

# **When emotional support becomes the game-changer: How fitness and sports instructors emotional support influence the mitigation of internet gaming addiction in E-sports among university students**

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*This study examined the relationship between perceived emotional support from instructors and internet gaming addiction among 235 university students in the Philippines. The research utilized the Instructor's Emotional Support Scale and the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale-Short Form (IGDS9-SF) to assess the variables. The findings showed that students who perceived higher levels of emotional support from their instructors reported lower levels of gaming addiction. Regression analyses further confirmed that instructor emotional support and its components strongly predicted reduced gaming addiction. These results highlight the importance of fostering supportive instructor-student interactions to mitigate gaming addiction and promote healthier academic behaviors. Future studies are recommended to explore these findings in different cultural and educational contexts to guide effective interventions and policies that create supportive learning environments.*

**KEY WORDS:** Internet Gaming Addiction, Instructor Emotional Support, Positive Climate, Instructor's Sensitivity, Regard to Adult Perspective.

## **Introduction**

The issue of internet gaming addiction among students is a pressing concern in the current era of digital technology (Yang et al., 2023). Due to the convenient availability of online games on cellphones, PCs, and gaming consoles, a growing number of students are becoming more engrossed in immersive virtual environments (Li et al., 2022). The appeal of these games stems from their capacity to offer immediate satisfaction, foster social engagement, and instill a feeling of achievement, so making it challenging for students to

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resist the temptation to play (Gong et al., 2019). Consequently, numerous students allocate an inordinate amount of time to gaming, frequently neglecting their educational achievement and personal well-being (Adžić et al., 2021). This study defines gaming as engagement in digital activities, including casual and recreational gaming and structured competitive gaming contexts like *e-sports* (Maldonado-Murciano et al., 2022). While *e-sports*—organized, multiplayer video game competitions—align more closely with traditional concepts of performance and competition studied in sports psychology, the broader implications of gaming behaviors, including their addictive potential (Ningning & Wenguang, 2023), also relate to sport and exercise psychology. This is because gaming addiction often intersects with psychological constructs such as motivation, emotion regulation, coping mechanisms, and social connectedness (Kou & Gui, 2020; Trotter et al., 2021), which are core topics in sports psychology.

Internet gaming addiction is classified as a behavioral disorder by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, n.d.). According to WHO, it involves compulsive and excessive gaming behaviors that significantly impair various aspects of life (World Health Organization, n.d.), including academic performance, emotional well-being, and social relationships. The psychological processes underlying gaming addiction to *e-sports*, such as its use as a maladaptive coping mechanism (Bowditch et al., 2024), are conceptually tied to constructs studied in sport and exercise psychology (Leis et al., 2024). For instance, the addictive nature of gaming stems from its ability to simulate competitive environments, provide immediate feedback and rewards, and foster a sense of accomplishment (Shi et al., 2019), much like traditional sports. On the other hand, the addicting feature of online gaming can have adverse consequences on the academic success of students. Excessive gaming can result in procrastination, inadequate time management, and neglect of academic responsibilities (Nordby et al., 2019). Students may experience sleep loss and weariness due to staying up late playing games, which can further hinder cognitive function and learning capabilities (Zaman et al., 2022). In addition, the persistent diversion of gaming impede focus during class and studying, resulting in reduced efficiency and diminished academic performance (Alzahrani & Griffiths, 2024). In addition to its academic repercussions, internet gaming addiction can also have an impact on students' social and emotional growth (Sun et al., 2023). Excessive gaming can result in social isolation (Wang et al., 2019), as students may choose the virtual realm of games above face-to-face contact with their friends. The state of isolation can exacerbate feelings of solitude, depression, and unease, so reinforcing the cycle of gaming addiction (Mohamed et al., 2022). Fur-

thermore, the disregard of obligations and withdrawal from social activities can lead to disputes with family members and friends, which can strain relationships and intensify feelings of alienation (Szász-Janocha et al., 2023).

The prevalence of internet gaming addiction is increasing among university students in the Philippines (Labana et al., 2020), primarily due to the extensive availability of online games and a societal emphasis on gaming as a means of amusement and social engagement (Li et al., 2023). Due to the widespread availability of internet cafes and gaming consoles, students frequently become deeply engrossed in virtual realms for prolonged durations, perhaps disregarding their academic obligations and personal well-being (Penamora, 2021). According to (Ni et al., 2023), the rising popularity of multiplayer online games intensifies the problem. Since students establish groups and develop friendships within these virtual worlds (Meriläinen, 2023), so making it more challenging to disengage from gaming habits. Internet gaming addiction has a complex and diverse impact on university students in the Philippines, influencing multiple parts of their lives. From an academic standpoint, students may encounter a decrease in their grades as a result of procrastination, a lack of concentration, and a reduction in study time as they choose gaming above their academics (Farillon et al., 2022). In addition, engaging in excessive gaming can result in physical health issues such as visual strain, exhaustion, and a sedentary way of life (Devi & Singh, 2023), which worsens the already widespread problem of sedentary behavior among young individuals (Park et al., 2020). In addition, the compulsive quality of online gaming can place pressure on relationships with family and friends, as students may isolate themselves from social engagements and obligations in order to prioritize gaming (Xavier et al., 2023).

In this regard, this study emphasizes the role of instructor emotional support, particularly in fitness and sports education, in mitigating gaming addiction. Emotional support from fitness and sports instructors can foster healthier coping mechanisms, reduce reliance on maladaptive behaviors like gaming addiction, and enhance psychological resilience. This aligns with the broader goals of sport and exercise psychology, including promoting mental health, resilience, and adaptive behaviors in athletic and non-athletic populations. By examining the relationship between perceived instructor emotional support and gaming addiction, this study aims to extend the application of sports psychology principles beyond traditional athletic contexts. It investigates how psychological and social factors fostered in physical education and sports settings can influence broader behavioral outcomes, such as gaming addiction. This is particularly relevant given the growing popularity of *e-sports* and its overlap with physical and mental performance frameworks.

## Review of Related Literature

### The rise of internet gaming and towards a psychological disorder

*Internet gaming addiction*, or gaming disorder, is a psychiatric state marked by a consistent and compulsive pattern of gaming activity, resulting in notable impairment or discomfort (Lin et al., 2021). People suffering with internet gaming addiction commonly display a strong fixation on gaming activities, frequently devoting excessive amounts of time to gaming at the expense of other aspects of their lives (Shi et al., 2019). This fixation can be observed as an incapacity to regulate gaming habits, resulting in the disregard of personal, social, and occupational obligations (Gros et al., 2020).

Flow theory, formulated by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, posits that individuals attain a state of utmost pleasure and involvement when they are completely absorbed in an activity that aligns their abilities with the provided challenges (Kleiber, 2024). Flow theory provides valuable insights into the phenomenon of internet gaming addiction, explaining why individuals become excessively absorbed in gaming to the extent of developing an addiction (Hu et al., 2019; Kiatsakared & Chen, 2022). Online games are specifically created to offer continuous challenges and rewards (Li et al., 2023), ensuring that players remain fully engaged and immersed in the virtual environment. The smooth incorporation of progressively challenging stages, coupled with instant evaluation and incentives, generates an alluring loop that engrosses players (Qu, 2023). As people strive to achieve the heightened state of flow brought about by gaming, they may develop a growing reliance on it for satisfaction, resulting in impulsive and excessive gaming behaviors that are typical of addiction (Bhatiasevi et al., 2023). As Qu (2023) have stated, flow theory emphasizes the need of optimal engagement and a balance between challenge and ability in sustaining internet gaming addiction. This is because individuals are consistently attracted to the immersive experiences offered by online games.

Additionally, an essential characteristic of internet gaming addiction is the persistent engagement in gaming activities, even in the face of adverse outcomes (Areshthanab et al., 2021). The potential ramifications encompass scholastic or professional difficulties (Suryawanshi et al., 2021), strained familial and social connections (Rozgonjuk et al., 2022), disregard for one's personal hygiene and well-being (Mohammad et al., 2023), and disturbances to sleep schedules (Kristensen et al., 2021). Individuals diagnosed with gaming disorder may have a lack of self-control when it comes to playing video games (Király et al., 2023), especially in the face of negative consequences. This can result in a repetitive pattern of compulsive gaming activity. Univer-

sity students are particularly vulnerable to these negative effects due to their unique developmental stage and the transitional nature of their academic environment (Shafiei & Maleksaeidi, 2020; Worsley et al., 2021). Increased autonomy, academic pressures, and accessibility to gaming platforms make this demographic a high-risk group for compulsive gaming behaviors (Abdel Rouf et al., 2022; Shouman et al., 2023). Furthermore, the social and emotional challenges faced during university life can exacerbate their reliance on gaming as a maladaptive coping mechanism (Blasi et al., 2019).

Moreover, internet gaming addiction frequently entails the emergence of tolerance and withdrawal symptoms (Shaheen et al., 2023), akin to addictions associated to substances (Mohammad et al., 2023). Tolerance is the requirement to dedicate more and more time to gaming in order to reach the desired degree of enjoyment or satisfaction (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022). Withdrawal symptoms may manifest as impatience, restlessness, mood swings, and anxiety when unable to engage in gaming activities (Yen et al., 2022). In this regard, these physiological and psychological reactions as mentioned by studies additionally strengthen the addictive quality of internet gaming and contribute to the challenge individuals face in overcoming obsessive gaming behaviors.

### **Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support**

Perceived *instructor's* (teacher) emotional support refers to the subjective perception that students have regarding the level of caring, understanding, and encouragement they receive from their instructors in academic settings. This framework emphasizes the way in which students evaluate their interactions with Instructors in terms of emotional bonding, understanding, and assistance (Wang, 2023). It pertains to the way students perceive their instructors' accessibility, attentiveness, and empathy towards their emotional well-being, in addition to their academic instruction (Romano et al., 2021). Moreover, the way students perceive an instructor's emotional support directly reflects their assessment of the emotional environment in the classroom and the level of connection they have with their instructors (Hoferichter et al., 2022). This view can have a profound effect on their academic engagement, psychological well-being, and socio-emotional development (Lobo, 2023a).

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a framework for understanding how a student's impression of an instructor's emotional support can impact their motivation and engagement (Monacis et al., 2023; Shen et al.,

2024; Zhou et al., 2022). SDT proposes that individuals have three essential psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Guay, 2022). When these requirements are fulfilled, students are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, engage in activities willingly, and demonstrate enhanced persistence and well-being. Research on the perceived emotional support from instructors has highlighted its importance in fostering favorable student outcomes in various domains (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2021). Studies suggest that students who receive substantial emotional support from their instructors are more likely to have higher levels of academic motivation, satisfaction, and accomplishment (Granziera et al., 2022; Jensen et al., 2019; Lobo, 2023b). Furthermore, the perception of emotional support from instructors is linked to enhanced socio-emotional abilities. This includes heightened self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience in coping with challenges (Cooper et al., 2023). Research has shown that students who receive emotional support from their instructors exhibit fewer behavioral concerns (Kaplan, 2022), experience greater psychological well-being (Wang, 2023), and develop stronger peer relationships (Chen et al., 2024), which contributes to a positive and productive learning environment. The concept of perceived instructor's emotional support highlights the significance of the interaction between the instructor and the student in shaping the academic experiences and well-being of students (Wang et al., 2024). It emphasizes the significance of these important individuals not just acting as instructors but also as emotional caregivers who establish a nurturing atmosphere for students to thrive (Zheng, 2022). Recognizing and addressing students' emotional needs and fostering strong relationships between instructors and students are essential for promoting holistic development and creating inclusive and supportive educational environments that facilitate optimal learning and growth for every student (Allen et al., 2021; Zheng, 2022). According to the study conducted by Romano et al (2020), the emotional support provided by instructors (Instructors) can be categorized into three dimensions: *positive climate*, *instructor's sensitivity*, and *regard to adult perspective*.

Positive Climate refers to the establishment of a favorable climate by instructors, which promotes a compassionate and supportive learning environment. This environment makes students feel valued, respected, and motivated to achieve success (Pangle, 2022). According to Martinsone and Žydžiūnaite (2023), instructors that establish a positive climate cultivate robust interpersonal connections with students through the display of warmth, empathy, and encouragement during their interactions. A favorable atmosphere is characterized by open and honest communication, mutual trust, and a sense of belonging, which enables students to feel safe in expressing

themselves, taking risks, and engaging in meaningful learning experiences (Brinia et al., 2022). Instructors play a vital role in creating a classroom atmosphere that appreciates variety, promotes collaboration, and gives priority to a growth-oriented attitude in order to facilitate students' academic and socio-emotional development (Hanaysha et al., 2023; Monteiro et al., 2021). Within this particular context, students exhibit a greater propensity to experience motivation, engagement, and a sense of connection with their academic pursuits, hence reducing the likelihood of adopting inactive behaviors associated with disinterest or feelings of isolation (Qiu, 2022).

Moreover, instructor's sensitivity pertains to an educator's capacity to recognize and react to the distinct needs, emotions, and experiences of their students (Chen et al., 2020; Kennedy, 2019). A compassionate educator demonstrates empathy, comprehension, and adaptability towards students' diverse backgrounds, learning preferences, and socio-emotional challenges (Aldrup et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022). Instructors possess a high level of skill in perceiving subtle cues and signals from students, allowing them to adapt their teaching techniques and interactions in order to provide appropriate support and encouragement. This sensitivity fosters validation and trust in the Instructor-student relationship, allowing students to experience recognition, attentive listening, and appreciation within the educational environment. Instructors cultivate a nurturing atmosphere by demonstrating sensitivity and encouraging active student participation in the learning process. This approach facilitates favorable results and mitigates sedentary behaviors associated with disengagement or emotional distress (Hsu & Goldsmith, 2021; Monteiro et al., 2021).

Furthermore, when it comes to regard to adult perspective, instructors must possess a comprehensive understanding of the unique developmental stage, experiences, and opinions of their adult students (Vattøy & Gamlem, 2019). The concept entails recognizing and appreciating teenagers as individuals undergoing significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, each with distinct strengths, challenges, and preferences. Educators who demonstrate reverence for the perspectives of adults acknowledge the importance of autonomy, exploration of identity, and interactions with peers in the lives of young people. This approach allows for the expression of oneself, the ability to make choices, and the fostering of independence within the educational environment (Hashmi & Fayyaz, 2022; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020). Instructors can create a more inclusive and engaging environment in the classroom by valuing the perspectives, interests, and real-world experiences of adults (Verhoeven et al., 2019). This method validates students' identities, fosters meaningful connections, and enhances active engagement

in learning activities. Taking into account the perspective of adults can enhance student motivation, self-esteem, and well-being, while reducing the likelihood of sedentary behaviors associated with feelings of disconnection or insignificance in students' lives (Raufelder & Kulakow, 2021).

### **Unveiling the undocumented: The relationship between perceived instructor's emotional support and students' internet-gaming addiction to *e-sports***

Although the body of research examining the correlation between perceived emotional support from Instructors and internet gaming addiction among students remains somewhat limited, it does suggest the possibility of such a connection. The concept of perceived Instructor emotional support pertains to the manner in which students perceive their instructors in terms of concern, comprehension, and favorable regard. Research has indicated that students who hold the perception that their instructors provide greater emotional support tend to exhibit enhanced psychological well-being, increased academic motivation, and reduced tension levels (Chaudhry et al., 2024). On the other hand, individuals in the student population who hold the perception that they receive inadequate emotional support might be more prone to resorting to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as excessive online gaming (Bowditch et al., 2024), in order to alleviate negative emotions or manage academic or personal difficulties (Romano et al., 2021).

In addition, emotional support and positive Instructor-student relationships may function as a mitigating influence against addictive behaviors such as online gaming (W. Zhang et al., 2022). There is a positive correlation between the level of support provided by educators and the propensity of students to develop healthy coping strategies (Segbenya & Anokye, 2023), seek assistance when confronted with challenges (An et al., 2022), and participate in constructive social interactions (Chen et al., 2023). These actions may ultimately diminish the students' dependence on detrimental behaviors such as excessive gaming. In this regard, this study aimed to determine the direct influence of perceived instructor's emotional support to university students' internet-gaming addiction in a selected State University in the Philippines. Furthermore, the present study aimed to test the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support does not predict Internet-gaming Addiction;
- H<sub>1a</sub>: Positive Climate does not predict Internet-gaming Addiction;
- H<sub>1b</sub>: Instructor's Sensitivity does not predict Internet-gaming Addiction;

H<sub>1c</sub>: Regard to Adult Perspective does not predict Internet-gaming Addiction.

**Methods**

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The respondents for the study were undergraduate students currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science program during the 2nd Semester of the Academic Year 2023-2024 at Bulacan State University, located in the City of Malolos, Bulacan, Region III, Philippines. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants for the study. This method involves intentionally selecting individuals or instances with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Rahman et al., 2022). Purposive sampling allows for a focused and precise sample that addresses the research questions directly. The total population of students currently enrolled in the program at the university is approximately 300. The Raosoft Sample Size Calculator determined the sample size with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to ensure statistical power and precision. A total of 270 students completed the online survey. After data cleansing, a final sample of 235 responses was retained, representing a response rate of 87.03%.

Table I displays the distribution of respondents by biological sex and gender identity. The majority identified as heterosexual women, followed by heterosexual men, members of the LGBTQIAP+ community, and individuals who preferred not to disclose their gender identity. Out of the 235 respondents, 218 (92.8%) identified as straight men or women (138 women and 80 men), while 13 (5.5%) identified as members of the LGBTQIAP+ community. Additionally, four (4) respondents (1.7%) preferred not to disclose their gender identity.

INSTRUMENTS

The survey questionnaire that was used to obtain data from the respondents is subdivided into three parts:

1. The first part obtained data about respondents' demographic characteristics (i.e., gender).

TABLE I  
*Distribution Table Based on Gender*

Variable	Item	N (%)
Gender	Heterosexual woman	138 (58.7%)
	Heterosexual man	80 (34.0%)
	LGBTQIAP+	13 (5.5%)
	Prefer not to say	4 (1.7%)

2. The second part consist of the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale-Short-Form (IGD9-SF) by Pontes and Griffiths (2015). It asks respondents about their gaming activity during the past year (e.g., last 12 months). It is a brief self-report questionnaire designed to assess symptoms of internet gaming disorder. It consists of nine items that measure key features of gaming addiction, such as preoccupation, withdrawal, and loss of control. The respondents may answer each question using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1- "never" to 5- "very often."
3. The third partTop of Form is the Instructor's (*Teacher*) Emotional Support Scale by Romano et al (2020). This instrument measures the perceived level of emotional support being received by students from their Fitness and Sports instructors based on three components namely, Positive Climate, Instructor's Sensitivity, and Regards to Adult Perspective. Responses may then be recorded using a 5-point Likert Scale from 1- "Not at all true" to 5- "Very true."

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Correlation analysis such as Pearson-r was used to determine the relationship between the variables. Lastly, the *multiple regression* has been performed to determine the direct influence of Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support to Internet gaming addiction. Furthermore, each of the components of Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support namely, Positive Climate, Instructor's Sensitivity and Regards to Adult Perspective were also regressed to IGA.

## ETHICAL STATEMENT

Highest Ethical considerations were strictly followed in the conduct of the study. The data gathering was conducted through online survey using Google Forms. In the Google Forms, the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, instruments to be used, and the components/variables which will only be measured in the entire conduct of the study are presented. Additionally, the researchers provided the benefits of the study to the institution, community, and its contribution to scientific knowledge. The online survey underlined that participating in the study is voluntary, and respondents can choose to withdraw at any moment. The respondents were similarly advised of the potential minor hazards associated with their involvement in the research, including the experience of unease when responding to personal and/or sensitive survey inquiries. In addition, respondents were informed that there is no monetary compensation associated with providing information for the study. The respondents were additionally informed regarding the information that would be gathered via Google Forms and transferred to an Excel file for evaluation. The protected password for this data was disclosed, with only the researchers granted personal access to it. Additionally, they were informed that the aforementioned data would be stored on a USB drive for a duration of three (3) months, after which it would be irrevocably removed from the system. Additionally, respondents were notified that the data that were obtained would no longer be used in any subsequent or secondary research. Withdrawal of respondents' participation in the study will not have any adverse effects on their relationships with the involved researchers or research organizations, nor will it affect their contributions to any future services or current programs. In order to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents, their identities and names were

withheld throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the study's findings. Due to the aforementioned conditions, respondents were at any moment permitted to withdraw from the study or request a debriefing. All respondents' information were securely protected in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, also known as Republic Act 10173.

## Results

Based on the findings in Table II, a significant positive relationship was identified between positive climate and internet gaming addiction [ $r(233) = .924, p < .05$ ]. This suggests that students who perceive their instructor as fostering a welcoming and nurturing environment are more likely to report lower levels of internet gaming addiction. Similarly, instructor's sensitivity demonstrated a significant correlation with internet gaming addiction [ $r(233) = .936, p < .05$ ], indicating that students who perceive their instructor as responsive to their needs and emotions tend to report reduced levels of gaming addiction. Lastly, regard to adult perspective showed a significant positive correlation with internet gaming addiction [ $r(233) = .851, p < .05$ ], suggesting that students who perceive their instructor as acknowledging their autonomy and involving them in decision-making processes tend to exhibit lower levels of gaming addiction. These findings underscore the relational patterns between perceived instructor emotional support and gaming behaviors. It is essential to emphasize that these findings reflect associations rather than

TABLE II  
*Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support vis-à-vis Internet gaming addiction*

		IGA
POSCLIM	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.924**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<.001
	<i>N</i>	235
TEASEN	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.936**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<.001
	<i>N</i>	235
REGADOPERS	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.851**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<.001
	<i>N</i>	235

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

PIES- Perceived Instructor Emotional Support, POSCLIM- Positive Climate, TEASEN- Instructor's Sensitivity, and REGADOPERS- Regard to Adult Perspective, IGA- Internet Gaming Addiction.

causal relationships and should be interpreted within the limitations of the study design. In this regard, future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental methodologies to establish potential causal mechanisms between these variables better. Additionally, further exploration is recommended to investigate the influence of broader contextual factors, such as cultural dynamics and institutional policies, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between instructor emotional support and internet gaming behaviors.

Based on the results in Table III, it was observed that PIES is a significant predictor of IGA, indicating that PIES is directly and significantly associated with IGA [ $F(3, 231) = 5242.750, p < .001$ ]. The  $R^2 = .986$  suggests that the model explains 98.6% of the variance in IGA. This finding highlights that perceived emotional support from instructors is strongly associated with variations in students' internet gaming addiction. Hence, H1 was rejected. Furthermore, the coefficients for each component of PIES were examined. POSCLIM was identified as a direct predictor of IGA ( $\beta = .541, t = 39.679, p < .001$ ), suggesting that a welcoming and nurturing environment perceived by students is strongly associated with lower levels of internet gaming addiction. TEASEN was also observed to predict IGA ( $\beta = .510, t = 37.199, p < .001$ ), indicating that students who perceive empathy, attentiveness, and adaptability from their instructors tend to report reduced levels of gaming addiction. Lastly, REGARDOPERS was found to be a predictor of IGA ( $\beta = -.043, t = -3.020, p = .003$ ), implying that empowering students to contribute to their learning and fostering a sense of belonging is associated with decreased levels of internet gaming disorder. These findings underscore the

TABLE III  
*Direct influence Of Perceived Instructor's Emotional Support to Internet gaming addiction*

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t	p	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	PIES → IGA	-	.986	5242.750	-	<.001	Rejected
H <sub>1a</sub>	POSCLIM → IGA	.541	-	-	39.679	<.001	Rejected
H <sub>1b</sub>	TEASEN → IGA	.510	-	-	37.199	<.001	Rejected
H <sub>1c</sub>	REGADOPERS → IGA	-.043	-	-	-3.020	.003	Rejected

Note: Significance  $p < .05$ .

PIES: Perceived Instructor Emotional Support, POSCLIM: Positive Climate, TEASEN: Instructor's Sensitivity, and REGARDOPERS: Regard to Adult Perspective, IGA: Internet Gaming Addiction.

importance of perceived instructor emotional support as a significant predictor of gaming behaviors rather than suggesting causality. In this regard, future studies should adopt longitudinal research designs to validate these associations further and investigate how changes in perceived emotional support over time influence gaming addiction. Additionally, exploring the role of contextual factors, such as institutional policies and cultural norms, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how instructor-student interactions shape gaming behaviors.

## **Discussion**

The discovery that students' internet gaming addiction to e-sports is greatly influenced by the positive climate they perceive from their instructors highlights the crucial importance of instructor-student relationships in determining the behaviors and well-being of students. Students may experience heightened feelings of association with their educational institution and overall contentment when they perceive a nurturing and optimistic atmosphere in their academic setting, which is distinguished by instructors who exhibit sincerity, comprehension, and motivation (Frenzel et al., 2021; Lombardi et al., 2019; Mousena & Raptis, 2021). Students who are respected and encouraged in their real-life interactions may be less likely to seek refuge or diversion in virtual environments (Kaya et al., 2023), which could potentially act as a protective factor against internet gaming addiction to e-sports. By cultivating a climate of positivity, instructors have the ability to nurture students' sense of purpose and involvement, while also equipping them with the essential resources and assistance required to effectively navigate obstacles and cultivate adaptive coping strategies (Wiedermann et al., 2023). Consequently, rather than resorting to online gaming as a coping mechanism, students might allocate their time and effort towards pursuits that foster personal development and satisfaction. Hence, by emphasizing the significance of cultivating positive instructor-student relationships and establishing supportive learning environments, initiatives to foster a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere in academic settings might aid in the reduction of internet gaming addiction to e-sports among students.

The observation that students' perception of their instructors' sensitivity is associated with a decrease in internet gaming addiction to e-sports implies that the quality of instructor-student interactions is vital for students. When students see their instructors as empathic and attentive, they are more likely to experience a greater sense of support and understanding throughout their

academic journey (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021; Guzzardo et al., 2021; Zhou, 2022). Furthermore, when educators exhibit proficiency and flexibility in attending to the wants and worries of students, they establish a feeling of trust and assurance in their capacity to effectively guide and mentor them. Within such an environment, students may exhibit reduced inclination to resort to online gaming as a method of seeking refuge or diversion from scholastic pressures or sensations of isolation. Alternatively, individuals may experience heightened motivation and involvement in their academic pursuits, deriving a sense of contentment and gratification from their relationships with educators and classmates. Therefore, cultivating favorable instructor-student relationships marked by empathy, attentiveness, competence, and adaptability can act as a safeguard (Wang, 2023) against internet gaming addiction. This is achieved by creating a supportive and enriching learning environment that addresses students' emotional and psychological requirements.

The relevance of comprehending the subjective experiences and perspectives of adults in identifying risk factors for problematic gaming behaviors is underscored by the discovery that regard to adult perspective predicts internet-gaming addiction to e-sports. A potential coping mechanism for adults with negative or distorted self-, relationship-, or environmental perceptions is the development of an addiction to online gaming (Kaya et al., 2023). Peer pressure, academic pressure, family dynamics, poor self-esteem, and other similar issues can all contribute to these pessimistic outlooks (Kim & Chun, 2022; Király et al., 2023). When students feel down about themselves or their lives, they may seek comfort and acceptance in online gaming communities as a way to avoid the reality of their problems. Consequently, it may be essential to address the viewpoints of students and offer them assistance and interventions that encourage healthy self-perception and coping mechanisms in order to prevent and manage internet gaming addiction.

To summarize, the significance of instructor emotional support in tackling gaming addiction to e-sports cannot be stressed enough. Students who experience a sense of warmth, empathy, and understanding from their instructors are less inclined to engage in excessive gaming as a means of coping. Establishing positive instructor-student interactions fosters a nurturing educational setting in which students feel appreciated and engaged, hence diminishing the appeal of seeking solace in virtual distractions. By cultivating emotional support in educational environments, educators not only improve students' academic encounters but also fulfill a crucial function in advancing their emotional well-being and averting the development of internet gaming addiction. Hence, it is crucial to give utmost importance to providing emo-

tional support to instructors in order to address this escalating issue and promote the well-being of students in the current era of technology.

## Conclusions

To summarize, the results emphasize the vital importance of instructor emotional support in reducing gaming addiction to e-sports among students. Establishing positive instructor-student interactions that demonstrate empathy, attentiveness, and competency fosters a nurturing environment that decreases the probability of excessive gaming behaviors. Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize the constraints of these findings, specifically its generalizability to the student population from various state universities in the Philippines. The dynamics of instructor-student relationships and students vulnerability to gaming addiction may be influenced differently by cultural and contextual elements specific to this setting. Future research should strive to thoroughly investigate these factors, taking into account a wide range of cultural backgrounds and educational settings, in order to gain a more nuanced comprehension of the impact of Instructor emotional support on the management of internet gaming addiction. In addition, longitudinal studies could examine the enduring impacts of instructor-student connections on students' gaming habits and academic achievements, providing valuable insights for targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting students' welfare in an ever-growing digital society. These findings have great potential for guiding particular interventions and policies that attempt to create supportive learning environments and promote healthy student development in the face of widespread internet gaming addiction.

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