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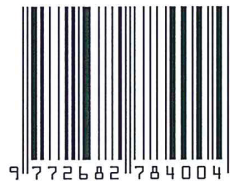
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PLAYING E-SPORT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES

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ABSTRACT

E-sport or electronic sport is a competitive video gaming, where people play against each other online. Other people can watch and it will usually involve cash prizes. As students also play e-sport, it is crucial to know students' opinions on e-sport. So, this study is conducted with the aim to investigate university students' opinions on the benefits and disadvantages of playing e-sport. Questionnaires were distributed to 66 respondents and data gathered was analysed using SPSS 20.0. The findings revealed that playing e-sport benefited the students in terms of they felt happy (mean=4.18), they connected to friends (mean=4.03), and it promoted teamwork (mean=3.97). Meanwhile, the disadvantages of playing e-sport were they felt tired and sleepy (mean=3.58), they had eye fatigue (mean=3.50), and they had neck and back pain (mean=3.33).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Playing online game is not new to students. They play online game for a variety of reasons. Currently, online game can also be term as e-sport. The world of e-sport has bloomed around the world and also in Malaysia. Everyone can participate in e-sport regardless of age and gender, and this includes students. In 2019, e-sport was included as a sport in Southeast Asean Games (SEA Games) that was held in Phillipines. The inclusion of e-sport in SEA Games is the first time in its history (AFP, 2019).

E-sport has been around for a long time. Yet, with the current situation now which is pandemic COVID-19, playing e-sport is one way for people to stay at home and be safe. To achieve this, many events on e-sport have been organized for people to participate as participants or audience. For example, a tournament hosted in Sarawak offered prize money of RM16,600 in total (Aina Azizah, 2020). When people participated as participants or audience, e-sport benefited the society as it can also united all Malaysians (Careem, 2018). However, the disadvantages of playing e-sport can be in term of health either physically or mentally where people can get eye fatigue, neck pain, back pain, hand pain, wrist pain, sleep disorder, or depression (DiFrancisco-Donoghue, Balentine, Schmidt, & Zwibel, 2019; Zwibel, DiFrancisco-Donoghue, DeFeo, & Yao, 2019).

There are many benefits and disadvantages of playing e-sport. Nevertheless, previous studies conducted focused on playing video game which was different from playing e-sport as explained in literature review (Wright, 2011; Yilmaz, Yel, & Griffiths, 2018). There are lack of studies on benefits and disadvantages of playing e-sport among university students in Malaysia (Bányai, Griffiths, Demetrovics, & Király, 2019; DiFrancisco-Donoghue, Balentine, Schmidt, &

Zwibel, 2019; Freeman & Donghee, 2017a; Freeman & Donghee, 2017b; Rai & Gao, 2009; Zwibel, DiFrancisco-Donoghue, DeFeo, & Yao, 2019). Thus, this study was conducted:

- i) to investigate the benefits of playing e-sport according to university students
- ii) to investigate the disadvantages of playing e-sport according to university students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online Game vs. E-Sport

Online game and e-sport are used interchangeably among students. Both online game and e-sport are played online via the Internet. People can play it individually or in groups and interact online. However, there are differences between online game and e-sport where e-sport is for professional or competitive video gaming. It is broadcasted on the Internet for people to watch and money is offered as a reward (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017).

2.2 E-Sport and Students

E-sport industry is growing rapidly, especially among the younger generation. Both males and females participate in e-sport. For male student, Luqman was ranked as the second top Fifa 19 player in Southeast Asia, one of the top five players in Asia, and 112th player in the world. He was 22 years old and from Universiti Malaya. In contrast, Ahmad Shahrin was a newbie. He was 19 years old and from Universiti Teknologi MARA. However, both of them made the nation proud in 2019 at the Gamergy ES Fifa19 2 vs 2 competition in Madrid, Spain as they won first place and took home about RM10,000 cash prize each (Nair, 2019). For female student, Shanice Choo led her team of all women, called Sphynx to win third place in the Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS: GO) category at the World Electronic Sports Games, South East Asia (WESG SEA). They represented Malaysia in 2018. She was 18 years old at that time and from Inti International College Subang (Inti) (Tan, 2019).

In Malaysia, there are also many tournaments for university students. The first e-sport campus tournament was XPAX Kejohanan E-Sukan Kampus (KEK) Semester 1 2019. There were three seasons of KEK. The second season was XPAX KEK Semester 2 2019 and the third season was Yodoo KEK Semester 3 2020. This events gathered the best e-sport teams from colleges and universities around the country to compete for a cash prize of RM150,00-180,000, inclusive of a partial scholarship. The first two KEK were held in universities. However, due to pandemic COVID-19 recently, Yodoo KEK Semester 3 was hosted completely online. This was to prioritise participants' health and safety (Tan, 2019; Aidil, 2020).

Not just tournaments, there are also universities that offer e-sport as a programme or module. Malaysia's first eSports Academy was established by Asia Pacific University (APU) together with eSports Malaysia (Rozana, 2017). Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) on the other hand will introduce e-sport as one of its co-curricular modules in the next semester ("UiTM to introduce e-sports module," 2020).

2.3 Benefits of E-Sport

Playing e-sport has many benefits. The most important benefit is happy and students do not feel stress. According to Baltezarević and Baltezarevic (2019), respondents claimed that playing video games improved the pleasurable stimulation that led to emotional well-being. When they were happy, it helped them to perform in academics. This claim was supported by Rai and Gao (2009) which students improved their learning while playing e-sport. As the language of video games is in English language, ones can also improve their vocabulary (Yilmaz, Yel, & Griffiths, 2018).

Moreover, students can improve in terms of teamwork, interpersonal skills, and communication skills. All of these benefits can be achieved when they interacted with each

other when playing e-sport as it involved many people. For example, Shanice stated that playing e-sport helped her as it moulded her into a better team player, increased her interpersonal skills, and allowed her to break out of her introverted shell (Tan, 2019). In Freeman's and Donghee's (2017a) study, one participant described how being in a college that was far away from home motivated him to seek friends in e-sport. Through e-sport, he built a new social circle and did not feel lonely. This is because they were going to focus on teamwork and collaboration to play e-sport. They also improve their communication skills as communication is important in playing e-sport to accomplish in game tasks and win. Another respondent also said that he was reluctant to work with team members who were unable to communicate well because it led to unavoidable failure (Baltezarević & Baltezarevic, 2019).

Other benefits when playing e-sport are it can enhance decision-making skills, task management skills, and problem solving skills. (Bányai, Griffiths, Demetrovics, & Király, 2019; Freeman & Donghee, 2017b; Baltezarević & Baltezarevic, 2019). A person can enhance his skills and at the same time receive income because playing e-sport can provide income to the individual as reported in news where champion will receive RM3,000 if they win (Aina Azizah, 2020). It can also be a platform for employment opportunities as said by UiTM vice-chancellor, Prof Emeritus Datuk Ir Dr Mohd Azraai Kassim ("UiTM to introduce e-sports module," 2020).

2.4 Disadvantages of E-Sport

Playing e-sport also has its disadvantages. DiFrancisco-Donoghue, Balentine, Schmidt, and Zwibel (2019) had conducted a study to find out the health habits of e-sport players. They found out players that practiced between 3 and 10 hours per day frequently complaint of eye fatigue (56%), neck and back pain (42%), wrist pain (36%), and hand pain (32%).

Apart from having physical problem, people who play e-sport can also have mental problem such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disorder (Zwibel, DiFrancisco-Donoghue, DeFeo, & Yao, 2019). They can also be addicted (Chandy, 2019). It made them to waste their time and become antisocial as they were in front of a screen. A student in Yilmaz's, Yel's, and Griffiths' (2018) study commented that he preferred playing video games instead of playing with his friends. He had no close friendships in his neighborhood. Consequently, this also make an individual to have low self-esteem.

Finally, students also have poor academic performance. It was illustrated in Wright's (2011) study that students who play video games had lower results than students who did not.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design of this study was a survey descriptive research. An online survey was administered to elicit information.

3.2 Sample

The sampling technique was convenience sampling. A total of 66 diploma students were selected to answer questions on the intended area of the study.

3.3 Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a set of questionnaires which consisted of three sections. The first section was Demographic Profile. In the Demographic Profile, the questions were on gender, faculty, semester, play online game, join e-sport, online game voted, time spent per week, and selected range of time. Respondents had to tick the appropriate statement. However, respondents can choose more than once for questions on online game voted and selected range of time. They can also write other options for online games voted.

The second section was Benefits that have 10 statements on the advantages of playing e-sport. Meanwhile, the third section was Disadvantages that also have 10 statements on the disadvantages of playing e-sport. Respondents had to answer the statement based on Likert Scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

3.4 Data Analysis

The gathered data for all the research questions was analysed in SPSS 20.0 using descriptive analysis, specifically percentage and mean.

4. FINDINGS

In total, 66 students consisted of 45 male students (68.2%) and 21 female students (31.8%) involved in the study. From these students, 58 students were from the Mechanical Engineering course (87.9%) and eight students were from the Chemical Engineering course (12.1%). They were from Semester 1 (22.7%), Semester 4 (1.5%), Semester 5 (68.2%), Semester 6 (6.1%), and Semester 7 (1.5%). Majority of them which were 61 students (92.4%) played online game compared to only 5 students (7.6%) who did not play online game. Only 21 students (31.8%) responded that they had joined e-sport while the other 45 students (68.2%) did not.

No.	Variables	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1. Gender	Male	45	68.2
	Female	21	31.8
2. Faculty	Mechanical Engineering	58	87.9
	Chemical Engineering	8	12.1
3. Semester	1	15	22.7
	4	1	1.5
	5	45	68.2
	6	4	6.1
	7	1	1.5
4. Play Online Game	Yes	61	92.4
	No	5	7.6
5. Join E-Sport	Yes	21	31.8
	No	45	68.2

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Students played many types of e-sport. As shown in Figure 1, the most voted online game was PUBG with 29.7%. It is followed by Mobile Legends (28.0%), FIFA 19 (16.9%), Dota 2 (10.2%), and Tekken 7 (6.8%). Star Craft and Counter-Strike shared the same percentage which was 1.7% respectively. Other games are PES, The SIMS, Overwatch, Team Fortress 2, BlackShot, and MAT2 (0.8% respectively).

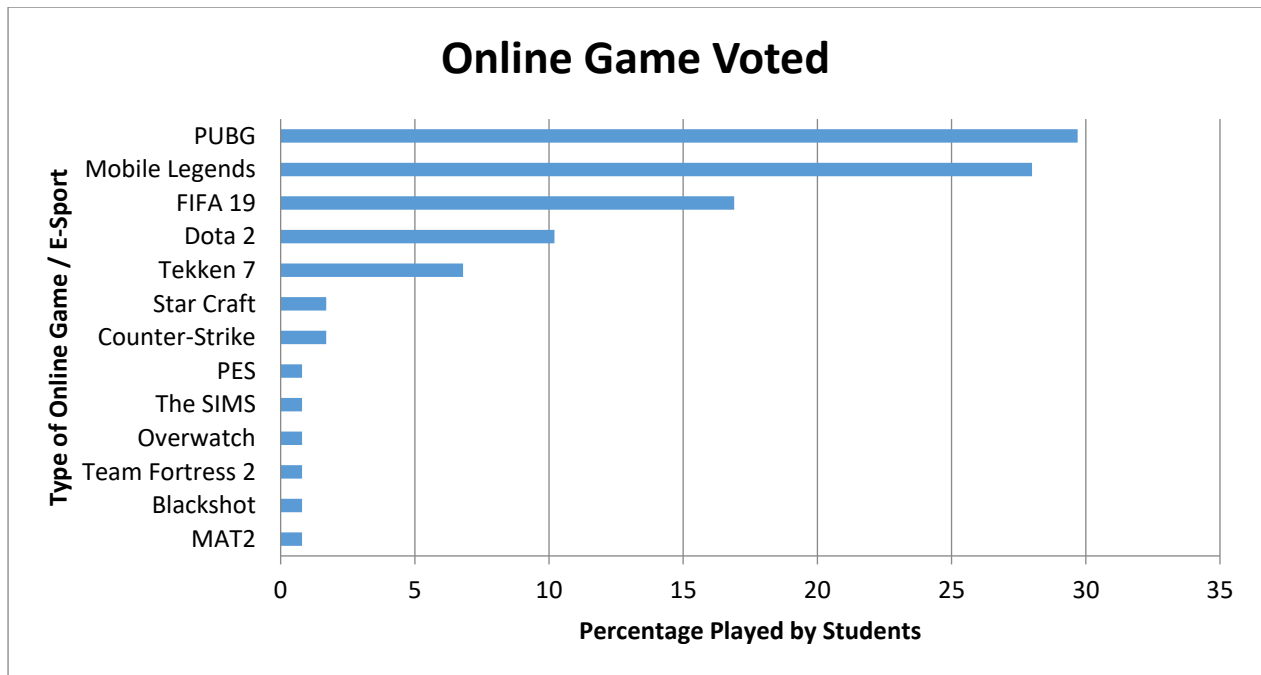


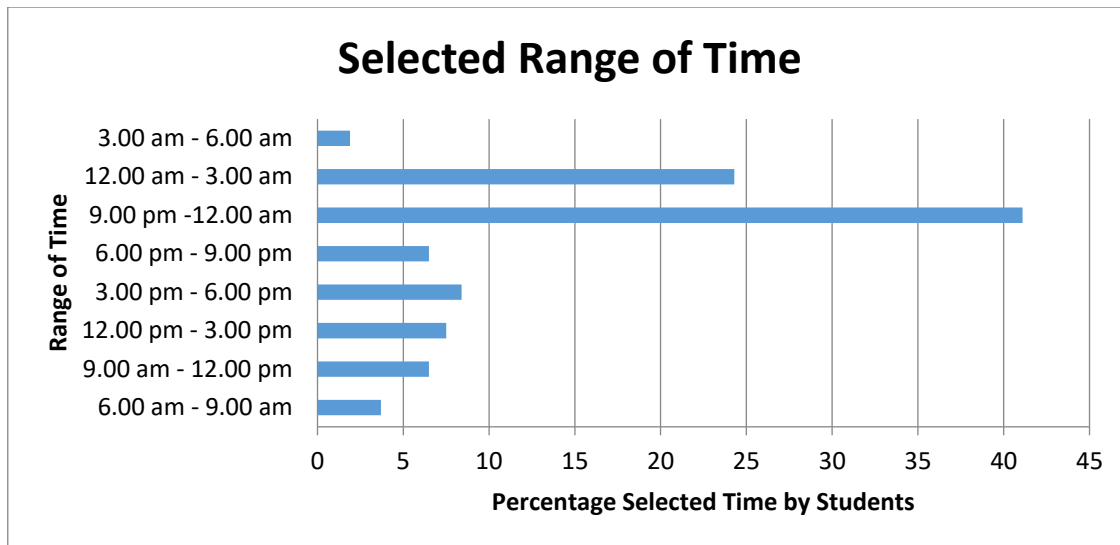
Figure 1: Online Game Voted

Table 2 indicated the time spent by students per week playing e-sport. It is found that majority of students which were 26 students (39.4%) spent 3-4 hours per week. There were also four students (6.1%) who spent 9-10 hours playing e-sport.

Time Spent Per Week	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
0 hour	5	7.6
1-2 hours	15	22.7
3-4 hours	26	39.4
5-6 hours	13	19.7
7-8 hours	3	4.5
9-10 hours	4	6.1

Table 2: Time Spent Per Week

After the revelation of findings for time spent per week, it was further analysed on the range of time that students play e-sport. 41.1% of students selected 9.00 pm-12.00 am as the time that they normally played. It is followed by 12.00 am-3.00 am with 24.3% of students and 3.00 am-6 am with 1.9% of students. In total, 67.3% of students played during night time as they did not have to attend classes at night. In contrast, only 26.1% of students played during the day which was 6.00 am-6.00 pm. During the day, students had to attend classes and activities that prevented them from playing e-sport.



Figure

2: Selected Range of Time

Table 3 depicted the benefits of playing e-sport. The statements were analysed and ranked in a table according to mean. Students felt happy when they played e-sport with the mean of 4.18. They can release stress from various work that they had in university. They were also connected with their friends (mean=4.03). When they played, they reconnected with friends or met new people. As playing e-sport required them to work with other people, it can also promote teamwork. Promote teamwork was ranked as the third among all the statements with the mean of 3.97. When they built teamwork, this teamwork can be applied in class when they had to do assignments in a group. However, students did not view playing e-sport can make money as this statement was ranked as the lowest with the mean of 3.06. Students did not view playing online e-sport as a source of money because as shown in the Demographic Profile, majority of students (N=45) in this study did not join e-sport.

No.	Statement	Mean
1	Feel happy	4.18
2	Connect with friends	4.03
3	Promote teamwork	3.97
4	Good in decision making	3.86
5	Improve attention and concentration	3.80
6	Improve problem-solving skills	3.80
7	Show superior task management skills	3.59
8	Improve in learning	3.50
9	Improve communication skills	3.45
10	Receive money	3.06

Table 3: Benefits

Disadvantages of playing e-sport were illustrated in Table 4. It is found that students were tired and sleepy with the mean of 3.58. This finding was in accordance with the responds on the Range of Time spent by students playing e-sport as majority of students used night time to play. So, they felt tired and sleepy when they had to go to classes or do other activities in the morning. Additionally, their eyes were tired (mean=3.50) after staring on the computer

screen for a long time. They also have neck and back pain (mean=3.33). Although they felt tired, was sleepy, had eye fatigue, and had neck and back pain, these did not hinder them to perform in their academic. They did not have a poor academic performance as this statement was ranked as the eighth among all the statement with the mean of 2.73.

No.	Statement	Mean
1	Tired and sleepy	3.58
2	Eye fatigue	3.50
3	Neck and back pain	3.33
4	Lazy and not productive	3.27
5	Waste of time and addiction	3.21
6	Wrist and hand pain	3.11
7	Antisocial	3.00
8	Poor academic performance	2.73
9	Low self-esteem	2.65
10	Depression	2.55

Table 4: Disadvantages

5. CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that the students found playing e-sport was very beneficial to them. This can be seen as students ranked high for all the statements in the Benefit category. The most important finding was the students felt happy which was crucial to them as students. Students needed to feel happy to be able to perform effectively. Students also said that playing e-sport helped them in their learning. So, playing e-sport can be included as one of the creative ways to learn in the classroom and this findings can contribute to the existing knowledge.

It is recommended that the research on e-sport should be done in the future as different samples may yield different responses that produce interesting findings. Future research can also focus specifically on how e-sport can help to improve the students' learning in the teaching and learning process.

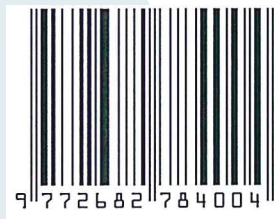
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