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Generation Game

A Report by Kaspersky
December 2020

Executive Summary

Video games, gaming and esports, while no longer relegated to the bedroom, remain stigmatized across cultures and generations. To help create better bonds, gamers can look to create parallels with parents' own hobbies, and parents can look to appreciate gaming's sociability to understand and connect to the gamers in their families.

Intro

Gaming has exponentially exploded this year, with various global lockdowns building habits and bonding groups like no other medium. And yet, culturally, it is an enigma. No other industry captures the hearts of so many, yet remains in such a "if you know, you know" niche. This is exacerbated between generations, with a lack of understanding of both content and culture, not least by parents, creating a damaging disconnect in the family dynamic.

Generation Game looks at the state of global gaming in 2020, considers what the dynamics are between gamers and their parents, and considers what can be done to break down barriers and stigmas. We also ask mothers – who either game themselves or buck the trend and support their gamer kids' passions – what they see and can advise, to help stop stigmas and build better bonds.

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Our Research

Generation Game was commissioned by Kaspersky and conducted by Savanta in November 2020, over 17 countries and 5,031 respondents in Russia, USA & UK (at least 500 each), Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and UAE (at least 250 each). All respondents were under 35, spread evenly across gender, age and socioeconomics within that, consider themselves gamers, and game at least 5-10 hours per week on a PC.

Key Findings

- **One quarter** (27%) of gamers globally hide how much they game from their parents
- Relief from stress and anxiety (**62%**) is the primary reason gamers game in 2020
- Creativity (**43%**) and sociability (**34%**) are the key positives that parents see in gaming
- Gamers have succumbed to cheating (**33%**), stress (**31%)**, bullying (**19%**) and theft of in-game valuables (**18%**) while gaming
- Half (**47%**) of gamers think that they would bond better with their parents if they were able to talk with them about gaming

Gaming by Numbers

- Overall industry worth – $159 billion (10% YoY)
- Number of gamers globally – 2.7 billion (10% YoY)
- Average number of hours played per week – casual 7, hardcore 50
- 48% gamers say they spend more time watching games on YouTube can playing

Sections
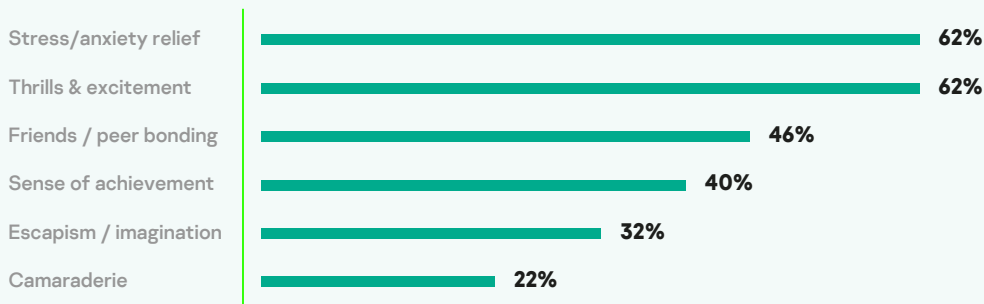
- Gaming in 2020
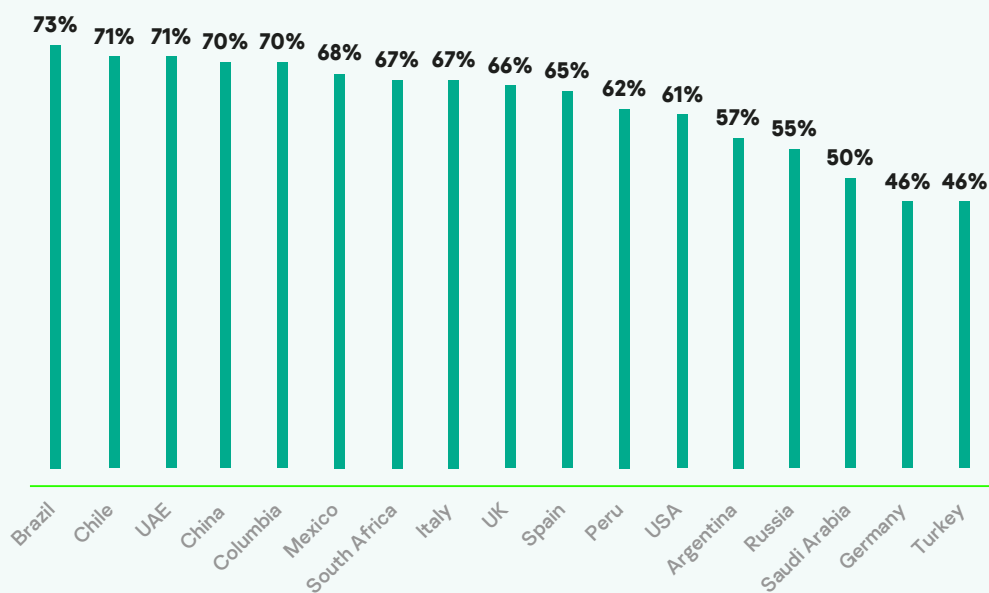- Stigmas and Stones
- Generation Game
- Network Therapy

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Gaming in 2020

Even before lockdown, the gaming industry leapfrogged the film industry in terms of sheer numbers. But in this difficult year, gaming has become an even stronger force – it not only provides entertainment for billions, it also is a unique conduit for connection, conversation and camaraderie. Our research looked at what benefits received from gaming. Nearly two thirds of gamers (**62%** globally) said gaming relieved anxiety and stress – something that has seen a huge rise this year. Anxiety relief is a particular panacea in Brazil (**73%**), Chile (**71%**), Colombia (**70%**) and UAE (**71%**) and is more beneficial than any escapism (**32%**) or sense of achievement (**40%**) they get from gaming.

What do you get out of gaming?

Stress/anxiety relief	**62%**
Thrills & excitement	**62%**
Friends / peer bonding	**46%**
Sense of achievement	**40%**
Escapism / imagination	**32%**
Camaraderie	**22%**

Gamers who get the stress and anxiety relief from gaming

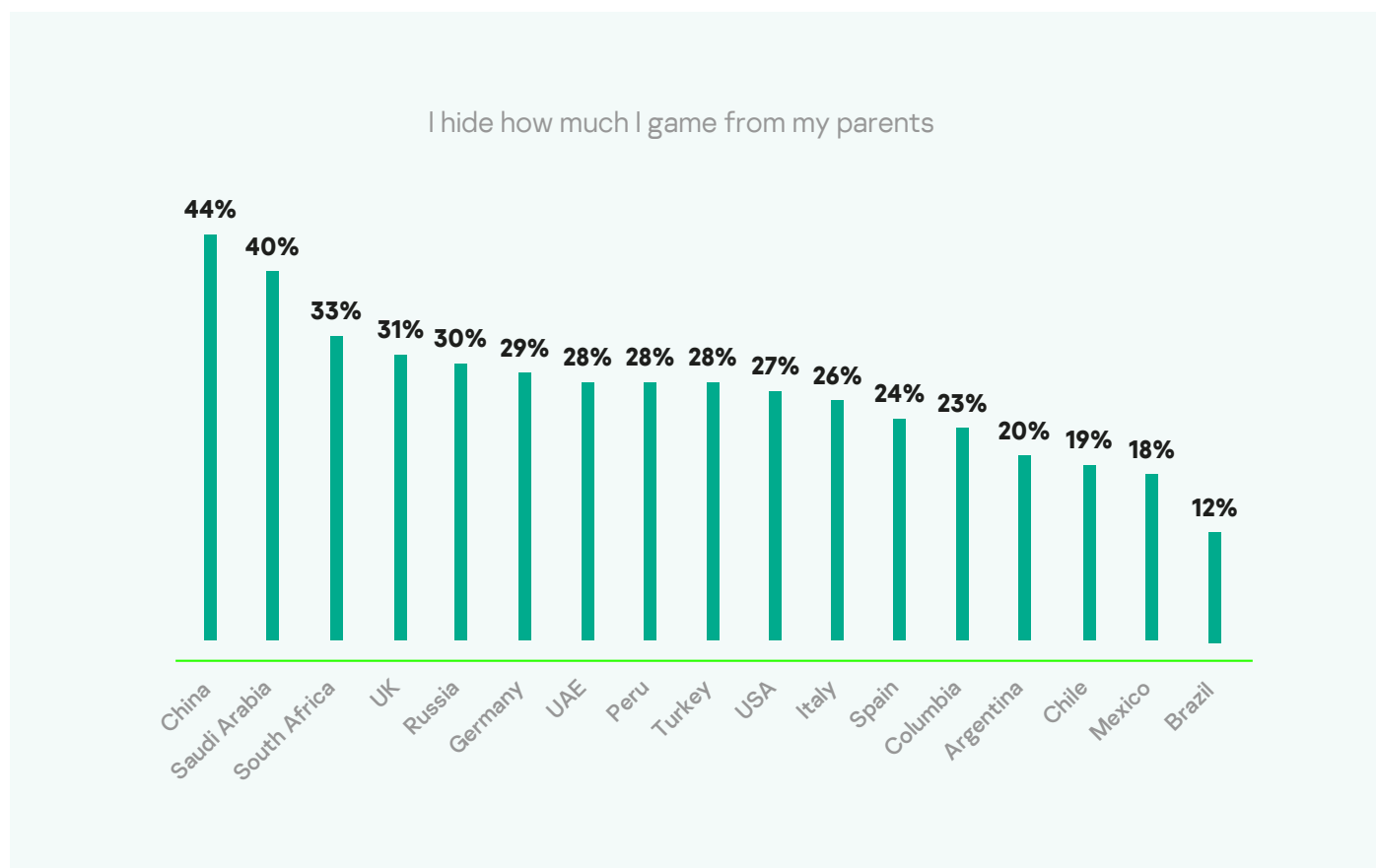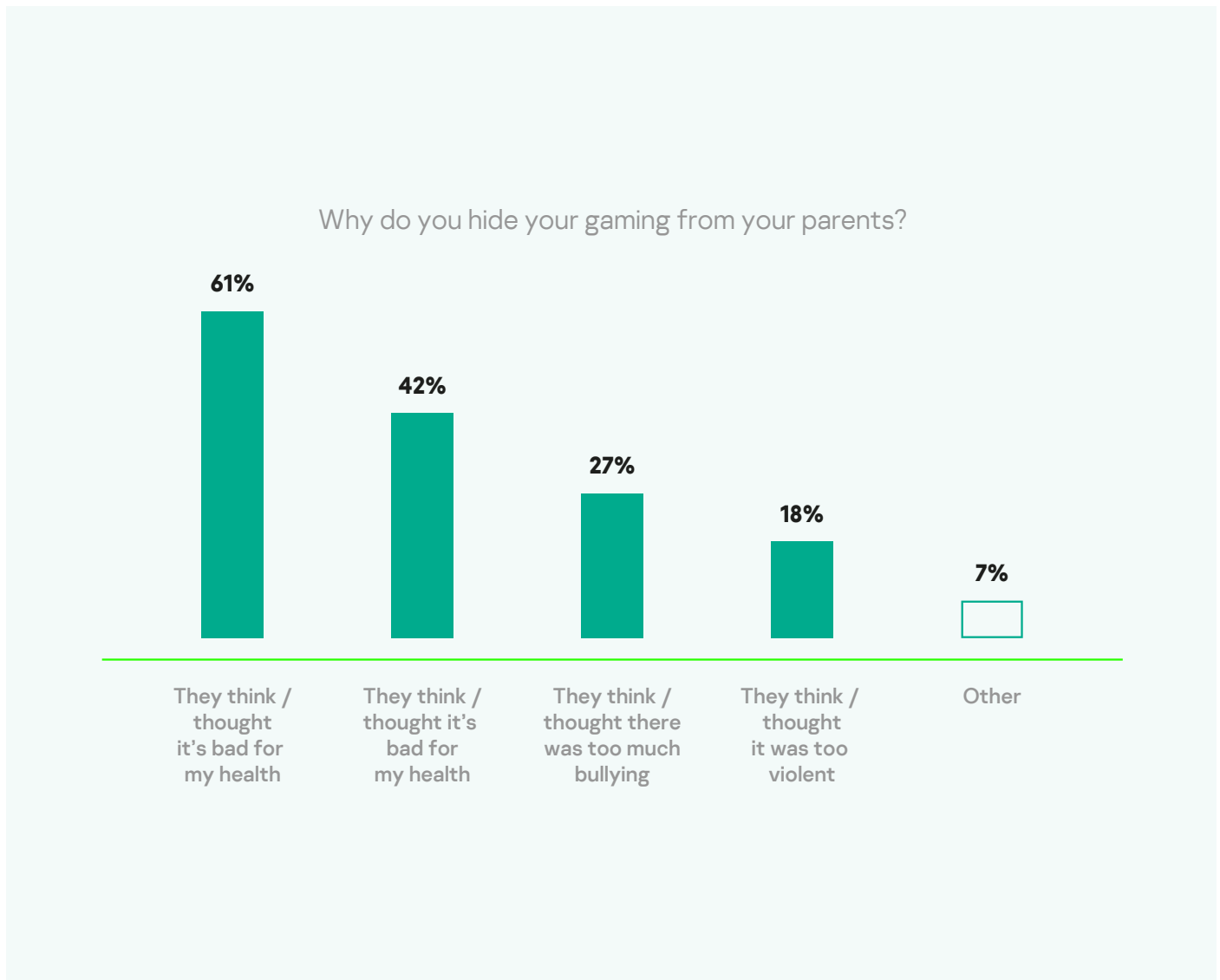| Brazil	Chile	UAE	China	Columbia	Mexico	South Africa	Italy	UK	Spain	Peru	USA	Argentina	Russia	Saudi Arabia	Germany	Turkey
73%	71%	71%	70%	70%	68%	67%	67%	66%	65%	62%	61%	57%	55%	50%	46%	46%

Stigmas and Stones

As an industry most often famed for pace, soundtracks and shooters, stress relief is a vital component that should not be overlooked. And yet, it so often can be: archaic or legacy views of what it is to be a gamer, often portrayed in other forms of media, fail to capture the positives, and headlines often focus on the negatives.

So why is this? Perhaps it is because gaming in its current form is so new compared to other industries of its size – in fact, no other industry has seen such a huge growth since its (re)birth with the advent of online multiplayer and streaming in the early 2010s.

Generation Game

Kaspersky's research shows that there is a huge intergenerational disconnect in understanding when it comes to gaming, streaming and watching streams. Over a quarter of gamers (**27%**) still hide how much they game from their parents, with nearly half of gamers in China (**44%**) and a third of the UK (**31%**). Negative health impact is cited as the major reason why, with nearly two thirds (**61%**) saying their parents think gaming is bad for their health, well over one third (**42%**) saying it "rots their brains" and one in five (**19%**) simply seeing no positives to gaming at all. This of course contrasts to the positives that gamers feel and perceive.

I hide how much I game from my parents

Country	Percentage
China	44%
Saudi Arabia	40%
South Africa	33%
UK	31%
Russia	30%
Germany	29%
UAE	28%
Peru	28%
Turkey	28%
USA	27%
Italy	26%
Spain	24%
Columbia	23%
Argentina	20%
Chile	19%
Mexico	18%
Brazil	12%

Why do you hide your gaming from your parents?

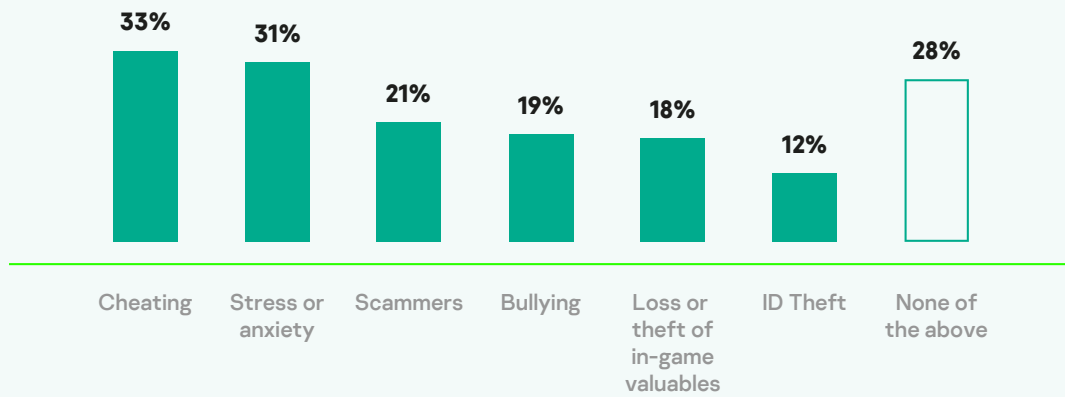| They think / thought it's bad for my health	They think / thought it's bad for my health	They think / thought there was too much bullying	They think / thought it was too violent	Other
61%	42%	27%	18%	7%

When asked about the positives though, gaming is seen by parents as a strong creative outlet by nearly half (**43%**) and particularly in Mexico (**54%**), South Africa (**55%**) and the US (**51%**). It is also seen as developing social skills (**34%**) and problem solving (**31%**). Learning a foreign language (**32%** globally) scores highly in non-native English-speaking countries, especially Turkey (**47%**) and Saudi Arabia (**50%**).

It is worth noting the downsides to gaming:

· **12%** have had their ID stolen, up to **18%** when it comes to in-game valuables
· **Nearly 1 in 5** (19%) gamers have also been bullied. This is **over one quarter** (27%) in Saudi Arabia and the US, and **44%** in Russia
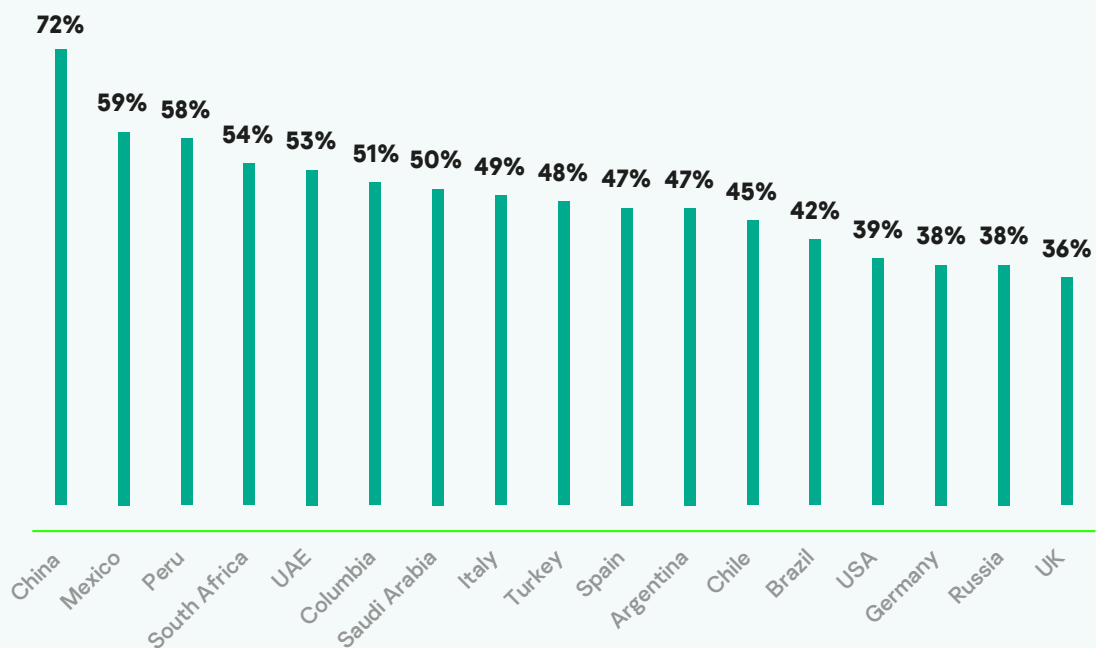· **33%** of gamers have suffered at the hands of cheaters

All of these combined cause stress and anxiety in **31%** of them – the very thing they look to gaming to remove.

Have you ever fallen foul to any of the following while gaming?

Cheating	Stress or anxiety	Scammers	Bullying	Loss or theft of in-game valuables	ID Theft	None of the above
33%	31%	21%	19%	18%	12%	28%

Gamers are keen to better engage with their families about their passion – both the good and the bad – but it is clear that the stigmas are preventing these conversations from happening. Nearly half (**46%**) believed that better or more informed conversations about gaming would create long-term benefits to their family relationships, rising astronomically to nearly three quarters (**72%**) in China.

I would get on with my parents better if we talked about gaming

China	Mexico	Peru	South Africa	UAE	Columbia	Saudi Arabia	Italy	Turkey	Spain	Argentina	Chile	Brazil	USA	Germany	Russia	UK
72%	59%	58%	54%	53%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	47%	45%	42%	39%	38%	38%	36%

Network Therapy

Network therapy is the social bond you can form online with like-minded peers. This is true for gamers but also those near gamers; there are many groups that work towards bridging the divide.

So how can this all be remedied? One key focus for both sides is to address where the connections lie and what the potential parallels are. Help is here from those who have been able to break through stereotypes:

Anne Fish, mum to Benjyfishy (Fortnite player for NRGgg and 2.5m Twitch subscribers):

- "eSports and gaming offer transferable skills like leadership and communication, and colleges and universities are doing courses to help with this"
- "Having the gaming machine in a public space means it can become part of family conversation"
- "We're all stuck indoors so what better time to engage a bit more in your kids' games"

Keza MacDonald, Video Games Editor, Guardian:

- "Supporting your kids' passions is vital, even if you don't share them"
- "It's about seeing games the same way as you'd see any other interest and not necessarily as potentially insidious force"
- "Gaming careers are well paid and range from music to art, development to coding, design, writing... and even journalism"

Ruth Payne, mum to Behzinga (one of Sidemen and with 4m YouTube subscribers):

- "It's important to keep an eye what they're doing, but you do need to trust them"
- "You don't have to know how to game to get games"
- "Gaming has given Ethan a huge, new confidence"
- "Gaming friends are a huge support system, especially right now"

These mums and their unique experiences and knowledge to create Kaspersky's first-ever Mum's Got Game panel show, broadcasting on YouTube (LINK) on December 9th at 11am GMT.