

The Level of Effectiveness of Online Video Games in Connecting People

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ABSTRACT

This is a study that examines on video games and interaction of human beings. The trend that the researchers choose to examine is regarding the level of effectiveness of online video games in connecting people. Social networking sites are chosen as they bring many benefits to the users. The creation of technology that we have today is so accessible and advanced. It has the potential of becoming a routine component of networking and connecting people like social media. This study used social capital theory as foundations theories for model development. The minimum sample size was determined through Raosoft Calculator software. The study involved 422 respondents, selected through a cluster sampling technique involving three main ethnics in Malaysia. A cross sectional survey and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. All variables were measured through scales previously used by other researchers. SPSS ver. 20 software was used in the analysis. Results of the SPSS indicated that the level acceptance of video games in connecting people is high ($m=3.52$).

Keywords: video games, uniting, online

INTRODUCTION

“The idea of the ‘lone gamer’ is really not true anymore. Up to 65 percent of gaming now is social, played either online or in the same room with people we know in real life.” according to (*Jane McGonigal - Iftf*, n.d.).

As the above quote may suggest, the current world has evolved into a technological era where every technology is accessible easily. One of the most advanced and fastest-growing industries is the gaming industry. This is due to the outstanding amount of players, media attention and the fanbase from the industry itself according to (*Here’s How Technology Has Changed the World Since 2000*, 2022).

Gaming was known as a time-wasting hobby especially when youth and youngsters are involved. The amount of time teenagers spend on this platform can last as long as hours. However, this statement has been debunked since it has become a billion-dollar industry. Video games have been known internationally, especially in the United States, South Korea, China and Japan. Malaysia, one of the nations from the Southeast Asia region, is not excluded as one of the famous gaming hubs in the world, according to (Chikhani, 2015).

Due to the advanced technological era, gaming has become so accessible that everyone from various ranges of age and categories can grab their chance to be involved in this industry. Decades ago, players enjoyed gaming on gaming consoles such as the Atari and Nintendo. It was limited during the time and most of the games available are offline and players from their houses or own rooms without connecting to the web, according to (Chikhani, 2015).

When advanced technological era were mentioned, what was it supposed to mean? It is known as the digital age where in the present time, in which many things are done by computers and a huge amount of information are available because of the existence of computer technology, according to (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). One of the examples that we can extract from the current world is the introduction of smartphones into the world. The penetration of smartphones has shifted the lifestyle of people in the current world because the technology is beyond voice calls and text communications. People have been interacting with each other by communicating by texts and calls, however smartphones nowadays offer everything from shopping, maps, music and social media. When social media is mentioned, it is where people connect to each other, talk to each other and have the opportunity of knowing people from various parts of the world, according to (Haridy, 2019).

The main focus here is connecting people. Knowing and interacting with other people from multiple different countries. In the 21st century, video games have become so popular that they are already considered one of the most famous platforms equivalent to social media. People are using it similarly to social media because video games also allow people to communicate, strategize and create relationships. In the real world, there are people who developed lifelong friendships through video gaming platforms, according to (Schmidt, 2021). The example we can see of the most video gamers platform that is being used is Twitch and Discord. Twitch is a streaming platform where everyone can register and start streaming their own gameplay of video games to the whole world. Meanwhile, Discord is widely used for communication purposes instead of using built-in games communication methods.

Multiple video games nowadays require an internet connection and connect to the web. The reason why is because most video games are now online and multiplayer-based. The percentage of people out there that have easy access to the internet is also one of the major reasons why most video games are online. Examples can be taken from famous top-tier games such as Fortnite, Counter-Strike Global Offensive, League of Legends and Valorant. These are types of games that require you to network and communicate with people due to strategic-based games. During the old days, people were also known to play story-mode games. The current story mode games now allow people to play together with friends and family members up to 4-6 people per session. Adding to that, story mode games nowadays have a long period of total hours to complete the whole game. Left 4 Dead 2 is one of the examples of the story mode games that allow you to play with your friends up to 3 people and which in total hours to complete the game require you to spend roughly 52 hours to reach 100% completion of the game, according to (*How Long Is Left 4 Dead 2? | HowLongToBeat*, n.d.).

In 2020, Malaysia was shocked with a deadly and contagious world pandemic virus. It was known as the Covid-19, a Movement Control Order was declared by our country on 18 March 2020. All business and social activities were blocked except for those essential services that remained open. This kind of movement has limited the communication interaction between human beings and everything was fully dependent on online communication, according to (*14-day Movement Control Order Begins Nationwide on Wednesday*, 2020). One of the prime examples are video games and video games platforms were used as an alternative to physical communication. The percentage of users on video games platforms such as Steam, Discord, and Twitch were increasing dramatically. People have made online friends from all of these platforms without meeting them and most of them are still in relationships, being friends and still contacting until this day. This shows that video games and video games platforms are one of the platforms that can connect people, according to (*Friends List 101*, 2022).

A group of people might be strangers to you and the next day playing one or two sessions of video games together will connect you with them. Sooner or later you will be friends and have the opportunity to know each other and the relationship will become like physical friendships, according to (Knight, 2020). Questions were raised, does playing video games and connecting with video games platforms are known to help people with their social skills? What are the benefits and how effective are video games and its platforms connecting people? What is the percentage of people out there that believes video games can contribute to social skills and communication skills?

To answer the questions above, society has to take a look at how long the relationship from the platform mentioned lasts. How many friends are still in contact and the benefits in terms of social, economic and the opportunity. Socially it connects people, knowing people across the world without any limitations. Economically it benefits a nation as people are involved with the video games and platforms. Lastly, new opportunities opened such as most gamers are able to invest themselves into a financial career and promote themselves to a better future. For this research, the terms used are Theory of Planned Behaviour Model. This theory was chosen in the development of conceptual framework of this study as to observe the

relationship among the components of TPB with the behaviour of consumer by taking in to consideration the Sunnah advantages (RozilahHamdan,2013)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gamers have been historically portrayed as awkward or loners, riddled with social anxiety, and drawn to lives of social isolation from the rest of society (Rachel & Raffael, 2020). According to a children's health poll from the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll (2020), 86 percent of parents believe that their adolescent children spend excessive time playing video games. Therefore, most parents of gamers have hollered to their children to stop playing games and go be with people. This is due to their children seeming totally isolated, sitting all alone, staring blankly at a screen for hours at a time.

Online video games have done far more than change the way we entertain ourselves. They have changed how we communicate, how much time we spend with friends and family, and how much time we invest in active, real-life pursuits. Also, it can put a huge strain on relationships with family members and friends. For instance, gamers tend to neglect others to play video games compulsively and this can cause conflict, confrontation and even relationship breakdowns. Research published in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* (2010) links young people's use of video games to poorer relationships with friends and family. In fact, the more time they spent playing video games, the worse their relationships with peers and parents got.

Video games hinder social interaction when gamers choose screen time over social time, A new study from UNC Chapel Hill (2020) says too much screen time can make our brains lazy, and even make it harder for us to interact with other people. The study says, in part, "The more time you spend looking at a screen, the less time you spend interacting in person with others. This makes it more difficult to establish interpersonal connections and strong relationships, which are important for mental health and the health of the community at large. This may cause the individual to lack the skills to establish friendships, relationships, or just "hang out" and enjoy people's company. The social awkwardness created by the isolationism of gaming addiction, unfortunately, feeds the addiction. The gaming addict will likely retreat back to an online world where relationships are easier and already waiting for him.

Nonetheless, to gain fuller understanding of how online video games provide the platform to connect people even though online games can seem like a solitary activity, in-depth quantitative research focused on the effectiveness of online video games in connecting people is also needed. Focusing on online video games for social connectedness. It can also identify how online video games allow constant communication between players which results in the development of both meaningful and casual relationships.

The aim of this research is to investigate the level of effectiveness of online video games connecting people. Quantitative methods will be used to gain in-depth insight to discuss the effectiveness of online video games on social interaction among people. This data will be contextualised with the uses and gratifications theory and social information processing theory.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is intended to answer the questions below:

1. What is the level of acceptance of online video games connecting people?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of video games on connecting people?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To identify the level of acceptance of video games that can help uniting people.
2. To identify the level of effectiveness of video games as a social tool.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, the method of quantitative research will be used. Online surveys were handled, and provided through the use of public platforms such as Instagram and Whatsapp. By using these public platforms, it would ease the researchers to collect data and respondents from various categories of people as this study focuses on the public response in order to gather the information on the topic covered.

Sampling Technique

This investigation employed the non-probability sampling technique known as convenient sampling. The study used non-probability sampling, a useful sample approach. In a non-probability sample, according to McCombes (2021), individuals are picked based on non-random criteria, and not everyone has an equal chance of being included. Participants in the poll are drawn from the general population and come from a wide range of professions, including those in the public and private sectors, self-employment, education, full-time homemakers, retirement, and the jobless (Ridzuan, Ridzuan, and Ridzuan, 2018). Using Raosoft Calculator Software, 30 million Malaysians or 12 million SNS users may be equal to 377 responders with 95% certainty (The Research Advisors, 2006).

Research Measurement

22 items make up the questionnaire's demographic section. The questionnaire is related to the study's objectives in terms of research. There are rating scales from 1 to 4 (strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and highly agree (4)), as well as true-false, matrix, and multiple-choice (MCQ) questions. Respondents find it simple to comprehend and provide answers to the questions because of their validity and plausibility. It was logically organised as well to avoid any confusion during the question-and-answer session.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package of Social Science, or SPSS, version 23 software was used to analyse the data. The actions of creating the survey and submitting the data are both a part of the data analysis process. The study's objectives, which aim to identify the level of acceptance of video games that can help uniting people and the level of effectiveness of video games as a social

tool, are tied to the questions in the poll. The first 50 respondents are given a questionnaire to assess the research's validity. The poll will run until 400 responses have been collected, at which point the data will be transferred to SPSS for evaluation and analysis (Ridzuan, Ridzuan, and Ridzuan, 2018). Using descriptive statistics, researchers looked at the frequency, proportion, and other data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The sample's demographics are defined in terms of sex, age, occupation, ethnicity, current region of residence, and 3 basic questions about video games, including the average number of hours played daily.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by demographic

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Female	136	32.2%
Male	286	67.8%
Age		
18-22	157	37.2%
23-27	179	42.4%
28-32	56	13.3%
33-37	11	2.6%
38 years old and above	19	4.5%
Occupation		
Student	271	66.1%
Government Sector	24	5.7%
Private Sector	115	27.3%
Unemployed	4	0.9%
Ethnicity		

Malay	192	45.5%
Chinese	39	9.2%
Indian	13	3.1%
Others (Bumiputera Sabah, Bumiputera Sarawak, Orang Asli, etc)	178	42.2%
Current region of residence		
Nothern Region (Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak)	31	7.3%
East Coast Region (Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan)	11	2.6%
Southern Region (Melaka, Johor, Negeri Sembilan)	57	13.5%
East Malaysia (Sabah, Sarawak)	147	34.8%
Central Region (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya)	176	41.7%

The 400 respondents' demographics are shown in Table 1 above. According to the results, the majority of those who responded to the questionnaires are male (67.8%) aged between 23-27 years old (42.4%), Malay (45.5%), Central Region, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya (41.7%) and students (66.1%).

Respondent's opinion towards video games as a social tool.

Within the same section, three questions were posed. To find out the respondents' thoughts and experiences with video games, these questions were put to them.

Table 2: Respondent's opinion toward video games as a social tool

Questions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How long do you think you spend averagely on online video games platforms per day?		
Less than 1 hour	48	11.4%
1-2 Hours	78	18.5%
3-4 Hours	251	59.5%
5-6 Hours	40	9.5%
6 Hours and above	5	1.2%
Do you think that online gaming is a social platform?		
Yes	408	96.7%
No	14	3.3%
Do you think that online gaming improved your social skills?		
Yes	388	91.9%
No	34	8.1%

Table 2 shows respondents' opinions toward video games as a social tool. According to the findings, the majority of the respondents who completed the questionnaires are knowledgeable about video games and spend an average of 3-4 hours per day (59.5%). The majority of respondents (96.7%) also agree that online video games serve as a social platform. Last but not least, 91.9 percent of respondents agreed that video games and online gaming had improved their social skills.

Acceptance of Online Video Games in Connecting People

ACCEPTANCE	Mean
Online gaming offer social platforms that connect people such as Discord, TeamSpeak, Steam and etc.	3.6
Online gaming allows people of all different backgrounds to connect with each other.	3.6
Online gaming allows gamers to create teams working cooperatively.	3.59
Online gaming allows people of all different professions to connect with each other.	3.57
Online gaming allows people of all gender to connect with each other.	3.55
Online gaming provides a virtual environment where people of all ages can interact with each other.	3.55
I believe that online gaming offers friendship.	3.54
I believe that online gaming offers networking.	3.54
I believe that online gaming allows me to interact verbally with other people virtually.	3.54
Online gaming allows gamers to work together to form alliances.	3.54
I believe online gaming brings people together even when we are apart.	3.52
I play online video games with people from other countries with different languages.	3.52
Every online gaming platforms offer to add other people as an option for interaction.	3.5
I believe that online gaming offers a new way to understand other cultures.	3.48
I spend most of my time playing online video games with friends and people who I know virtually.	3.41
I believe that by playing online video games, I feel connected with society.	3.4
Overall	3.52

Table 3: Acceptance of Video Games in Connecting People

Table 3 shows that (M=3.60) is the highest mean for video game acceptance in connecting people. The question itself, as well as the number of respondents, demonstrate that video games have provided facilities and features that allow users to interact with other users. This can be proven by an article by the World Economic Forum which stated that games have more than just the ability to emotionally connect us, according to (*Video Games Are Transforming How We Communicate With Each Other - and They Could Fix a Range of Other Global Issues Too*, 2020). Today, 63% of adult players play with others, frequently in squads that meet both online and in person. Nowadays, video games are more multiplayer or cooperative games in which interaction with another human being is essential, according to (*Video Games Play May Provide Learning, Health, Social Benefits, Review Finds*, 2013). The second highest mean is that respondents believed that people from various backgrounds, careers, and professions could connect through video games. Video games help people unite regardless of their age, occupation, or who they are, according to (*Video Games Are Transforming How We Communicate With Each Other - and They Could Fix a Range of Other Global Issues Too*, 2020). The overall mean for video game acceptance in connecting people is (M=3.52) which is very high. This also can be proven by how the engagement of video games has been increasing especially during the pandemic of covid 19, according to (Santos, 2021).

Level of Effectiveness of Online Video Games as a Social Tools

Effectiveness	Mean
I believe online gaming creates an opportunity for me to make new connections.	3.64
I am able to join communities on online gaming platforms.	3.58
My social skill improved by playing online video games.	3.53
I am able to discuss anything related to me in online gaming.	3.5
Online gaming allows gamers to communicate via text.	3.5
Online gaming allows gamers to communicate via voice chat.	3.5
I am happy interacting with people through online gaming platforms.	3.44
My favorite aspect of playing online video game is grouping with other people.	3.43
I play online video games to socialize with friends.	3.42
I am comfortable interacting with people through online gaming platforms.	3.4
Online gaming environment is "highly socially interactive".	3.4

I make more interaction with other gamers while playing online video games.	3.38
I get social support from the online gaming communities.	3.35
I am able to receive support from gamers emotionally.	3.34
I am able to meet the individuals I know from online gaming in real life.	3.31
I feel the interaction between gaming friends and physical friends is the same.	3.31
I make more friends through online gaming.	3.31
I am involved in lots of competitive online gaming.	3.3
I made close friends through online gaming.	3.3
Overall	3.59

Table 4: Effectiveness of online video games as a social tool

According to the data in Table 4, the majority of respondents believe that online gaming provides an opportunity to make a new connection ($M=3.64$), which is the highest mean. This is backed by a DIGIDAY article sponsored by Activision Blizzard (2022), one of the largest gaming companies, which stated that gaming experiences are designed to be shared through multiplayer gameplay, watching gaming, or discussing strategies and achievements. Respondents believed that video games allow them to join communities on online gaming platforms, which had the second highest mean ($M=3.58$). This claim is backed by Discord (2022), which posted instructions for Discord friends on their website. They posted How to Find and Make Friends on Discord, which essentially explains that you can search for communities to join using the discovery tab. Overall, the mean for the effectiveness of online video games as a social tool is ($M=3.59$), indicating a very high level of effectiveness. According to The Life Project (2020), online video games are providing direct psychological and social benefits to people of all ages. A Google survey found that 40% of new gamers are likely to continue playing video games, which brings communities together.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the public accepted and believed that online video games nowadays can be considered as a social tool and platform as the findings from the survey show the total mean is more than (M=2.5) as the level of acceptance of online video games connecting people score the highest mean (M=3.52) followed by the level of effectiveness of online video games as a social tool (M=3.59). The overall mean score conducted by the researchers in this survey (M=3.55) is considered a high mean score. This has proved that the public accepts and believes that video games connect with the current world and society in the daily life of individuals.

Item	N	Mean
The Level of Acceptance Online Video Games in Connecting People	422	3.52
The Level of Effectiveness of Online Video Games as a Social Tools	422	3.59
Overall		3.55

Table 5: Description of the level of public acceptance of online video games in connecting people

One of the most significant findings of our research is the potential of online video games to overcome the stigma and misconception that they are a waste of time. Our research has shown that online video games can be an effective tool for connecting people, fostering friendships and relationships, and creating a sense of community. This challenges the commonly held view that video games are a solitary and isolating activity, and instead suggests that they can be a valuable tool for socialization and connection, according to (Bowen, n.d.).

It is important that we work to overcome this stigma and misconception by educating the public about the social benefits of video games, and by highlighting the ways in which video games can be used to connect people and build communities. This can be achieved through various means such as media, education, and research. By doing so, we can help to create a more informed and accepting society, one that recognizes and embraces the positive aspects of online video games, according to (*Video Games Are Social Spaces: How Video Games Help People Connect* / ResponseCenter, n.d.).

In conclusion, our research has shown that online video games can be an effective tool for connecting people on multiple levels. At the individual level, video games provide players with opportunities to form new friendships and relationships, and to interact with others who share their interests. At the societal level, video games can help to bridge social divides and create a sense of community among players. And at the national level, video games can play a role in fostering a sense of national identity and pride, according to (*Video Games Play May Provide Learning, Health, Social Benefits, Review Finds*, 2013).

Our research supports the idea that video games can have social benefits and can be used as a tool for fostering friendships and relationships. It also suggests that online video

games can be an effective tool for connecting people, not just for entertainment but also for socializing. This can be a new way of breaking the stereotype that video games are just for wasting time, according to (Schmidt, 2021).

Overall, the results of this study suggest that online video games can be an effective tool for connecting people, and that the social benefits of video games should be recognized and embraced. Not only that, it also shows that video games have the potential to bring people together and create a sense of community on multiple levels, from the individual to the national level. It is important that the society should acknowledge and embrace this new way of socializing, and the benefits it can bring to the society as a whole, according to (Knight, 2020).

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