

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Internet technology has been making many cultures global. Because of this, many people are learning about the different kinds of popular culture from different parts of the world. Popular culture is a worldwide phenomenon and one of those cultures is video games (Reid, 2014). The popular culture of video games is interesting to discuss and make research on. It is interesting because the writer does not only play video games as a hobby but also wants to take advantage of whatever culture has been shared through video games.

There are two-point seven billion users worldwide that have been recorded as players of video games (<https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/newzoo-games-market-numbers-revenues-and-audience-2020-2023/>). This high number influences the writer to try and understand why people like playing video games. From the writer's own experience, playing video games gives the enjoyment of both gameplay and story series that is put in the video games. For the writer, playing video games is like reading a novel series or watching a drama TV series. Yet, unlike conventional drama or novel series, players of video games have a major role in creating the plot of the story. Usually, a single video game offers branches of adventures and multiple endings. Because of this, when the writer finishes one game, there is a curiosity to know what

will happen in the next round of the games that playing one video game is not enough. Playing a video game is, like playing a giant jigsaw puzzle, therefore, satisfaction may lie in playing many more video games.

Historically, video games entered the stage of popular culture in the 1960s through the venue of arcade games (Wolf, 2017). Wolf informs that a wide range of “electromechanical coin-operated games offered players several genres of games, including shooting games, racing games, trivia games, themed pinball games, combat games, sports games, and many more. Depending on the venue, such games might be played alongside other table-top games like pool, ping-pong, air hockey, and skeeball, some of which also required coins to play” (2017, p. 120). Ever since then, video games have become a culture that is known throughout the world and is developing over time.

Many other studies were written regarding the video games’ contents, and these contents are related to something that makes it even popular such as music. Music is an essential element in a video game. Without music, video games will not be successful. In a video game, the music gives it a sense of emotion. Lankoski (2012) observes that “One needs only to turn off the sounds from *Silent Hill 3* or *Thief Deadly Shadows* to see how the games lose their emotional impact” (p. 40). Like music in film, music in video games works precisely by the player not being aware of how it is working.

A video game player, however, may be interested in learning about the characters that are considered unique. Video game makers usually make a customized character, a patent character; or a patent character that can be customized. In this case,

some players have the intention of playing games because they want to create a customized character that resembles their faces. The identification within customized in-game characters based on the player's favor is a good candidate to examine possible effects on the flow state of the game or how the enjoyment will take place within the game (Soutter & Hitchens, 2016). Other research has suggested that players tend to choose characters that are similar to themselves based on gender, which enhances certain aesthetic qualities and elevates various ethnicities and different cultures (Meredith, 2014).

A character in video games is meant to be placed in a certain predicament (plot) for the players to control the character and navigate them through levels to reach the main objectives (Belinkie, 2011). Those scales of video game plots are created for the players to make it everlasting. Just like reading a novel, video games have some kind of a fastener or binder that keeps them playing. These binders can be characters, gameplay, or even plots inside a videogame that is worthy enough to wait for the next series and also become material for discussion by the players among their circle and makes videogames popular and also have a social function. The social function here based on the theory by Castelfranchi (2001) means that video games are consumed regularly by people, who did not realize that they had done that on purpose. It is this quality that players are determined to login into the game each day to claim prizes for the daily patronage the games have to offer. It is also this indicator that makes people addicted to opening a video game at least once a day.

The topic of video games is genuinely related to players' tastes and favor. Video games never choose their players but it is the players who choose the video games as stated by Shapiro (2014). Shapiro also stated that video games will increase the players' instinct in certain aspects outside the video game's mechanic/real-life impact, which means that video games can teach us something rather than just provide entertainment. Most of the time, video games demand supportive individuals (players) that can do multitasking activities, which shows the players' preciseness, good concentration, and long-term memory (Csobanka, 2016). In brief, video game players usually seek players who withstand frequent challenges.

For this research, the writer wants to know the preferences of players because the writer believed that the preferences support the fact that video games is a product of Popular Culture, the respondents are the tournament players who have participated in the online tournament of *FLA x Grand Order MLBB E-Sport Tournament* that was held on August 23rd. 2021 The writer who also acts as the Head of the Committee for this event is happy to know that this online tournament has interested players who do not only originate from Semarang but also other regions in Indonesia as well. This becomes the reason why the writer believes that data can be used to represent most tournament video game players' preferences, and is thus, worthy of reporting for his undergraduate thesis.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this research is cultural studies in the literature field, especially popular culture.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is limited to video games, which are played by youngsters and students who participated in the *FLA x Grand Order MLBB E-Sport Tournament*.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are

1. How have video games been identified as one of the products of popular culture?
2. What are tournament players' preferences in playing video games?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are

1. To identify video games as a popular culture
2. To identify what are tournament players' preferences in playing video games

1.6 Significance of the Study

For the readers, particularly those who are from the Faculty of Language and Arts in Soegijapranata Catholic University, the research will be especially significant for literature students, because students can learn how to relate their knowledge of playing video games to the study of popular culture.

1.7 Definition of Term

1. Video Games

Digitally based games are typically played on personal computers or dedicated gaming devices, such as game consoles (e.g., Xbox, PlayStation) or handheld game devices (e.g., 3DS, Vita) (DaCosta, 2020).

2. Popular Culture

The definition of popular culture comes from Matthew Arnold (in Schuck, 2020) who first identifies what is called “high culture.” He says that high culture consists of the texts and practices that are considered elite or of the highest class. Activities such as opera, classical music, ballet, works of art that hang in art museums, and so on are categorized as high culture. So, too, are the pieces of literature called the Greats or the Classics, such as the works of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Aristotle. These works are often referred to as “the canon” of great literature, and historically educators, along the same lines as Matthew Arnold's view of culture, have assumed that these are the works with which any well-educated and “cultured” individual should be familiar. High culture is set in opposition to low culture, and low culture is generally thought to be the equivalent of popular culture. Popular culture consists, then, of the cultural texts and practices of the working classes as well as texts and practices produced and consumed on a mass scale, such as rock music, Hollywood films, graffiti, and works by the likes of Stephen King and J.K. Rowling. In this way, popular culture corresponds to a large degree with mass culture, which consists of the mass-produced, mass-marketed products so many of us use (Schuck, 2020).

3. Preference

A feeling when people psychologically is wanting to choose something that is more to their advantage or favor rather than the others and will not stop to preserve it no matter what the cost may be (Crozier, 1997).

