



THE CORRELATION OF GAMING ADDICTION ON  
PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND STRESS  
COPING MECHANISMS AMONG MALAYSIAN  
YOUTHS

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of Master of Psychology  
(Clinical) integrated program

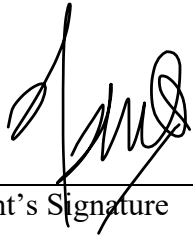
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research work entitled “The Correlation Of Gaming Addiction On Psychological Resilience And Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Malaysian Youths” is a record of original work of my own; and to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain materials that is being published in the past or written by others except where resources are properly acknowledged in the text; and that it has not been submitted in part or in whole to any other University or Institute for the purpose of publications. In making this declaration, I wholly understand the presence of any breaches off the declaration constitute academic misconduct may lead to certain penalties.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left and several loops and curves on the right, positioned above a horizontal line.

Student's Signature

23/08/2025

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the numerous individuals whose assistance and encouragement made this thesis a reality. In extending my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to this accomplishment, I dedicate this journey to my two supportive parents, Shammim Azad and Dr. Hashimah. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in achieving such a remarkable milestone in my academic career. Beyond providing the financial means for my studies, they have consistently inspired and taught me to not only excel as a student but also to grow as a person, and for their enduring love and support, I am profoundly grateful.

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ABSTRACT

By

Muhammad Hazeeq bin Shammim Azad

Video games have recently become highly prevalent worldwide, with players of all ages participating in such activities. However, because gaming has a negative impact on players' mental health, particularly among young people in Malaysia, addiction to video games has become cause for concern. This research examined the interrelations among gaming group classification, psychological resilience, and stress coping strategies within the youth demographic in Malaysia. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional methodological approach, data were gathered from 203 individuals who were classified into Contrast, Highly Engaged, Problem, and Addicted gamer categories according to the Gaming Addiction Scale (GAS). Psychological resilience was measured through the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and stress coping strategies were classified into Problem-focused, Emotion-focused, or Avoidant-focused categories using the Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE). One-Way ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression analyses demonstrated the absence of statistically significant differences in psychological resilience across the various gaming groups, indicating that classification does not serve as a predictor of resilience levels within this population. In contrast, a Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a statistically significant correlation between gaming

group classification and stress coping strategy. Although Emotion-focused coping was prevalent across all classifications, the Addicted gamer group distinctly exhibited the utilization of an Avoidant-focused coping strategy, thereby differentiating them from other categorizations. In summary, the findings indicate that gaming group classification does not have a direct correlation with overall psychological resilience. However, it is significantly associated with specific coping mechanisms. This suggests that interventions aimed at addressing gaming-related challenges, particularly for individuals classified as addicted gamers, should focus on modifying maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, in order to foster more effective stress management techniques.

*Keywords:* Gaming addiction, psychological resilience, stress coping styles, gamer groups, avoidant coping, youths.

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Permainan video baru-baru ini telah menjadi sangat lazim di seluruh dunia, dengan pemain dari semua peringkat umur mengambil bahagian dalam aktiviti tersebut. Walau bagaimanapun, kerana permainan mempunyai impak negatif terhadap kesihatan mental pemain, terutamanya dalam kalangan golongan muda di Malaysia, ketagihan permainan video telah menjadi punca kebimbangan. Kajian ini meneliti perkaitan antara klasifikasi kumpulan pemain, daya tahan psikologi, dan strategi daya tindak tekanan dalam demografi golongan muda di Malaysia. Menggunakan pendekatan metodologi kuantitatif keratan rentas, data dikumpul daripada 203 individu yang diklasifikasikan ke dalam kategori pemain Kontras, Sangat Terlibat, Bermasalah, dan Ketagih mengikut Skala Ketagihan Permainan (GAS). Daya tahan psikologi diukur melalui Skala Daya Tahan Ringkas (BRS), dan strategi daya tindak tekanan diklasifikasikan kepada kategori berfokus-masalah, berfokus-emosi, atau berfokus-mengelak menggunakan Inventori Orientasi Daya Tindak Ringkas Terhadap Masalah yang Dialami (Brief-COPE). Analisis ANOVA Sehalu dan Regresi Linear Berganda menunjukkan ketiadaan perbezaan signifikan secara statistik dalam daya tahan psikologi merentas pelbagai kumpulan pemain, menunjukkan bahawa klasifikasi tersebut tidak berfungsi sebagai peramal tahap daya tahan dalam populasi ini.

Sebaliknya, Ujian Chi-Square Ketakbergantungan mendedahkan korelasi signifikan secara statistik antara klasifikasi kumpulan pemain dan strategi daya tindak tekanan. Walaupun daya tindak berfokus-emosi lazim di semua klasifikasi, kumpulan pemain Ketagih secara jelas menunjukkan penggunaan strategi daya tindak berfokus-mengelak, lantas membezakan mereka daripada kategori lain. Ringkasnya, penemuan menunjukkan bahawa klasifikasi kumpulan pemain tidak mempunyai korelasi langsung dengan daya tahan psikologi keseluruhan. Walau bagaimanapun, ia mempunyai perkaitan signifikan dengan mekanisme daya tindak tertentu. Ini mencadangkan bahawa intervensi yang bertujuan menangani cabaran berkaitan permainan, terutamanya bagi individu yang diklasifikasikan sebagai pemain ketagih, harus menumpukan pada pengubahsuaian strategi daya tindak maladaptif, seperti pengelakan, untuk menggalakkan teknik pengurusan tekanan yang lebih berkesan.

*Kata Kunci:* Ketagihan permainan, daya tahan psikologi, gaya daya tindak tekanan, kumpulan pemain, daya tindak mengelak, belia.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BRS	Brief Resilience Scale
Brief-COPE	Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory
GAS	Gaming Addiction Scale
HSD	Honestly Significant Difference

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Correlation of Gaming Addiction on Psychological Resilience and Stress Coping  
Mechanisms Among Malaysian Youths

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Gaming addiction, or Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), is recognized by a loss of control over gaming, prioritising it over life aspects (Eka et al., 2023). Individuals with gaming addiction continue or escalate gaming despite negative consequences on their social,

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educational, or occupational lives (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Psychological resilience is the ability to adjust and recover from obstacles, hardship, and pressure. Key components of resilience include overcoming setbacks, sustaining a positive outlook, and feeling in control (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Stress coping skills involve strategies to manage the emotional and physical effects of stress. These can be problem-focused coping (directly addresses the stress source), emotion-focused coping (managing emotional responses) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and avoidant coping (denial, distraction or substance use) (Holahan et al., 2005). Gaming addiction is prevalent among teenagers and young adults, with studies showing varied rates across different countries. A global review estimated the prevalence of gaming addiction to range between 1.7% and 10%, depending on region and assessment methods (Stevens et al., 2021). Nations like South Korea and China have reported higher rates, with estimates of 8-10% (King & Delfabbro, 2019). In Malaysia, the prevalence of gaming addiction among adolescents is approximately 9.9%, aligning with global trends (Heng, 2020; Wong et al., 2020). Psychological resilience and effective stress management techniques play a vital role in mitigating the risk of gaming addiction in young individuals. These attributes facilitate improved handling of emotional and psychological difficulties. Psychological resilience is the ability to adjust and recover from obstacles, hardship, and pressure. Key components of resilience include overcoming setbacks, sustaining a positive outlook, and feeling in control (Luthar et al., 2000). Resilience equips individuals with the capacity to bounce back from stress and hardship, thereby decreasing the probability of resorting to excessive

gaming as an unhealthy coping mechanism (Loton et al., 2016). Stress coping skills involve strategies to manage the emotional and physical effects of stress. These can be problem-focused coping (directly addresses the stress source), emotion-focused coping (managing emotional responses) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and avoidant coping (denial, distraction or substance use) (Holahan et al., 2005). A study indicated that coping mechanisms serve as a complete mediator in the association between video game addiction and manifestations of depression, anxiety, and stress, with avoidant coping exhibiting the most pronounced influence (Clara & Romano, 2020). Furthermore, research identified a notable positive correlation between online gaming addiction and the utilization of avoidant coping strategies, suggesting that individuals who predominantly employ avoidance-focused coping are more inclined to partake in excessive gaming as a strategy for alleviating stressors (Boran & Sürücü, 2022).

## **1.2 Background of Study**

Video gaming is deeply ingrained in modern culture, particularly among young people. The rise in gaming has led to concern about gaming addiction and its associated psychological effects. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) recognises gaming addiction significant behavioral concern. Not yet recognized as a formal psychiatric disorder, the term “Internet Gaming disorder” has been included in the “Emerging Measures Models” section of the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders-5 (American Psychological Association, 2013) and the beta draft of the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) includes “Gaming disorder” in the section “Disorders due to Substance Use or Addictive Behaviors”. In Malaysia, the popularity of video games has surged, mirroring global trends, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the potential negative impacts on the mental well-being of Malaysian adolescents (Ling et al., 2021).

Research has linked gaming addiction to various negative consequences, including lower academic achievement, strained social interactions, and increased anxiety and depression (Mohamed et al., 2023). However, the relationship between gaming addiction and resilience (the capacity to recover from adversity) remains under-explored, particularly in the context of adolescents. Additionally, the role of coping mechanisms in managing stress, and how these mechanisms interact with gaming addiction in this population warrants further investigation.

While studies like Gentile et al. (2011) have shown a link between problematic gaming and adverse mental health, research specifically on the impact of gaming addiction on Malaysian adolescents’ resilience and coping strategies is scarce. Given Malaysia’s unique cultural and socio-economic context, it is crucial to examine these aspects within this specific setting.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

In Malaysia, gaming has emerged as a prevalent pastime among the youth, demonstrating considerable participation across various age demographics. A survey conducted in 2020 indicated that 73% of Malaysian individuals aged 16 to 24 engaged in online gaming, with 42% of them reporting daily play (Statista, 2020). This highlights the significance of gaming as a common leisure activity among the younger population. Despite the increasing prevalence of gaming addiction among Malaysian youths, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how it affects their resilience. A meta-analysis on gaming disorder in Southeast Asia found no data from Malaysia (Chia et al., 2020). This lack of research may be due to challenges in defining the problem and concerns about stigma (Aarseth et al., 2017). This stigma may dissuade individuals from seeking assistance, as they might fear being categorized or misinterpreted, which in turn can amplify the difficulties associated with addiction and mental health disorders (Griffiths et al., 2018). Furthermore, society frequently underestimates the gravity of gaming addiction, perceiving it as less consequential compared to other behavioral addictions, thereby perpetuating the stigma and obstructing adequate support for those impacted (Pontes et al., 2019). Understanding the relationship between gaming addiction and resilience is crucial, as resilience is vital in navigating life's challenges and maintaining psychological well-being of an individual.

From a clinical standpoint, explaining the mediating functions of coping strategies within the framework of gaming addiction is instrumental for mental health practitioners in customizing their therapeutic methodologies. A study showed that coping mechanisms can influence the association between gaming addiction and manifestations of depression, anxiety, and stress, which indicates that the enhancement of adaptive coping strategies may mitigate the risk of addiction and enhance mental health outcomes (Clara & Romano, 2020). This perspective can serve as a foundation for clinicians in formulating targeted interventions that prioritize the development of resilience and effective coping competencies that addresses both the addictive behavior and its psychological foundations. From a practical viewpoint, the insights derived from research can inform educational initiatives and preventive strategies aimed at the youth demographic. A study highlighted that using avoidance as a coping mechanism can increase the likelihood of developing Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) (Mills et al., 2019). By incorporating coping skills training into educational curricula or community-based programs, adolescents are able to be equipped with the necessary tools to navigate stress more adeptly, potentially diminishing their dependence on gaming as a maladaptive coping strategy. Moreover, understanding the attributes of gaming addiction can facilitate the differentiation between healthy gaming practices and those that are problematic which enables more informed guidance for parents and educators (Sublette & Mullan, 2010).

Effective stress coping mechanisms are essential for mental health and overall well-being. This study aims to examine how gaming addiction influences the development and use of stress coping strategies among Malaysian youths. Previous studies have emphasized the link between addiction to gaming and coping strategies (Plante et al., 2019; Clara & Romano, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to determine the effects of gaming addiction on the psychological resilience and stress coping skills of Malaysian youths, providing insights into how excessive gaming behaviour affects their ability to recover from stress and adversity, and provide insights which can inform clinical practices, educational interventions, and policymakers to address the issue of gaming addiction.

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#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To determine if gaming addiction significantly predicts psychological resilience and is associated with stress coping among Malaysian youths.
2. To compare the psychological resilience score among contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers.
3. To associate the stress coping skills among the contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there a significant relationship between gaming addiction and psychological resilience and stress coping among Malaysian youths?

RQ<sub>2</sub>: Are there significant differences in psychological resilience scores among contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers?

RQ<sub>3</sub>: Are there significant differences in stress coping skills among the contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers?

## **1.6 Research Hypothesis**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between gaming addiction and psychological resilience and stress coping among Malaysian youths.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There are no significant differences in psychological resilience scores among contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers.

H0<sub>3</sub>: There are no significant differences in stress coping skills among the contrast group, highly engaged gamers, problem gamers and addicted gamers.

## **1.7 Significance of Research**

This study aims to fill the gap in literature by investigating the effect of gaming addiction on resilience and stress coping skills among Malaysian youths, offering insights into how cultural factors influence these dynamics (Tang et al., 2017). Understanding these effects can inform the development of targeted psychological interventions, promoting mental health and well-being among youths. The findings can guide educational policies, helping schools integrate resilience-building and coping strategies into curricula (Mentzoni et al., 2011), and raise parental awareness about supporting healthy gaming habits (Wartberg et al., 2020). Additionally, the study's insights can inform public health campaigns and resource allocation for mental health services (King & Delfabbro, 2016; Loton et al., 2016).

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

### **1.8.1 Conceptual Definition**

***Gaming Addiction.*** Gaming addiction, also known as digital game addiction, can be defined as a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive and repetitive engagement in digital gaming activities, whether conducted online or offline, resulting in a persistent inability to control gaming behaviors despite facing social, emotional, or psychological challenges (Özdemir & Karaboğa, 2021; Almourad et al., 2020). This addiction is associated with adverse effects on mental health, including heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Gong et al., 2021). Various factors, such as impulsivity, a tendency towards sensation seeking, and dysfunctional family dynamics, may contribute to the onset of gaming addiction (Ahmmad, 2020). The addictive properties of gaming can lead to conflicts that negatively impact various areas of an individual's life, underscoring the difficulties faced in overcoming this behavior (Eka et al., 2023). Brunborg et al. (2013) reported that the contrast group are gamers who do not exhibit significant signs of gaming addiction, and that they experience minimal or no issues related to gaming, have a balanced life with healthy gaming habits with no significant impact on daily life. In addition, highly engaged group are gamers who show high levels of engagement in gaming but do not meet more than one of the core criteria for addiction, and that they experience intense involvement in gaming, potentially high hours spent gaming, but maintain control and

balance with other activities. The problematic group are gamers who meet two or three of the core criteria for addiction (problems, conflict, withdrawal, relapse), and that they experience moderate issues related to gaming, such as interpersonal conflicts, neglect of responsibilities, and signs of withdrawal. The addicted group consists of gamers who meet all four core criteria for addiction (problems, conflict, withdrawal, relapse), and that they experience severe issues due to gaming, significant negative impact on personal, social, and occupational areas, loss of control over gaming behavior.

***Psychological Resilience.*** Psychological resilience refers to the ability to adjust and recover from obstacles, hardship, and pressure (Babić et al., 2020). It involves the capacity to recover from challenging experiences, maintain psychological well-being, and effectively manage stress and challenges (Canale et al., 2019). Key components of resilience include overcoming setbacks, sustaining a positive outlook, and feeling in control (Luthar et al., 2000). The importance of psychological resilience cannot be overstated in mitigating the adverse effects of stress and may assist individuals in regulating their responses to stressors, thereby decreasing the likelihood of adopting maladaptive coping strategies, such as gaming addiction.

***Stress Coping Skills.*** Stress coping skills represent a variety of strategies and techniques individuals utilize to manage and alleviate stress. These skills are vital for sustaining emotional balance and mental well-being in the face of stressors. Effective stress

coping skills include active coping, positive reframing, self-regulation, and problem-solving abilities (Liang et al., 2020). These can be problem-focused coping (directly addresses the stress source), emotion-focused coping (managing emotional responses) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and avoidant coping (denial, distraction or substance use) (Holahan et al., 2005). Dias et al. (2012) reported that problem-focused coping includes tackling the source of stress directly to eliminate or reduce it, and it involves problem-solving, time management, seeking information or assistance, and taking direct action. In addition, emotion-focused coping includes managing the emotional response to the stressor rather than changing the stressor itself, and it involves seeking social support, using relaxation techniques, positive reframing, and acceptance. Avoidant coping involves ignoring, avoiding, or withdrawing from the stressor or stress-related thoughts and feelings, and it includes denial, substance use, distraction, procrastination, and disengagement. Research indicates that individuals possessing higher levels of stress coping skills are more adept at managing stress and are at a lower risk of resorting to maladaptive coping strategies, including gaming addiction, as a means of stress relief.

### **1.8.2 Operational Definition**

***Gaming Addiction.*** Gaming addiction was measured using the Gaming Addiction Scale (GAS). Participants are then classified into different gamer categories (addicted,

problem, highly engaged, or contrast group) based on the established criteria (Brunborg et al., 2013).

***Psychological Resilience.*** Psychological resilience was measured using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS).

***Stress Coping Skills.*** Stress coping skills were measured using the Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE). Scores from 14 subscales, including self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humor, acceptance, religion, and self-blame (Nisa & Siddiqui, 2020) were measured accordingly.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

This research is grounded in a theoretical framework that integrates psychological perspectives to understand the complex interplay between gaming addiction, resilience, and stress coping mechanisms in Malaysian youths.

In their publication, Canale et al. (2019) delve into various addiction theories that explain the concept of gaming addiction as a behavioural disorder. These theories offer

valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms driving addictive behaviours, thereby illuminating the effects of gaming addiction on psychological resilience and stress coping mechanisms. The addiction theory explains the process through which engaging in gaming repeatedly can escalate into an addiction, characterized by a compulsive urge to continue despite adverse effects. This theory is founded upon neurobiological and psychological underpinnings, suggesting that addictive behaviours modify brain functions, especially in areas related to reward and motivation (Volkow et al., 2016). Within the spectrum of gaming addiction, individuals are distinguished by severe issues such as conflict, withdrawal, and relapse. In contrast, individuals who are highly engaged in gaming may exhibit extreme gaming behaviors yet not cross the threshold into addiction, while those identified as problem gamers display intermediate manifestations of these issues. The addictive qualities of gaming can detract from psychological resilience, as it often fosters maladaptive coping mechanisms, thereby diminishing individuals' capacity to effectively manage stress and adversities (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). This conceptual framework aids in distinguishing among the varying severities of gaming behaviors and their implications for mental health, underscoring the significance of comprehending addiction's role in resilience and coping strategies.

Kaya et al. (2023) underscored the importance of basic psychological needs in the prediction of online gaming addiction. According to this theory, the satisfaction of fundamental psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is

believed to be pivotal in comprehending the impact of gaming addiction on psychological resilience and stress coping skills. The theory of basic psychological needs, derived from self-determination theory, posits that human well-being depends on the satisfaction of three fundamental needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Within the gaming domain, these needs can be fulfilled due to the interactive and immersive aspects of games. For instance, games often provide a sense of competence through the achievement of goals, autonomy via choice and control within the game environment, and relatedness through social interactions with fellow players. However, when gaming becomes addictive, these needs are superficially addressed, resulting in an overreliance on gaming as a principal source of satisfaction. Such overreliance can diminish psychological resilience and effective stress coping mechanisms, as individuals may find it challenging to seek fulfillment and support beyond the gaming context. Gamers who are highly engaged but not addicted may manage to balance their gaming activities with other life domains, whereas those identified as addicted may neglect other essential aspects of life, negatively impacting their resilience and coping strategies (Rigby & Ryan, 2011).

In their discussion, Canale et al. (2019) stress the significance of psychological resilience in moderating the relationship between problematic online gaming behavior and perceived stress. This theory posits that bolstering resilience can mitigate the adverse effects of gaming addiction on stress levels, consequently influencing the coping strategies individuals employ. The theory of resilience emphasizes the ability to recover from stress

and adversity through the adoption of adaptive and flexible coping strategies (Masten, 2001). Within the framework of gaming addiction, this theory suggests that varying degrees of gaming engagement influence resilience differently. Highly engaged gamers may develop resilience through the problem-solving skills and social support received from gaming communities, whereas addicted gamers might experience a decline in resilience due to the adverse effects of their addictive gaming habits. Problem gamers occupy a middle ground, experiencing both the positive and negative consequences of their gaming activities. Resilience theory highlights the necessity for a balanced approach to gaming, where the potential for enhancing coping skills and stress relief is maximized, yet not at the expense of falling into addiction (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

### **1.9.1 Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Addiction**

This model posits that addictive conduct among teenagers and young individuals in the educational system has been a focal point of psychological and pedagogical investigations (Minyurova et al., 2022). Despite the presence of current literature regarding addictive behaviors, a thorough examination of methodological strategies and empirical discoveries within this domain remains deficient. This underscores the necessity for further scrutinizing addictive behaviors, encompassing addiction frameworks such as the cognitive-behavioral model, to enrich our comprehension of addiction across diverse demographics. The cognitive-behavioral model postulates that addictive behaviors, encompassing substance

misuse or behavioral addictions like gaming addiction, are upheld through a sequence of cognitive misrepresentations, maladaptive convictions, and reinforcement mechanisms (Wang et al., 2019). Individuals might partake in addictive behaviours to handle adverse emotions, pursue gratification, or relieve stress, culminating in a reinforcement loop that perpetuates the addiction. In the realm of lockdown experiences, the cognitive-behavioural framework of addiction can be utilized to comprehend how individuals might resort to addictive activities, such as excessive gaming or substance use, as a mechanism for dealing with stress or loneliness (Gerrand, 2023). This framework underscores the significance of cognitive elements, like ineffective coping mechanisms and distorted perceptions of the advantages of addictive behaviours, in perpetuating addictive tendencies. Moreover, the notion of rebalancing power dynamics in games like Monopoly can be associated with the cognitive-behavioural model of addiction (Hackett & Coghlan, 2023). Within addiction, individuals may view the addictive conduct as a strategy to re-establish authority, tackle difficulties, or attain a sense of dominance or gratification, thereby strengthening the cycle of addiction.

### **1.9.2 Resilience Theory**

The theory of resilience posits that individuals possess the capability to effectively adjust to unfavourable circumstances, demonstrating the capacity to recover from challenges and uphold their well-being (Canale et al., 2019). This theoretical framework underscores the

significance of psychological resilience, which is defined as the capacity to adapt positively to adverse situations (Canale et al., 2019). Resilience is viewed as a dynamic attribute that can be nurtured and reinforced through various elements, including social support, coping mechanisms, and individual resources (Zou, 2024). The concept of resilience theory is informed by diverse frameworks, one of which is Polk's Resilience Theory, which amalgamates principles from health theories and psychological studies to comprehend resilience within the context of chronic illness and underprivileged communities (Moore, 2023). This theory proposes that resilience is grounded in the expansion of awareness and the theory of unitary human beings, underscoring the interrelation between health and well-being (Moore, 2023). Research has indicated that psychological resilience plays a pivotal role in attenuating the adverse effects of addictive behaviours, including mobile phone addiction and gaming addiction (Ma et al., 2022; Shen, 2020). The theoretical framework of resilience emphasizes the protective function of psychological resilience in diminishing the seriousness of addictive behaviours and enhancing mental well-being (Zhao et al., 2022). Moreover, the application of resilience theory spans across various domains, such as expatriate adaptation models and the well-being of adolescents amidst the COVID-19 crisis (Gao, 2023; Varela, 2023). The theory asserts that resilience acts as a safeguard against risk factors and challenging circumstances, empowering individuals to effectively cope with stress and obstacles (Varela, 2023).

### **1.9.3 Transactional Model of Stress and Coping**

This model offers a thorough structure for comprehending how individuals perceive and react to stressors (Ouko, 2024). Stress is conceptualized as a dynamic process involving the interaction between individuals and their surroundings within this model (Ouko, 2024). It underscores that individuals partake in a cognitive appraisal process to assess the importance of a stressor and their resources to handle it (Ouko, 2024). The transactional model argues that individuals' cognitive evaluations of stressors impact the coping mechanisms they employ to address inner or outer pressures (Hill, 2023). This cognitive appraisal process comprises primary appraisal, where individuals gauge the significance of the stressor, and secondary appraisal, where they assess their capacity to deal with it using their resources (Miller et al., 2021). Individuals choose coping strategies based on these assessments to tackle the stressor and its accompanying difficulties (Miller et al., 2021). Additionally, the transactional model stresses that coping encompasses cognitive and behavioural reactions that individuals utilize when they perceive stressors as exceeding their capabilities (Saleem, 2023). Coping mechanisms vary from problem-focused strategies aimed at directly handling the stressor to emotion-focused approaches focused on regulating emotional distress (Saleem, 2023). The success of coping techniques is affected by individuals' judgments of the stressor and their perceived capability to address it (Saleem, 2023).

#### **1.9.4 Cultural Considerations**

This study acknowledges that understanding the nuances of culture and societal norms is essential in formulating a theoretical framework that is attuned to the cultural environment and equipped to effectively tackle issues pertaining to addiction in the context of Malaysia. Cultural elements such as collectivism, familial values, and societal expectations can influence the perception and management of gaming addiction within the Malaysian populace (Grills et al., 2022). The cultural emphasis on family unity and deference to authority in Malaysia could impact the way individuals seek assistance for gaming addiction and the extent of social backing accessible to them (Wang et al., 2019). Furthermore, cultural beliefs and practices concerning mental well-being and coping mechanisms may mould how individuals react to stress and addiction. By incorporating cultural dimensions into the theoretical framework, researchers can pinpoint culturally fitting coping strategies and interventions that resonate with Malaysian communities (Zaharim et al., 2022). Additionally, language and communication approaches play a pivotal role in effectively engaging with Malaysian communities. The translation of evaluation tools and interventions into Malay, coupled with ensuring cultural appropriateness, can heighten the efficacy of studies on gaming addiction and mental health outcomes in Malaysia (Ghazi, 2023). Furthermore, recognizing the influence of cultural norms on stigma, help-seeking behaviors, and social support systems is imperative in

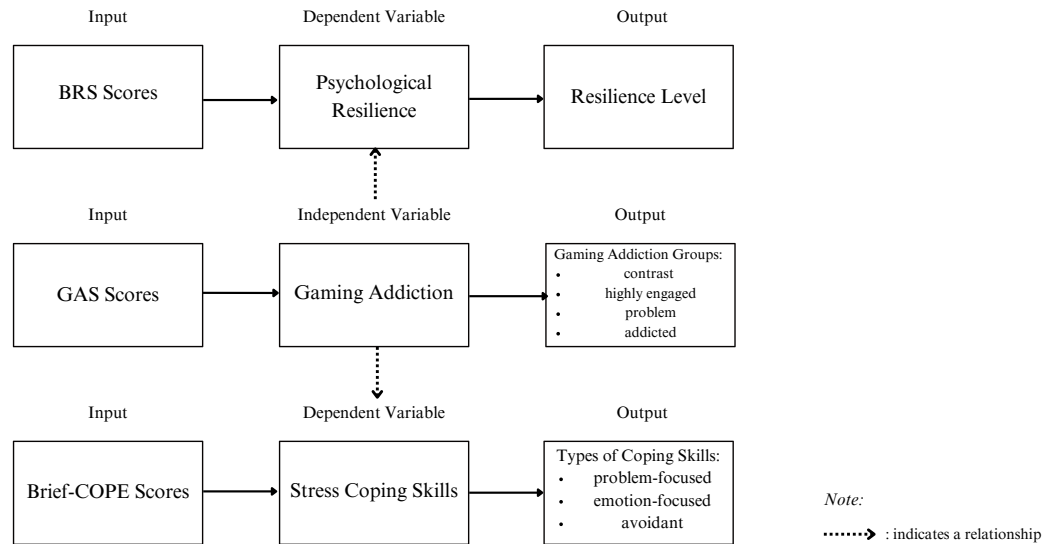
crafting a holistic theoretical framework that addresses the distinctive hurdles encountered by Malaysians grappling with gaming addiction (Giree, 2024).

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying the impact of gaming addiction on psychological resilience and stress coping among Malaysian youths. This integrative framework will inform the development of targeted interventions and prevention programs that are culturally sensitive and address the unique needs of this population.

### **1.10 Conceptual Framework**

This study proposes a conceptual model between gaming addiction and psychological resilience and stress coping skills among youths in Malaysia (Figure 1). Gaming addiction would lead to lower levels of psychological resilience (Turel et al., 2016). Highly engaged gamers might display moderate resilience, whereas problem and addicted gamers are expected to show significantly reduced resilience. Higher severity of gaming addiction might result in a lower effectiveness of stress coping skills. Gaming addiction would also lead to unhealthy stress coping skills (Lin et al., 2021). Contrast and highly engaged gamers might employ more adaptive coping strategies, while problem and addicted gamers might rely on maladaptive strategies.

**The Correlation of Gaming Addiction on Psychological Resilience and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Malaysian Youths**



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework for The Correlation of Gaming Addiction on Psychological Resilience and Stress Coping Mechanisms Among Malaysian Youths

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Gaming Addiction**

In recent times, gaming addiction, also referred to as problematic gaming or Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), has become a major concern, especially for youths. People are more likely to develop compulsive gaming habits due to the widespread use of digital technology and online gaming platforms, which can negatively impact their everyday functioning and psychological health. The prevalence, risk factors, repercussions, and treatment options of gaming addiction are all examined in this review of the literature.

## **2.2 Definition and Conceptualization of Gaming Addiction**

A pattern of excessive and obsessive gaming behavior that significantly impairs or distresses a person in many aspects of their life is referred to as gaming addiction, also known as problematic gaming or internet gaming disorder (World Health Organisation, 2019). Gaming disorder is defined as persistent and recurrent gaming behavior that results in clinically significant impairment or distress, as indicated by impaired control over gaming, prioritizing gaming over other activities, and continuing to game in spite of negative outcomes, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The obsessive aspect of gaming behavior and its detrimental effects on people's functioning and well-being are highlighted in this conception of gaming addiction. It acknowledges gaming addiction as a behavioral addiction that resembles substance use disorders and is defined by an inability to regulate one's gaming behavior and the unfavorable effects of excessive gaming.

A number of theoretical frameworks and models have been put out to explain the development and maintenance of gaming addiction. According to Griffiths (2005), the biopsychosocial model of addiction suggests that the interplay of biological, psychological, and social elements leads to the development of gaming addiction. Genetic susceptibility and neurochemical imbalances are examples of biological variables that may increase a person's risk of developing a gaming addiction. The emergence and maintenance of gaming