Mobile gaming pattern among college students in Manipur

Dr. Achom Roshan Kumar

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
G.P. Women's College, D. M. University, Imphal

Abstract:

Mobile gaming has become rampant among school and college students. This raises concerns for parents, teachers, and all other sections of society. Newspaper and various media reports carry stories of mobile and internet addiction, problematic gaming, increased mental health issues, depression, anxiety, and even suicide among teenagers. Hence, there is a need to understand the nature and pattern of student's mobile gaming habits. This knowledge may be useful in dealing with students and teenagers constructively.

Keywords: *Cloud Computing, High-Speed Internet, Problematic Smartphone Use, etc.*

Introduction

Today, smartphones have become an indispensable gadget that provides a variety of services. For students in particular, a mobile phone is an important recreational and entertainment device for gaming. Irrespective of age, sex, religious affiliation, or region, playing mobile games has become a regular feature among the student community. The concern of parents and guardians in this regard is also seemingly visible in almost every home with frequent quarrels over lengthy periods of mobile phone use. It is against this backdrop that the present study tries to address some important gaming behaviors of college students in Manipur.

Review of Literature

The precursor of modern-day internet-based online mobile games can be traced back to the year 1985 when former Soviet Engineer Alexey Pajitnov created "Tetris" ("Tetris," 2024) which became a much-loved puzzle game worldwide. It was followed by the action game "Snake" included in the Nokia mobile game released in 1998 ["Snake (video game genre)," 2024]. The popularity of mobile games zoomed and different genres of gaming soon emerged. With the increasing availability of advanced smartphone hardware, coupled with high-speed internet penetration throughout the world, and the rise of cloud computing and services, the mobile gaming industry is witnessing significant growth and transformation.

At present North America is the largest mobile gaming market, while Asia-Pacific constitutes the fastest-growing market (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Mordor Intelligence (2024) estimated the present market size of mobile gaming at USD 100.54 billion in 2024 which is expected to reach USD 164.81 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 10.39% during the 2024-2029 forecast period. The current value of the Gaming market in India is USD 3.1 billion (Gupta, 2024) and it is estimated to grow to USD 8.90 billion in the next five years. Tencent Holdings Ltd, Nintendo Co. Ltd, Activision Blizzard Inc., Zynga Inc., and GungHo Online Entertainment Inc. are some of the top market leaders in the online gaming industry.

Although there is a lot of research addressing the negative consequences of mobile media use, there is so far no definitive answer regarding the influence of mobile on an individual's overall well-being (Haberlin and Atkin, 2022). A comparative study of Belgium and Finland, (Fernandez et.al., 2018) found that mobile games did not predict any problematic smartphone use. Regarding possible addiction to mobile phone use, Roberts et, al. (2014) opined that with the increasing functionality of mobile phones, there is an increasingly realistic possibility of addiction to this indispensable technology. They (Roberts et, al.,2014) are also of the opinion that modern smartphones can be both freeing and enslaving by providing the freedom to gather information, communicate and socialize in ways only dreamed of before the discovery of cellular technology while at the same time, cell phones can lead to dependence and restrictions.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study include the following –

i)   To examine the extent of mobile gaming among the student community.

ii)   To identify if students develop mobile gaming addiction or dependency syndrome.

iii)   To study the nature of mobile gaming behavior among students.

Research method

The present study was carried out in 5 government colleges located in Imphal city. Pre-tested closed-ended questionnaires were used to gather the required data. A total of 452 questionnaires which were satisfactory and complete in all details were received however 46 students were found not playing any mobile game. Thus, the study was based on only 406 respondents who claimed to play mobile games regularly. This study also incorporates library sources and relevant references from national and international journals, previous research reports, government publications, and reports published by reputed organizations and CSOs. Secondary data from books, newspapers, magazines, and online sources are also used.

Findings

Fig.1 clearly shows that out of the total 452 sample college students, 406 play mobile games irrespective of sexual differentiation which is approximately 90 percent while only 46 students, or about 10 percent said they do not play. The general assumption about mobile game playing habits is that students play mobile games daily and that they spend more time playing rather than their studies. However, the present study proves otherwise with only 142 (34.97 %) students or about one-third of the sample (Fig.4) playing mobile games daily. In other words, almost 65 percent of students do not play mobile games daily.
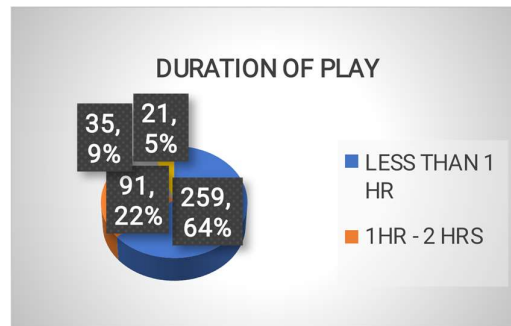
Figure 1.

The present study also reveals that only 21 students (5 %) admitted that they play mobile games for more than 5 hours a day while 35 (9 %) students are found playing mobile games for 2 – 5 hours (Fig.2). Although a huge majority of the students play mobile games, however on further probe it is found that there are only a few hardcore mobile gamers who play consistently for lengthy hours at a stretch. Students who play mobile games for a daily average of 1 -2 hrs. constitute about 22 percent while a huge majority of about 64 % play for less than an hour.

It is interesting to note that only a small proportion of students play mobile games in the morning while a sizeable chunk prefers playing during the night time. Fig.3 shows that only 14 students (3 %) play mobile games before 10 am, while 42 (10 %) are found convenient to play between 10 am – 2 pm.

Figure 2.

Whereas, 91 students (22 %) said that they play mobile games mostly in the afternoon between 2 pm – 6 pm while 224 students (55 %) said they find it most convenient playing any time after 6 pm and until late at night. In addition to these, 35 students (9 %) said that they do not have any fixed time of playing mobile games, they play at any time of the day when they are free or feel bored. This may be perhaps because students have more free time in the after-school hours and at night time and are also relatively undisturbed.

Further, from Fig.4 it is also learned that 353 students (87%) said that they can readily and without any difficulty spend a day without playing mobile games whereas only 53 (13%) students said that they cannot stop playing even for a single day. Again, on the query, of whether they can replace their gaming activity with other physical activities, sports, or hobbies, 358 students (88%)

Figure 3.

readily agreed. However, 48 students (12%) are unwilling to substitute their daily mobile gaming routine with any other physical or outdoor activity. Hence, contrary to popular belief only a meagre 12% -13% of students are into hardcore mobile gaming while more than 87% do not exhibit any dependency syndrome to mobile games.

The present study tries to get students' viewpoints and opinions on certain aspects of mobile phone use. Students are also aware that some mobile games cause young people particularly students to take extreme steps such as committing suicide. Fig.5 indicates that more than three-fourths of the students 332 (82%) said that mobile games can indeed induce, force, or drive young people with weak minds to commit suicide or take other extreme steps. On the other hand, 74 (18%) students felt that playing mobile games cannot drive students to commit suicide. Again, about the increase in anxiety and depression among students due to frequent mobile gaming, more than half, or 212 students (52%) believe there is no correlation however, 194 (48%) students felt that frequent mobile gaming
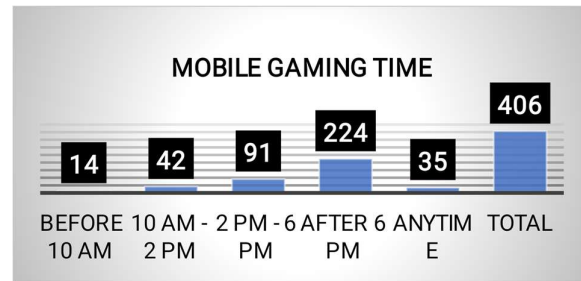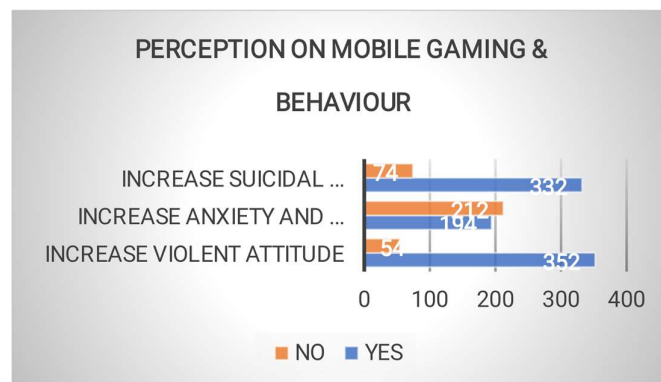

Figure 4. for longer hours certainly heightened anxiety and depression among students. Regarding students' opinions on the increasing violent attitude among children and mobile gaming, Fig.5 shows that 352 (87%) strongly believed that continuous mobile gaming increases violent attitude and high temperament among teenagers while 54 (13%) saw no correlation between mobile gaming and increasing temper and attitude of students.
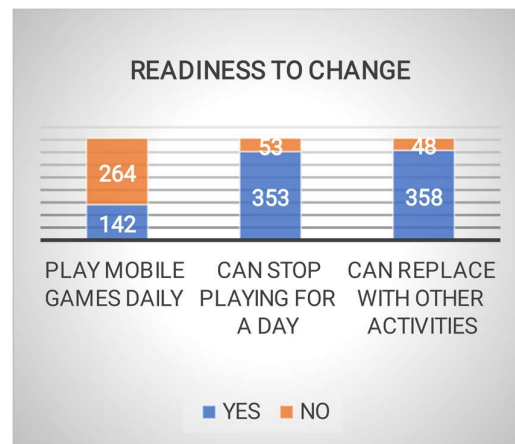
Figure 5.

Conclusion

A large proportion of college students are found playing mobile games which include both boys and girls. However, contrary to popular belief, the majority of them are casual gamers and do not even play daily. No visible signs are found for technological dependence or non-drug addiction type behaviour among them. Students are also largely aware of the negative influences of mobile gaming. Most students are found playing mobile games until late at night and the majority of them play for an average of 1 hour or less. Therefore, the mobile gaming pattern of college students does not seem to seriously affect their normal social and academic life.

References

Fernandez, O. L.,Mannikko, N., Kaariainen, M., Griffiths, M.M., and Kuss, D. J (2018). Mobile gaming and problematic smartphone use: A comparative study between Belgium and Finland. Journal of Behavioral Addictions . Vol. 7, Issue 1, 8 January 2018, pp. 88-89. https://akjournals.com /view/ journals/2006/7/1/article-p88.xml

Gupta, A. (2024, Jul 9). *Indian gaming industry to grow to $8.92 billion in next 5 years:Report*. Business Standard. https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-gaming-industry-to-grow-to-8-92-billion-in-next-5-years-report-124070900896_1.html

Haberlin,K, A., and Atkin, David, J.(2022). Mobile gaming and Internet addiction: When is playing no longer just fun and games? *Computer in Human Behaviour.* Vol. 126, January 2022. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/ abs/pii/ S074756322100312

Mordor Intelligence. (2024). *Mobile gaming market size & share analysis – Growth trends & forecasts (2024 – 2029)*. https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/mobile-games-market.

Roberts, J, A., Yaya, L,H,P., and Manolis, C. (2014). The invisible addiction: Cell-phone activities and addiction among male and female college students. *Journal of Behavioral Addiction.* Vol. 3(4) , 26 August 2014. DOI : 10.1556/JBA.3.2014.015 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4291831/

Snake (video game genre).(2024, May 16). In *Wikipedia.* https://en. wikipedia. org/wiki /Snake_(video_game_genre)

Tetris. (2024, August 22). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetris