

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE MOBILE GAMERS

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Abstract: For millennials, engaging in games on their mobile devices has evolved into an intriguing leisure activity. With the diversity of online, free apps available, mobile games are a highly helpful learning tool in the educational setting. It is a determinant of how adolescents and young adults develop in their day-to-day lives. The paper will examine the real-world experiences of mobile gamers and draw themes from their narratives. The information was acquired using the method of qualitative research through focus group discussions, interviews, and observation. The five participants in this study met the following requirements: played at least three distinct mobile games and spent a maximum of 10 hours per day playing mobile games.

Keywords: mobile gamer, mobile games, online games, virtual reality, gamification, cost of fun, struggles of mobile gamers.

I. INTRODUCTION

As the world grows increasingly technologically savvy and virtual, games are always evolving. Mobile games are a very useful instrument for learning in the context of education due to the broad variety of free online applications and the capacity to be played offline. Poptropica, Mr. Nussbaum, National Geographic Kids, Sheppard Software, and PBS Kids Games are a few of them (Schaaf, 2014). Additionally problematic, especially for parents, are the game's design and psychological undertones. This study aims to examine the impact of internet gaming on the lives of young learners. We look at how different mobile gamers' lives are affected by their diverse gaming activities, even if this is a task that millennials must complete as part of their growth. how the activity affected the participants' behavior, attitudes, employment, and academic success in the real world. Due to rising internet usage, online gaming has become a new phenomena that has become extremely important in the lives of today's young students. Over the past ten years, there have been noticeable socioeconomic changes in the resources, opportunities, and lifestyles available to modern adolescents. This new social reality looks to be a platform for a deeper engagement with the rapid, immediate, and uncontrolled type of life energy that must give an activity a sense of instantaneity (Malhotra, Bholra, 2014). Dobrilova (2019) asserts that games that are casual and ultra-casual predominate on mobile platforms. Both young and old gamers like playing games like bingo and simulations of arcades, lifestyles, and riddles. The majority of customers prefer playing fast, easy games. Love Balls and SpinUp Jump are examples of these games, which are frequently referred to as hyper-casual games.

The goal of this study is to examine how mobile gaming affects mobile gamers' lives based on their perspectives and experiences both inside and outside the gaming industry. It is the experience and perspective which will help others in gaining insights into the lives of mobile gamers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Mobile Gaming

Mobile gaming has been increasingly popular in recent years, with millions of people playing games on their smartphones and tablets. However, research suggests that mobile gaming is not without its challenges and challenges. The primary issues that mobile gamers encounter as well as their root causes will be examined in this study of the literature.

One of the main issues with mobile gaming is the prevalence of in-app purchases. Despite the fact that many mobile games may be downloaded and played for free, they occasionally offer in-app purchases that allow players to advance more quickly or gain access to more content. Some players might discover that they spend a lot of money on these things, which could lead to financial difficulties or even addiction (Kim, Lee, & Choi, 2017). Additionally, some mobile games use dishonest or coercive tactics, such as timed discounts and rewards for signing in every day, to persuade players to make purchases (Hagen & Robertson, 2021).

Additional difficulties that mobile gamers confront include the danger of addiction and its damaging impact on mental health. According to study, excessive mobile gaming can lead to problems with sleep and social relationships as well as increased stress, anxiety, and depression (Billieux et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019). Additionally, to encourage players to play longer and develop compulsive habits, several mobile games use techniques like gamification and social rewards (Hagen & Robertson, 2021).

B. Related Studies on Mobile Gaming

A study by Chen and colleagues (2019) explored the motivations and behaviors of mobile gamers. The study found that players were primarily motivated by socialization and competition, and that they played mobile games for an average of 2.5 hours per day.

Another study by Rettie and colleagues (2016) investigated the role of mobile gaming in the daily lives of players. The study found that mobile gaming provided a means of relaxation and stress relief, and that it was integrated into daily routines.

A study by Oh and colleagues (2018) examined the impact of mobile gaming on psychological well-being. The study found that mobile gaming was associated with lower levels of stress and depression, and higher levels of positive affect.

A study by Kardefelt-Winther (2014) investigated the prevalence of problematic mobile gaming and its association with mental health. The study found that problematic mobile gaming was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression.

A study by Cheung and colleagues (2017) examined the impact of mobile gaming on social relationships. The study found that mobile gaming provided opportunities for players to connect with friends and family, and that it strengthened existing relationships.

These studies provide insights into the motivations, behaviors, and experiences of mobile gamers. The studies suggest that mobile gaming is a popular and integrated activity in the lives of many players. Mobile gaming provides opportunities for socialization, relaxation, and stress relief. However, excessive or problematic mobile gaming can have negative effects on mental health. Overall, these studies highlight the need for a balanced approach to mobile gaming and the importance of understanding the lived experiences of mobile gamers.

C. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the experiences and perspectives that occur within and outside of the gaming world of mobile gamers. Specifically, this study sought the answer to the following question.

What are the struggles encountered by mobile gamers?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative method of research. Data were gathered through interviews, observation, and focus group discussion. Case accounts from the lives of five participants was used to demonstrate our objective. Online observation of the social-networking and gaming profiles of the participants was also adopted as an important tool. The interviews were carried out over two sessions for each participant, wherein the narration was recorded and transcribed. The interview proceeded as per the self-constructed schedule that attempted to explore areas of family, online tasks, needs and motivations, and virtues of gaming. As a part of qualitative research ideology, it was ensured that the participants were briefed about the ethics of confidentiality, informed consent, beneficence, etc. An empathetic understanding between the researcher and the participants established the setting of the interview method where sensitive listening, open disclosure, and gathering of descriptive information remained central to this work.

B. Participants

Participants for this study were based on the following criteria: Spent not less than 10 hours in mobile gaming a day; Must have played at least 3 different mobile games; must be at least 18 years old and above. Non-random snowball or chain-referral sampling was used to select the participants from several informants who also served to validate our thematic-based findings.

C. Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure

The interview protocol contains a guide for the participants for them to answer the interview questions properly. The researchers provided input to the key research questions in the protocol for the respondents. The interview guide was made to conduct a qualitative interview that highlights the known and unknown issues on the topic. The participants may reveal many things but by using the instructions, the researchers used the issues needed to explore. The researchers used the recorder feature of a smartphone to record everything in the interview and follow up by taking down notes.

D. Data Analysis

Narrative analysis was used to derive themes from the transcribed textual data of the interview. Narrative analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data that focuses on the stories or narratives that people tell. This approach involves analyzing the structure, content, and context of narratives to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences and construct meaning in their lives. It is used to explore a range of topics, including personal experiences, cultural beliefs, and social norms. One example of a study that uses narrative analysis is the work of Riessman (2008), who analyzed the narratives of breast cancer survivors. Riessman used narrative analysis to examine the ways in which survivors constructed their experiences of cancer and how they made sense of their illness. Through this approach, she was able to identify common themes and patterns in the survivors' stories, as well as the ways in which they used their narratives to make sense of their experiences and find meaning in their lives.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is becoming more and more obvious that social science research could be conducted in online environments. Social network topology provides covert, comprehensive information that is revealing of the users' private information. Furthermore, attributes like anonymity and duplication bring the virtual and actual worlds closer together (Malhotra, 2013). The participants' ages, educational levels, and need structures varied, as did their origins and demographics. The five participants, who ranged in age from 18 to 25, represented a range of educational backgrounds, including college, junior high, and senior high schools. Narrative analysis was used to glean themes from the textual material of the interview. The paragraphs that follow provide an overview of the five major themes that arose from the participants' individual stories.

A. Theme 1: Motivation Towards Learning

Contrary to common belief, playing video games promotes a variety of cognitive abilities, dispelling the notion that it is sedating and cognitively lax. This is particularly true in shooter video games, which academics often refer to as "action" games. (e.g., Halo 4, Grand Theft Auto IV). The majority of the evidence comes from training studies that recruit inexperienced players (those who have played shooter video games infrequently or never) and randomly assign them to play a shooter video game or another genre of video game for the same period of time. In comparison to control participants, those that participate in the shooter video game condition display quicker and more exact attentional allocation, higher visual processing spatial resolution, and superior mental performance.

Participant A, 18, came from a happy family, of 2 siblings with complete parents with them under one roof. She was presently a Junior High School student in one of the national high schools in the province. She plays varied online and offline games such as Mobile Legends, Pou, TempleRun, PacMan, and other games downloadable for free online. Her family is conservative and religious. Her religious and conservative upbringing greatly influenced her identity as a simple and diligent teenager in her studies. As a millennial, learning has no boundaries, mobile phones are as easy as 1-2-3 to manage. Learning new things with the availability of the internet and other online services seemed unlimited just like games which affect her behavior and actions as a mobile gamer.

I love to play games, I felt happy when I play, I am so entertained and enjoy it a lot. I consider myself a gamer and I play mobile games for 10 to 13 hours a day. When I play, I felt I own the world, like I don't want to be interrupted, and I don't want to work and do household chores. I aim for high scores and to increase the level of my game and it feels so challenging.

I'm not ashamed of being a mobile gamer and I am not proud of being one. I haven't experienced playing with others online but I want to try it and I do play games with others in person and I enjoy it. Slightly, I felt that gaming has affected my life in a way positively, like, enjoyment, also because I'm learning the English language as I search for topics on the web. Also, due to my engagement with games, I learn to use other applications online which enable me to perform an audio search which allowed me to search for stories with subtitles on YouTube and learn some moral lessons. Yes, I've learned many techniques in playing games, I felt I am in the character I play because it is a virtual reality kind. I consider gaming to be too much when I already felt the stress in my body like when my eyes and hands are hurting due to excessive hours spent playing games. This happens when the kind of game I play requires quick responses and movements to gain a score. The good thing about gaming and the gaming industry is that it satisfies my imagination like I want to play modeling, run so fast, feed a pet, fight in a war zone, and so on. Some of my favorite games are Mobile Legends, Pou, TempleRun, My Talking Hank, and My Talking Angela. The worst thing about playing mobile games is that, it can ruin your studies and your study habit. With too much engagement in games, I came late to school in the morning and even in the afternoon. I'm thinking of my game score and it excites me more than my studies, I felt like becoming addicted to it. But I don't let myself be addicted to mobile games. When I think of a gamer, I label the individual as having low IQ because they only focus and think of games. Mobile Legends is a kind of game I find memorable. I play mobile games with my cousins at home and the computer café with our own preferred games and I haven't developed any friendships or relationships with others because of it. My parents said that playing games has no gain and ruins my studies because it takes so much of my time instead of doing my tasks in school and at home.

B. Theme 2: Self-Confidence Toward Peers

Your peers could have a big impact on how you behave. If you are surrounded by positive people, you will have more opportunities to carry out healthy activities, make good decisions, and see the positive side of things. Toxic friends, on the other hand, might have a negative impact by encouraging you to take foolish or unhealthy actions. Their constant negativity and criticism can cause you to lose confidence in yourself. Your peers may have an impact on how you see yourself and the kind of person you become. Having friends who will encourage you to become the person you want to be in your life is essential. Realizing how individuals can affect your self-esteem is the first step in taking control of your life and developing a healthy self-image (Revilla, 2006).

Participant B, 22, is a college student, living with his father at home, her mother is working abroad for a living to provide for the needs of the family. He has two siblings who are also college students. Their family settings where one parent is away from home affected their behavior and dispositions in life. Their father is authoritarian in terms of disciplining them which influences his social relationship with others.

Gaming is good entertainment that allows you to be creative and more skillful in the context of a real-life situation. Yes, I consider myself a gamer and I spend at least 10 hours gaming, specifically, in Mobile Legend. I am proud of being a gamer because I know the latest trends in gaming. Having a rank, a higher rank in a game makes me more outstanding among my friends. They look up to me as a model..hahahahaha. Playing games online and in person makes me feel happy and challenged. It affects me more in negative ways because it affects my study habit and relationship with my family. I got bad grades and even failed some of my subjects. I feel so satisfied and rewarded if I win, however, if I lost, I feel more challenged and it increased my eagerness to start the game again and try other tactics to win. Yes, I became creative and gain knowledge in winning the battle with specific skills I appropriate to use. And I gain more friends and I am happy about that. If you forgot to do your household chores or even not at all because of your desire to do gaming. Gaming is too much if it creates problems like too much hunger because I got no time to eat. My allowance and budget are affected and I give priority to load so I can buy data for my online games. Having a short time to sleep has resulted in absences and low grades in my studies. Playing games is great entertainment, with very creative designs and characters. Realistic environment because it's 3D ... It makes me lazy and affects my studies. Ehehehehe I learned to trash talk, someone, I don't even know? A gamer is someone brilliant and a computer expert. He has to be a wise and good decision-maker. Creative and very cooperative and willing to collaborate to win the games.

Yes, when my team ranked 1st in the whole Region and we even experienced being ranked 5 in the whole country...Eheheheh. It makes our friendship stronger even though we are virtually known to each other. And also, the worst experience I had, was when I got Incomplete, failed, and dropped my subject because of these

Yes, a lot. Until now we are communicating and even helping each other. Some are bad influences but most of them are good and even helped me with my problem. My parents are aware that I play mobile games. They always remind me to prioritize my studies. They said that I should be more disciplined and responsible for my future. They are not at any point against my gaming activities and not prohibiting me from this as long as it is done in a proper way.... "study first before anything" they said.

C. Theme 3: Social Relationships

Being social beings, humans depend on the love, concern, and acceptance of others. Because relationships are such a fundamental part of the human experience, it is difficult to picture what our lives would be like without them. Think about each relationship you have. Some of them are work-related, while others are personal. Some connections are only superficial, while others are established profoundly. You probably had a friend with you for most of your favorite childhood memories, if you think back on them. We need people in our lives who can make us happy, evaluate our potential, impart knowledge, and live with us. Children's social and emotional development depend heavily on the development of their interpersonal interactions. Fostering social and emotional development through positive relationships.

Participant C, 19, a senior high school student, came from a family whose parents are separated from each other. He lives with his mother and he is the only boy of five siblings. His social status and family background affected his personality as a student, child, brother, friend, and social relationships. As an ordinary individual with a unique personality, he was engaged in mobile gaming.

Yes, of course I consider myself a gamer, and gaming for me is more entertaining and a stress reliever. Every day, I spent 10 to 12 hours gaming. I am proud of being a gamer, especially when I got the highest rank...I love to play in person with friends. Of course, yes, gaming affects my studies and habits. I feel better and more satisfied when I play mobile games. Yes, I learned to become friendly and more tactical or strategic to survive and win the game. But gaming for me can be considered too much if you forget to take care of yourself and become addicted. Gaining more friends of course is my favorite thing about the gaming industry. Becoming addicted to games and having failed my subject is the worst thing gaming has brought into my life. I become unhealthy and sick because of bad eating habits. For me, a gamer is a hero and a legend, strong and realistic in thinking. A gamer is also practical in decision-making with the immediate application of knowledge as possible. My memorable gaming experience is when I feel my subject. I formed my one and only girlfriend in gaming. My parents are not aware that I played mobile games. If they are, they've probably disagreed and would not support me in my studies.

D. Theme 4: Mobile Games Addiction and School Withdrawal

According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), Video game addiction is still not sufficiently established to be considered a separate mental disease. Playing video games for an inordinate period of time—sometimes more than 12 hours per day—is referred to as "video game addiction," especially when it comes to children. However, when gamers refer to themselves as "addicted," they often do not mean this in a medical sense; rather, they imply that they play video games excessively and maybe compulsively because they find it entertaining. When a person is actually addicted to video games, they start to establish a gaming habit that negatively affects important elements of everyday life. is extremely rare, occurring in just 1% of individuals. Additionally, contrary to other addictions, excessive video gaming dissipates on its own, even without treatment, according to scientists. Most video gamers only experience a brief, obsessive phase of interest, similar to with Minecraft, Pokemon Go, and Fortnite, after which the desire gradually wanes. (How to Treat Your Child's Addiction to Video Games, n.d.)

Participant D, 20, is a college student, living with his father at home and his mother is working abroad. He has two siblings and both studying at the same university. Being a student with an absentee parent, every day is a struggle, yet, coping to have a better future. Having his father and brother at home has somehow made him more persistent in his desire to finish his course. His mother working abroad has inspired him to do better in school and become a better person which affected his behavior and dispositions in life. As a young learner, he tried to spice up his life with activities other than school to make meaning every day, he is working to augment his financial needs and also to sustain his other activities like mobile gaming.

My opinion about gaming is it can destroy your dreams in life, most consequently, if you will be addicted to it. Yes, I consider myself a gamer but I'm not addicted. I play video games if I have no work. Yes, If I'm playing mobile games, I sometimes just get proud of myself, especially, if I win. Based on my experience, I enjoy more playing in person than through online games. I feel that if you play online games and you get addicted, your life will be miserable and it can

destroy your goals in life, especially your future. I sometimes get excited and feel intense in gaming. Yes, I've learned a lot of lessons from playing mobile games because it can destroy relationships with your family, time, and especially your goals if you get addicted. Mobile gaming is affecting my behavior, my time to sleep, have failing grades, and especially my time for family every game can affect your life if you handle it. My favorite thing about gaming is you will be competitive, and learn how to defend yourself. The worst thing I can say is that gaming can destroy your life. I think every gamer has his personality and a gamer is friendly. I have so many memories of gaming that no one can replace them. Yes, I have many friends when I'm playing. My parent's opinion on online games is that gaming can turn you bad if you get addicted.

E. Theme 5: Positive Outlook in Life

In a busy, worried, and stressful environment, it is simple to feel as though the entire world is pushing down on you. You organize everything in advance and rush from one thing to the next as if taking a moment to relax and reflect is forbidden. You then begin to question why life is so stressful and challenging. To escape the hectic pace and stress, take the time to develop and maintain a good outlook on life. Positivity will change how you approach it and live your life, even though it might not get everything off your to-do list. (How to Maintain a Positive Attitude in Life)

Participant E, 25, working professional, living with her parents, with six siblings in the family. All siblings had their own families and lived on their own. She grew up in a religious family, engaged in religious activities, and having graduated from a catholic school is a big factor in her growth as an individual. She works so hard to provide for the needs of her parents who are both senior citizens living with them. She has been a self-supporting student during her college years and graduated with flying colors. Her struggles in life have a big impact on forming her personality and dispositions in life which made her pursue higher goals. Despite discipline, she was tempted to engage in mobile gaming as her pastime hobby.

Gaming is a recreational activity that can help relieve stress when engaged in it purposively. I consider myself a gamer because I enjoy it and it made me feel I'm getting better as a person when I hit a higher score. I play mobile games for an average of 10 hours a day. I am proud of being a gamer but I prefer not to tell anyone about my achievements in games. I prefer to play alone, online, and in person, because I don't want to compete with others. I am satisfied with tracking my levels and achievements in all the mobile games I engaged in. Yes, gaming has affected my life, both positively and negatively. Positively, in a sense, it made me feel that challenges in life can be fought and won. That we all have the chance to achieve higher goals and level up ourselves and become better and better people every day. What challenges are made for us to measure our capacity and prove we are capable of winning? Negatively, in the sense that, I lost my focus in achieving my daily tasks towards accomplishing my goals. It makes me abuse my health when I play the mobile game the whole night and made me sleepless. This makes me irritable at work but I was able to manage it recently with self-discipline. I learn to prioritize my tasks and activities and it made me feel that gaming is a good spice I added to my life as I journey. I learned many things in gaming, I always see gaming as a way to discover myself, what I am capable of, my weaknesses, and my strength. With this, I was able to come up with the idea of winning. That we must always have to arm ourselves, be wise, be reflective, be persistent, be courageous, and be risk-takers to win life. As gaming made me feel always challenged, I've learned a lot of virtues and values about becoming a successful person and that is what I am grateful for in mobile gaming. Gaming can be too much when it ruins life. Like ruins my relationship with my partner because it somehow steals my time and attention instead of spending it bonding with loved ones. My favorite thing about the gaming industry is that, it gives me room for improvement. Like if you fail to win, you can try again and play again until you are satisfied and feel accomplished. It allows you to improve yourself and develops self-confidence in dealing with challenges. The worst thing about gaming is that it makes me greedy, I sometimes don't get enough, and I tend to long for the highest score which makes me more and more disappointed because I can't be always on top. A gamer is a risk-taker and brilliant. I don't have much about memorable games because all the mobile games I played sound the same to me. I was able to share my gaming experience with a stranger and it makes us become friends. My parents don't have much issue with my mobile game activities, they've trusted my disposition and they are happy about the things I am engaged in especially when they see me happy with it.

V. CONCLUSIONS

As they play mobile games, gamers face challenges in many areas of their lives. While gaming may aid in learning, it can also derail a player's desire to do so. Mobile gaming has the potential to either increase or decrease one's peer confidence. Mobile gamers either form healthy social connections or don't as they become addicted on gaming. Additionally, allowing oneself to be consumed by mobile gaming increases the risk of addiction. Last but not least, mobile gamers' positive view on life had a favorable effect on them in the virtual world.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent their child from becoming addicted to mobile gaming, parents should prioritize being attentive to their children's needs and ensuring that they engage in responsible daily activities.

To promote interactive and effective teaching, educational institutions should take into account the advantageous characteristics of mobile games and integrate them into the classroom and teaching delivery.

It is important for government organizations to offer a program that addresses the needs of individuals who are addicted to mobile gaming, or to prevent mobile game addiction altogether.

Psychologists must develop a helpful mechanism for mobile gamers that would keep their mental health.

Future researchers must conduct further studies using more participants and other variables to ensure their accuracy and integrity.

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