



Overspending on Online Game App Purchasing Among University Students in Sarawak, Malaysia

Dr. Parveen Kaur, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia, E.Mail: sspkaur@unimas.my

Dr. Arif Jawaid, Academic Director, Lahore Garrison University, Pakistan

Armando Nathaniel, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia,

Benita Thomas, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia,

Muhamad Zulfazid, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia,

Ricky Kong, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia

ABSTRACT- This research has sought to ascertain the pattern in-app purchasing in online games amongst university students. The sample consisted of 100 university students from all over the area of Kuching, Sarawak. This research revealed that out of the 100 students chosen, 91 were involved in in-app purchasing while 9 did not share the same passion. There are a wide range of factors as to why students are or are not involved in the habit of in-app purchasing in online games amongst university students. This research also studied on spending pattern of students, source of financial aid and factors contributing to reasons for in-app purchasing. While this study was conducted in Kuching, it has affected people from other regions as well, as there are many students who are not only involved in in-app purchasing, but addicted to it.

Keywords: In-App Purchases, Online Games, University Students

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the business in games technology, developers depend on a good marketing strategy to boost its potential trajectories for game development. In the gaming business industry, in-app purchase is one of the ways to monetize their digital products. The most well-known indication for potential profitability is the mobile puzzle game “Candy Crush Saga”, which in October 2013 was estimated to earn an average of over \$600,000 in daily revenue for its developer, solely through in-app purchases (Thomas, 2013).

The apps which utilize in-app purchases range from productivity software with purchasable features, to games where a customer can pay for additional play time or the ability to skip difficult portions (Thomas, 2013). However, it is really important to remember that any subscription-based payment, for example, membership to a service, is not considered in-app purchasing. As a defined characteristic is that, in-app purchase features are rarely advertised and are never part of a customer’s initial product offering (Reyburn, 2013).

In-app purchasing or micro transaction refers to the act of buying designs, also known as ‘skins’ from an online application of a game. The transactions can be made through coins collected on the application or online banking (Gaudeul, 2010). In this research, we are keen to study how excessive in-app purchasing is affecting the students’ lifestyle in the Kuching area. The study includes to investigate how much students are willing to spend on a game application and the consequences they have to face after purchasing the designs or avatars in the application.

In-App Purchases in Online Mobile Games

According to Yee (2007), an online game player utilizes the existence of in-app purchases as a source of motivation to continue playing the game despite its nature of repetitiveness. Upon purchasing or subscribing to an in-game option, a player can experience a total immersion of the game while also receives some rare achievements, which can only be unlocked through this method. These achievements act as an indicator of social hierarchy in the gaming community where players of different age, gender and nationality often interact with each other based on their social standing in the game. The findings of Balakrishnan and Griffiths (2018) supported this idea of motivation and noted the element of game loyalty amongst players. Their observation shows that paid-to-play players who had spent a huge amount of money via in-app purchases tends to have a greater sense of loyalty to the game than the free-to-play