

INTERNET GAMING EXPERIENCES OF NURSING STUDENTS IN METRO MANILA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

* Anne Cecille C. Villar

** Angel Feliz C. Poserio

*** Angelica S. Quinto

**** Jemeela Lois C. Ramirez

***** James Patrick U. Rodriguez

***** Exequiel Renzo B. Singzon

***** Kennedy Win M. Villamayor

***** Patricia Aerielle T. Villano

***** Frances Kailah D. Vitug

***** Esther O. Dela Cruz

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Corresponding Author: Esther O. Dela Cruz; Email: edelacruz@feu.edu.ph; doi:10.46360/cosmos.mgt.420212002

Abstract

During the trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic, internet gaming has served as entertainment and activity, in some ways even an escape into the virtual world. This study explores the internet gaming experiences of nursing students in Metro Manila on how internet gaming was utilized during the pandemic. This would also provide awareness with regard to the experiences of the nursing-student gamers to understand whether internet gaming is a positive or negative type of activity in terms of coping for nursing-student gamers during this pandemic. The study's methods began with conducting an interview consisting of 12 participants using a semi-structured interview. Colaizzi's Method was used for the data analysis, which led the researchers to come up with four emergent themes (1) Incorporating Internet Gaming into Daily Lives (2) Internet Gaming and its Psychosocial Implication (3) Internet Gaming in Emotional Stability (4) Internet Gaming Interfering in the Patterns of Functioning. As a result, gaming activity impacts its users' psychological and social aspects as they encounter various types of players in the gaming space. Considering these findings, the researchers conclude that internet gaming during pandemic exposes nursing students to greater negative encounters than pleasant experiences.

Keywords: Internet Gaming, Experiences, Nursing, COVID-19, Pandemic.

Introduction

Several internet gaming cases involving teenagers across the Philippines were reported to bring about serious health problems, violence, addiction, and death have moved the researchers to investigate more about the concept of internet gaming. Online gaming or internet gaming can refer to a video game played through the internet. Online games vary from several designs and structures and there are different types of both single and multiplayer online games (Ray, 2012) [60].

The increasing mortality rate due to the coronavirus outbreak prompted the World Health Organization to announce it as a public health emergency as it became a global pandemic (Kopecki, 2020) [38]. Consequently, nationwide community quarantine was ordered by the Philippine government to prevent the spread of the virus (Petty, 2020) [53].

For this reason, online activities have become vital in every Filipino's daily lives. They have found a way to cope with restrictions in traveling and moving around the city during the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of these activities was online gaming (Statista, 2020) [63].

The study focuses on the experiences of nursing student-gamers in terms of internet gaming activity during pandemic. These nursing students that are also internet gamers are in the age range of those included to be in total lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, the nursing student-gamers' direct experiences are at risk of instability due to the presence of environmental disruption. In line with this, the researchers initiated to investigate how gamers utilizes internet gaming during pandemic and to fully understand the lived experiences with the current global

*_*****BSN Candidates, Far Eastern University, Institute of Nursing, Manila, Philippines.

*****Professor, Far Eastern University, Institute of Nursing, Manila, Philippines.

situation.

Presented literatures and the current research begins at the topic of Internet gaming and its ever-growing use of the majority within the population. Different aspects of internet gaming are tackled and presented with the goal of understanding its foremost nature of entertainment value. The literatures delved into the topic of experiences of online gamers, their challenges, and their motivations for partaking in the said activity. These helped the current researchers to relate these said literatures with the present study and have a better insight about the topics that have already been studied before.

The phenomenon of internet gaming motivated the researchers to conduct this study using this specific research design because of the related literatures with this concept as this concept was used to see how this affect a specific user. Most literatures covered what causes the users to utilize and what are the effects which are usually coming on one side. The researchers were motivated to investigate things that are in the gray area in between the literatures found especially that the activity was highlighted to be an activity utilized in pandemic. This has led the researchers to investigate nursing student-gamers' experiences in internet gaming during pandemic. The researchers chose the nursing student that are internet gamers as the target participants of the study because of how the demand of this program is different from others that could put a little addition to the difficulty being felt in the time of pandemic. Also, to show how this phenomenon be able to provide future possible nursing interventions in the nursing practice. In addition, the nursing students today are part of the community that utilizes internet gaming that can be beneficial in terms of interventions as they will someday be members of the health care team.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a descriptive phenomenological qualitative design which was generally based on an individual's perspective to fully recognize and assess the internet gaming experience of nursing students in selected universities in Metro Manila during pandemic. These types of approaches were not statistical probabilities or systematically computed but rather it relied on the explanation of the participants and the phenomenon's meaning. This design includes the four essential steps in Husserl's Phenomenology; bracketing – a reflexive journal that has a progressive log of the researchers' thoughts about internet gaming which acted as a barrier in the analysis; intuiting - Intuition was used in the context of this research

method to gain a sense of the lived experience and link them to what is understood about the phenomenon of interest; describing – identification of finalized meaning to formulate sub-themes; and analyzing – the utilization of Colaizzi's method of analysis after finalizing the meaning and its designated category.

Population and Sampling

Participants of the study were nursing students, with ages 18 to 20, who identified themselves as online or internet gamers from different various universities in Metro Manila. The subject participants of this research were students who identify themselves as gamers. The researchers had a total population of 12 nursing student-gamers to participate in the study. The researchers focused on a small-scale of samples in order to have more concrete information that would contribute in explaining the topic of the study effectively. For the sampling technique is a non-probability sampling that is a purposive sampling. This sampling technique is used which the research relies on the eligibility of the target participants based on the inclusion criteria set by the researchers. A homogenous sampling was used in terms of using a similar set of inclusion criteria applied to all participants. Participants included in the study had the same characteristics relating to the study like the ranges of age, location, and program taking in college.

Data Collection Instruments Procedure

The research study was then sent under the application for approval of the Ethics and Research Committee of Far Eastern University-Manila. As the research study was approved, the researchers preceded to the selection of the study participants through the set of qualifications needed for the study. The researchers then proceeded on the screening process of the participant's eligibility to participate in the study based on the criteria set included and excluded in the study's scope. An initial questioning before the actual interview was done to ensure that the participant was really a gamer. Initial questions involved the type of internet games the participants played, the time or duration of playing and when is the activity utilized. Once all qualifications were met, the participant was considered qualified to participate in the study. The participants were then asked to sign the informed consent form. The consent includes the discussion of the study's purpose, significance, social value, risks, benefits, safety, and the rights of the participants in the duration of the study and other vital information that the participants must be aware of before deciding to agree or disagree in participating in the study. The researchers reach them through the provided contact details for the appointment of interview.

The researchers implemented a method of a semi-structured interview since a set of open-ended questions to be asked are pre-identified but could still be diverted based on the responses of the respondents that allowed the researchers to gain new discoveries on the phenomenon through a video conferencing application, Zoom. The interview lasted for 30-45 minutes which was consumed to gather sufficient data.

Data Analysis

The data collected and transcribed data were interpreted and analyzed using the Collaizi's method of analysis. It started from reading and re-reading the transcripts of interview from the participants, extracting all the relevant statements, formulation of meaning of the extracted relevant statements, categorizing of the formulated meanings by grouping the similar features of the formulated meanings as done by the researchers through coding. The pattern of connections from these steps able to explain the phenomenon of this study. The outcome was accustomed into a thorough description and was written and consolidated into a statement of the fundamental structure of the experiences of nursing student-gamers in terms of their gaming activity during pandemic. To assure that the researchers have correctly interpreted the experiences, the participants were reached by the researchers to review the findings.

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered lead the researchers to formulate four (4) emergent themes in the lived experiences of the nursing students in internet gaming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Incorporating Internet Gaming into Daily Lives

The first theme discusses how internet gaming is utilized as a form of escape. As participants engage in internet gaming, it serves as an influence in matters regarding the outturn of alteration in their daily tasks, academic performance, and conflicts between families. Internet gaming could cause a parent-child conflict if interruption of usual routine has already been compromised. Gamers prioritize gaming as their activity over other tasks outside the virtual world.

Internet Gaming and its Psychosocial Implication

The second theme emphasizes how the participants were able to meet and interact with other people with the same interest, it highlights how internet

gaming can serve as a source of positive social connections between the community of internet gamers. Besides being a way to communicate with other players, there exists encounters with inappropriate language and hate speech in internet gaming. There are unpleasant experiences that are present in internet gaming, such as gender discrimination, stigma against women, and sexual harassment. Also, it portrays the experiences of the participants on their encounters on being verbally bullied, harassed and insulted while engaging in internet gaming.

Internet Gaming in Emotional Stability

The third theme discusses how participants felt that utilizing internet gaming will be a sense of relief from the stress during the pandemic because of the enjoyment that was felt due to the features of the game. The sense of relief that the participants longed for whatever source of stress they have that internet gaming is provided them, the concept of escape which could lead to redirection of their thinking.

Internet Gaming Interfering in the Patterns of Functioning

The researchers came up with this theme since the participants mentioned the disruption of their daily activities or rather their routine patterns as they engage in internet gaming, such as their motivation in performing physical activities as well as their sleep and meal schedule were affected too, these are all due to constant utilization of internet gaming.

Discussion

Despite the numerous studies available that provide insights regarding the effects of internet gaming on students, very few were focused on the experiences of the users of this activity. Our study revealed that through comprehensive investigation, internet gaming experiences of nursing students during pandemic intercept with their daily lives through their roles and responsibilities, societal relationships, and their day-to-day routine. Furthermore, results also suggested that the participants experienced improved coping during the current circumstances. With these findings, it can be implied that while internet gaming, when used as a coping activity during a pandemic, can result in negative encounters, it also brings about positive experiences that could lead to potential benefits in the psychosocial wellbeing of its users. To use internet gaming as a coping activity during the pandemic period, it is essential to acknowledge that it is only favorable when used in moderation. Accordingly, a constructive approach must be formulated to respond to internet gaming activity during the pandemic. Although participants

experienced improved coping, internet gaming activity should not be used to cope in times of crisis such as the pandemic because the purpose could be achieved, which is to cope with the ongoing crisis. Still, an alteration to the holistic aspect of the self of the user will occur.

Conclusion

Despite the numerous studies available that provide insights regarding the effects of internet gaming on students, very few were focused on the experiences of the users of this activity. Our study revealed that through comprehensive investigation, internet gaming experiences of nursing students during pandemic intercept with their daily lives through their roles and responsibilities, societal relationships, and their day-to-day routine. Furthermore, results also suggested that the participants experienced improved coping during the current circumstances. With these findings, it can be implied that while internet gaming, when used as a coping activity during a pandemic, can result in negative encounters, it also brings about positive experiences that could lead to potential benefits in the psychosocial wellbeing of its users. To use internet gaming as a coping activity during the pandemic period, it is essential to acknowledge that it is only favorable when used in moderation. Accordingly, a constructive approach must be formulated to respond to internet gaming activity during the pandemic. Although participants experienced improved coping, internet gaming activity should not be used to cope in times of crisis such as the pandemic because the purpose could be achieved, which is to cope with the ongoing crisis. Still, an alteration to the holistic aspect of the self of the user will occur.

Recommendation

Considering the study's findings, the researchers recommend that users of internet games find a more effective way of managing stress. This can be achieved through conducting classes or group discussions addressing the cause of stress. In line with this, healthy coping techniques such as meditation and physical workouts must be integrated. Seminars may also be organized to tackle the dismissive effects of internet gaming and restate the various negative effects of overindulging in the activity. In this discussion, participants are encouraged to acquire adequate sleep that sleep journal may aid to keep track of the time and length of sleep. The talk is also to motivate the participants to maintain physical activity that is beneficial in improving mood and keeping holistic well-being. Moreover, the researchers recommend applying the concepts from internet gaming within nursing informatics, focusing on using regulated internet gaming with guidance and reservation.

Conflicts of Interest

The researchers declared to have no conflicts of interest in financial aspects in conducting the study. Conflicts of interest that were encountered included the personal strong views in the subject matter discussed in this study.

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