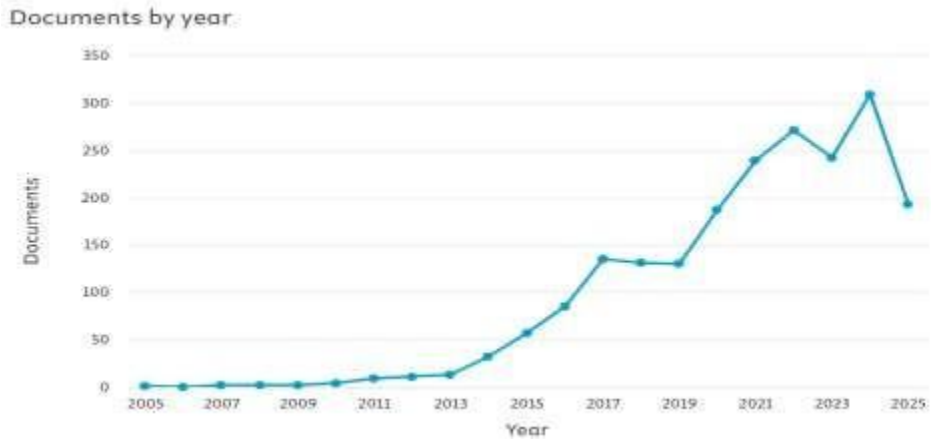

Figure 2. Number of Internet Gaming Disorde Publications

Based on Figure 2, it is evident that from 2005 to 2014, the number of published documents remained relatively low, reflecting a lack of attention to this topic among researchers. This could be due to a limited understanding or interest in the phenomenon of IGD at that time. In 2005, one significant article discussing this topic was "Addiction to the Internet and Online Gaming" published in *Cyberpsychology and Behavior* (Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005). This article was one of the first to introduce the concept of addiction to the internet and online gaming as an issue that needed further exploration. Since 2015, the number of publications has experienced a significant surge, indicating increased awareness and interest in research on this disorder. The rise in research during this period may be influenced by technological advancements, greater internet access, and the social impact of online gaming. A sharper surge occurred between 2019 and 2023, when IGD began receiving broader attention, following its official recognition by global health organizations, such as the American Psychiatric Association (APA), which classified IGD as a mental disorder. Data for 2024 and 2025 show continued high fluctuations in the number of publications, suggesting that despite shifts in trends, this topic remains a primary focus in mental health research, aligned with the rapid development of the gaming industry and related technologies. Overall, this graph reflects a significant increase in IGD research, marking a surge in publications that parallels growing attention to the social and psychological impacts of online gaming.

RQ2: To what extent has research related to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) been allocated?

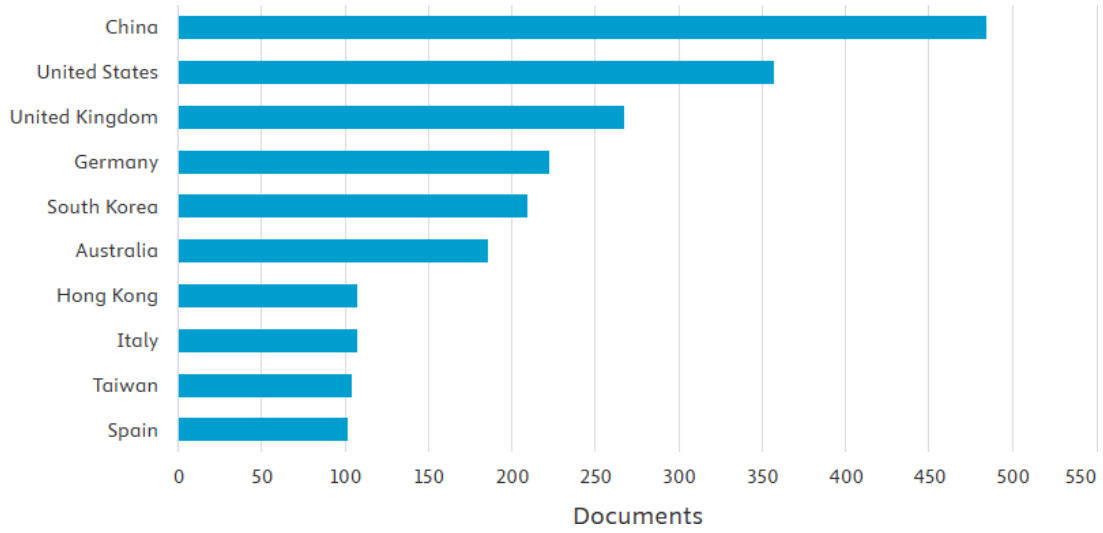

Figure 3. Number of Article by Country or Territory (Top 10 Country)

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the number of publications on the topic of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) by country. According to the data, China ranks at the top with 486 articles, indicating the country's dominance in IGD research. This may be influenced by its large population, technological advancements, and increasing awareness of the negative impact of online gaming within society. Meanwhile, the United States ranks second with 358 articles, reflecting the high level of attention to mental health and gaming addiction research in the country, supported by numerous research institutions and available resources. The United Kingdom contributes 267 articles, highlighting its important role in IGD studies. The country has many universities and research institutions focused on the influence of technology on social behavior. Germany, with 223 articles, and South Korea, with 209 articles, also make significant contributions to IGD research, which could be influenced by the high internet penetration and the popularity of online gaming in both countries. Australia (188 articles), Hong Kong (108 articles), and Italy (107 articles) also contributed substantial research on IGD, albeit low numbers of publications, they still reflect global interest in this topic. Meanwhile, Taiwan (104 articles) and Spain (101 articles) have lower publication figures but still indicate that the issue of IGD is receiving attention in various parts of the world. Overall, this graph illustrates that countries with large technology industries and wide internet access, such as China and the United States, dominate IGD-related research. However, other countries also contribute significantly to understanding the impact of online gaming addiction on mental health.

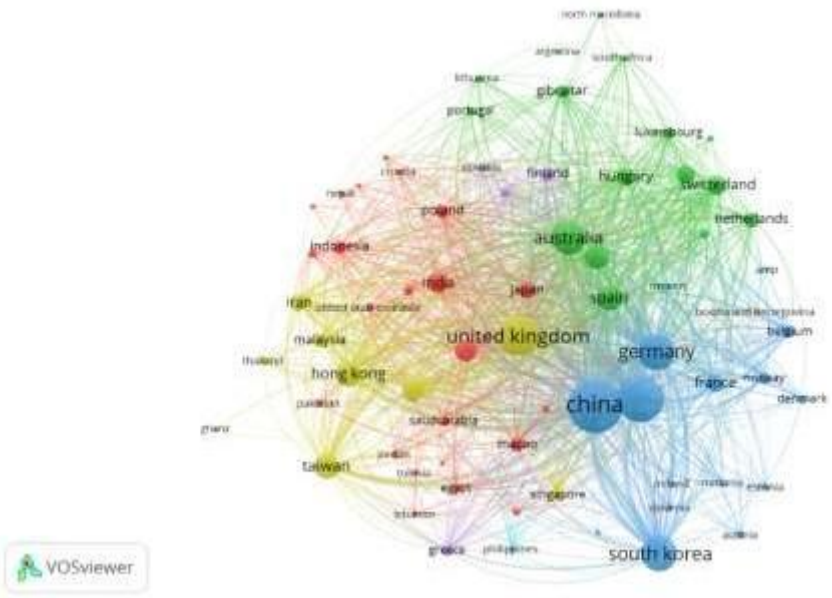

Figure 4. Network Country Visualizations

Figure 4 shows a network map illustrating the relationships between various countries based on publications related to the topic of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). Countries like China and the United States dominate the central positions on this map, reflecting their significant contributions to IGD research. The strong connection between these two countries indicates a high number of interconnected publications, both in terms of collaborative research and shared focus on the topic. Additionally, European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, France, and the Netherlands, as well as Australia, are closely connected, reflecting considerable attention to the issue of IGD in this region.

Asian countries, including India, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia, show strong ties with China, highlighting the growing collaboration and interest in IGD research in this area. This visualization also reveals that countries from the Middle East, such as Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, are contributing to IGD research, albeit with a lower level of publication compared to Western and East Asian countries. Overall, this map depicts a wide international collaboration network in IGD research, with leading contributions from major countries, but also significant input from various parts of the world.

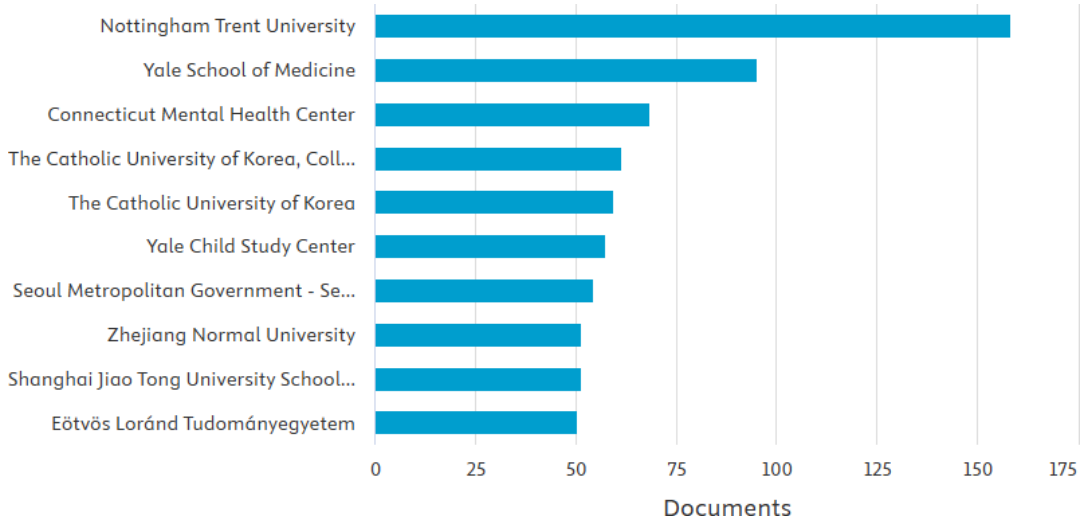

Figure 5. Document by affiliation Top 10

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the number of publications on the topic of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) based on the institutions involved in the research. Nottingham Trent University leads with the highest number of publications, reaching 158 articles. This reflects the significant contribution of this university to IGD research, likely driven by strong research facilities and available resources to explore this topic. Yale School of Medicine follows in second place with 95 articles, highlighting the important role of this medical

institution in understanding the impact of IGD, particularly in the context of mental health and behavioral disorders.

The Connecticut Mental Health Center, with 68 articles, also makes a major contribution to IGD research, focusing on the psychological aspects and the impact of addiction disorders on individuals. The Catholic University of Korea has 61 articles, demonstrating the important role of this institution in conducting IGD research in Asia. Yale Child Study Center, with 57 articles, and the Seoul Metropolitan Government - Seoul, with 54 articles, also show significant involvement in IGD studies, reflecting major concern about this issue in these countries, especially among younger populations.

Additionally, Zhejiang Normal University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China each have 51 articles, indicating significant contributions from Chinese universities to this topic, both in the social and mental health contexts. Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem in Hungary, with 50 articles, also plays an important role in expanding the understanding of IGD from a European perspective.

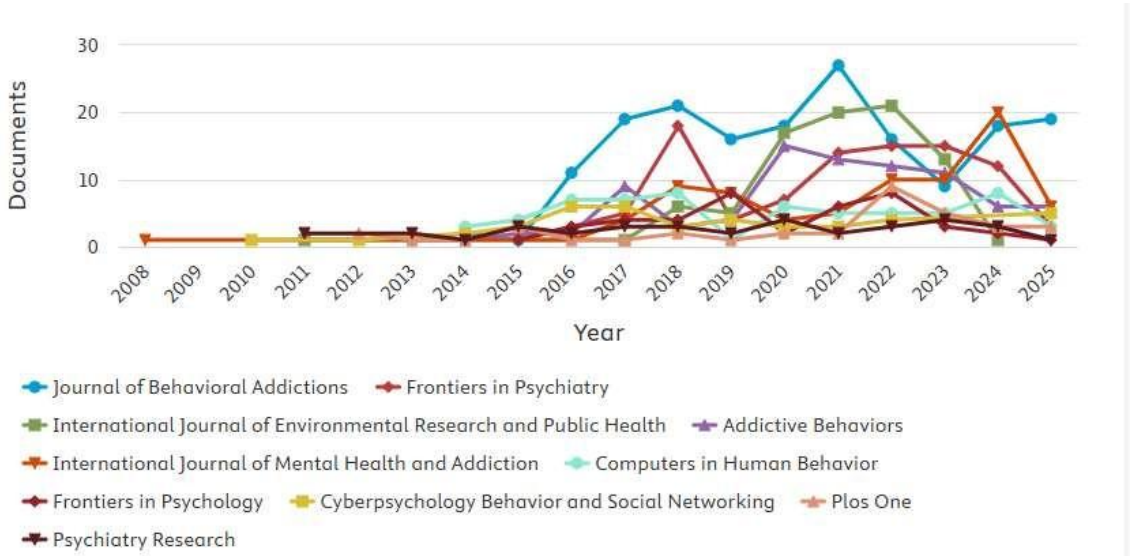

Figure 6. Number of Articles by Souces (Top 10 Sources)

Figure 6 illustrates the trend in the number of publications on the topic of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) published in various journals from 2008 to 2025. Several journals show a significant increase in the number of IGD-related articles, with the Journal of Behavioral Addictions (blue line) leading the way, showing a sharp surge since 2016, peaking in 2021 and 2022. A similar trend can be seen in Frontiers in Psychiatry (red line), which experienced a steep increase starting from 2016, with high fluctuations between 2018 and 2021. This increase reflects a growing interest in IGD in relation to psychological disorders. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (green line) also shows a gradual rise since 2016, reflecting attention to the social and public health impacts of IGD. Addictive Behaviors (purple line) saw a spike in 2018-2019, although it declined afterward, it still remains one of the key journals in behavioral addiction research.

Additionally, the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction (orange line) demonstrates a more stable fluctuation with several peaks in 2017, 2019, and 2020, indicating that although IGD is not the main focus of this journal, the topic still receives attention in the context of addiction. Computers in Human Behavior (light blue line) and Frontiers in Psychology (cyan line) show significant increases in 2019 and 2020, illustrating the connection between technology and human behavior in the context of IGD. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking (pink line) also shows a lower but steady trend with peaks in 2021 and 2022, focusing on the influence of social media and digital behavior. Finally, PLOS ONE (orange line) and Psychiatry Research (brown line) display smaller fluctuations but still play an important role in IGD research publication.

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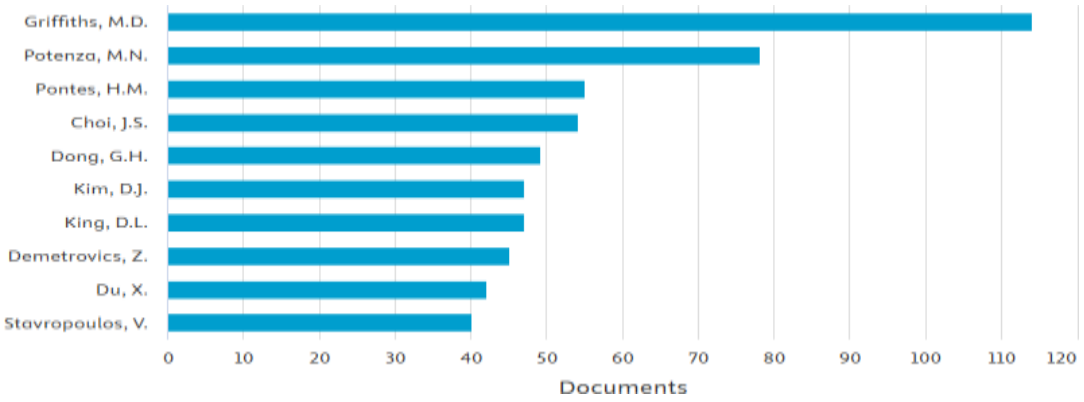

Figure 7. Count of Publications by Author (Top 10 Author)

Figure 7 shows the number of publications published by the lead researchers in the field of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). According to the data, Griffiths, M.D. ranks first with 114 articles, reflecting a significant contribution to IGD research. Griffiths is known as one of the leading researchers in the field of behavioral addiction, particularly related to gaming addiction, and his high number of publications demonstrates his dominance and influence in this study area.

Potenza, M.N. follows with 78 articles, indicating a significant role in examining IGD, especially from the perspective of psychological and neurobiological disorders. His research often focuses on behavioral addiction and the underlying mechanisms of addiction, including gaming addiction. Pontes, H.M., with 55 articles, also contributes greatly to the IGD literature, with research frequently focusing on various psychological and social factors influencing addictive behaviors related to online gaming.

Choi, J.S., with 54 articles, and Dong, G.H., with 49 articles, also made significant contributions to IGD research, highlighting their roles in exploring the factors influencing gaming addiction, as well as the social and psychological effects of the disorder. Kim, D.J. (47 articles) and King, D.L. (47 articles) also play an important role, particularly in studying the impact of IGD on mental well-being and individual behavior, as well as developing strategies to identify and address gaming addiction.

Other researchers, such as Demetrovics, Z. with 45 articles, Du, X. with 42 articles, and Stavropoulos, V. with 40 articles, also contribute to expanding our understanding of IGD. Their work often covers various aspects of addiction, including the factors influencing addictive behavior and its impact on individuals and society.

RQ3: What are the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of future research?

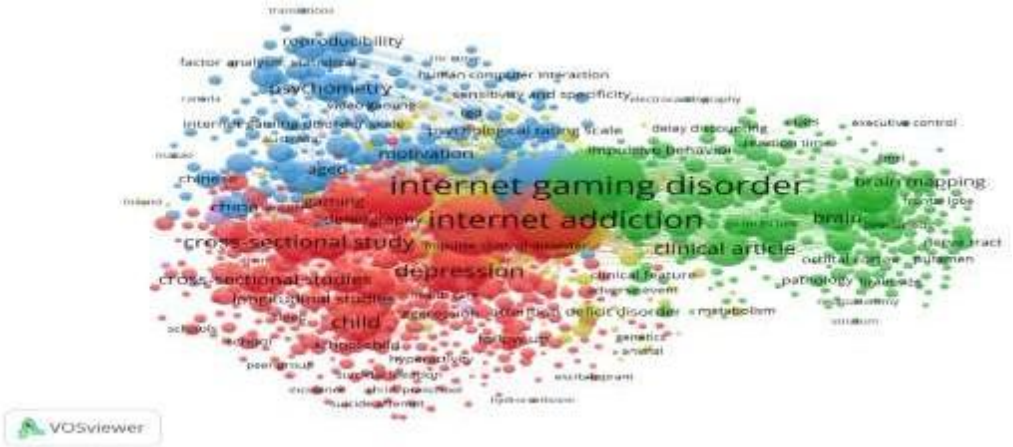

Figure 8. Co-Occurrence Framework and Representation of Key Terms

Figure 8 above illustrates the co-occurrence map of keywords related to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and Internet Addiction in the research literature. This map shows that two main topics, Internet Gaming Disorder and Internet Addiction, are the central focus of research, with related keywords such as impulsive behavior, impulse control disorder, and clinical articles frequently appearing together. This reflects the numerous studies exploring the relationship between internet addiction, impulsive behavior, and the clinical implications associated with these disorders.

Additionally, the map highlights the dominance of research examining brain mapping and neuroscience aspects, with keywords such as frontal lobe, precuneus, orbital cortex, and putamen, indicating research on the impact of IGD on brain structures, particularly those related to impulse control. Keywords like psychometry and psychological rating scale also underscore the psychological approaches used to measure the psychological factors and motivations contributing to the disorder.

IGD-related research also includes various demographic studies, with keywords such as child, school child, aged, and youth, showing that children and adolescents are often the focus of research due to their vulnerability to this disorder. Methodological approaches like cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies reflect the importance of using research designs to map the prevalence of IGD in different population groups. Furthermore, keywords like clinical article, adverse event, suicidal ideation, and escitalopram suggest that many studies also discuss the psychological impact of IGD, including potential mental health issues and the role of clinical interventions in addressing the disorder.

Table 1. Keywords by Authors

No	Keyword	Total Link Strength
1	Game addiction	28727
2	Internet addiction	25347
3	Video game	25346
4	Video games	24876
5	internet	24296
6	addiction	23455
7	adolescent	23444
8	Internet gaming disorder	22557
9	Young adult	20842
10	Internet addiction disorder	15575

Table 1 lists the most frequently occurring keywords in research related to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and internet addiction, along with their total link strength, are listed. The keyword with the highest link strength is Game Addiction (28727), indicating that video game addiction is the most discussed topic in the literature related to IGD. This high link strength suggests that many studies associate IGD with video game addiction, making it a central issue in this research field.

The next keywords are Internet Addiction (25347) and Video Game (25346), which rank second and third with very strong link strengths. These keywords indicate that both internet addiction in general and addiction related to video games are highly relevant topics within the context of IGD. This implies that many studies explore the relationship between internet addiction and video game addiction.

Video Games (24876) and Internet (24296) also show significant connections in IGD research. The high link strengths of these two keywords demonstrate that internet use and video gaming are primary factors contributing to IGD and remain major focuses in research concerning the social and psychological impacts of this addiction.

Addiction (23455) is a keyword that encompasses various forms of addiction and has a very strong relationship with IGD. This indicates that addiction, in general, is a frequently discussed theme in the IGD literature, considering that IGD is often viewed as a form of digital addiction.

Keywords such as Adolescent (23444) and Young Adult (20842) show that many studies focus on younger age groups, which are considered more vulnerable to IGD. This reflects the fact that IGD studies are more often conducted on teenagers and young adults, analyzing the effects of this disorder on their psychological and social development.

Internet Gaming Disorder (22557) is the keyword directly referring to the disorder itself, and it has a strong link to other keywords in this research. This indicates that many studies explicitly examine IGD as a disorder that needs to be diagnosed and treated.

Lastly, Internet Addiction Disorder (15575) also appears as a keyword related to IGD, though slightly lower compared to other keywords. This suggests that while IGD has a strong connection to internet addiction, there are also distinctions when considering internet addiction in a broader context.

DISCUSSION

Based on the bibliometric analysis using data from Scopus, this study shows that since 2015, the number of publications related to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) has seen a significant increase. This surge coincided with IGD being recognized as a mental disorder requiring further attention by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition

(DSM-5). Prior to 2015, IGD was relatively underexplored, with only a few key articles addressing the disorder, one of which was published by Ng and Wiemer-Hastings in 2005. However, after 2015, the number of publications sharply increased, reflecting growing awareness of the negative impacts of internet gaming addiction, which is clearly evident in the publication data up until 2025.

Furthermore, this study also highlights variations in the prevalence of IGD based on geographic location, influenced by demographic factors, local culture, and access to technology in each country. According to the available data, China is the country with the highest publication contribution, reaching 486 articles. This is likely influenced by its large population, widespread internet access, and growing awareness of the social impacts of gaming addiction in the country. The United States and the United Kingdom follow with significant publication numbers, 358 and 267 articles respectively. The study also notes contributions from other Asian countries such as South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, further demonstrating that IGD is not only a problem in Western countries but has also been recognized as a global issue that requires more attention.

The impact of IGD on individuals is vast, encompassing psychological, social, and physical aspects (Byeon et al., 2022; Nalwoga et al., 2024; Rahul et al., 2025). This study finds that IGD is often associated with other mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and ADHD. These findings suggest that IGD is not merely a behavioral issue, but is closely linked to vulnerabilities to more complex psychological conditions. Additionally, IGD affects interpersonal relationships, academic performance, and eating habits, which may lead to physical health disorders, as well as sleep disturbances that could result in long-term health problems. In this regard, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding IGD in a more holistic context, recognizing it not only as a gaming addiction but also as a profound mental health issue.

However, despite the numerous studies addressing IGD, methodological limitations found in this research remain a major issue. One of the most noticeable limitations is the inconsistency in the diagnostic criteria used across studies. Although IGD has been included in the DSM-5, many studies still rely on self-reported data from participants, which is prone to recall bias. This results in inconsistent findings, which naturally hinders the development of more effective intervention strategies. Therefore, future research should introduce more consistent diagnostic standards and develop more objective research methods to enhance the accuracy and comparability of study results.

In this context, the bibliometric analysis conducted in this study provides a clear picture of the trends in IGD research and the key factors contributing to the increase in the prevalence of this disorder. The study underscores the importance of international collaboration in IGD research, with countries such as China and the United States leading the way. Additionally, significant contributions from European and Asian countries further enhance our understanding of IGD and promote the development of stronger evidence-based approaches. This international collaboration illustrates that IGD is a problem faced by the global community, and addressing it requires an integrated approach.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a significant trend in the increase of publications related to Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) since 2015. This phenomenon coincides with the recognition of IGD as a mental disorder that requires further attention by the APA in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (Castro-Calvo et al., 2021). Prior to 2015, the topic of IGD received limited attention, with only a few articles addressing it. However, after 2015, there was a sharp rise in the number of publications, reflecting growing awareness of the negative impacts of internet gaming addiction.

Additionally, this research highlights the variation in the prevalence of IGD based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and geographic location. Countries with advanced technology and high internet penetration, such as China and the United States, show the largest contributions to this research. However, other countries, including several in Asia and Europe, also play a significant role in expanding the understanding of IGD.

This study also notes several methodological limitations, particularly the inconsistency in the use of diagnostic criteria across studies, as well as reliance on self-reported data, which may lead to recall bias. Therefore, it is important to introduce more consistent diagnostic standards and more objective research methods in future studies.

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