CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions of the findings related to videogame playing behavior and attitudes toward videogames of the game players, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to study the videogame playing behavior of teenagers in Bangkok. The objectives of this study were to find out the characteristics of students playing videogames at Mathayom 3 level in a private school and those in a government school, to identify reasons making them love to play videogames, and to explore the attitudes of youths toward videogames. The results of the study will be useful for parents and the future of videogame studies.

A cross-sectional design was used for conducting the research and the samples of this study were the young people who were students in Mathayom 3 in a private boy's school located on Pramuan Road and a government boy's school located on Charoenkrung Road. The questionnaire was used as the instrument of the study. 150 questionnaires or 75 questionnaires for each school were submitted to the schools' teachers who helped distribute the questionnaires to their Mathayom 3 students by using an accessible design. The distribution was conducted during December 20, 2007 to January 5, 2008.

Additionally, the questionnaire was divided into three parts with closed-ended question formats such as dichotomous, multiple choice and Likert scale questions. The first part of the questionnaire asked for general information from the participants. In the second part, all subjects were asked about their gaming habits while the last part was regarding the attitudes of the respondents toward videogames.

The results from this study will be used as a reference for the first stage of a child's behavior before they become extreme gamers in the future. Moreover, students in these two schools are different in terms of average of family income, which could be a cause for their different behavior. Therefore, this information can be useful for parents to understand their children's gaming behavior, and can help them keep their children away from the problems caused by such behavior. The results will also be useful for future studies of videogame playing behavior in Thailand.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Characteristics of Social Biography and Background

In this study, a vast majority of respondents (98%) had a very good performance (3.0-4.0 GPA) at school. Even though there were differences in family income between 43.9% of students from the private school (more than 60,000 Baht per month) and 60.1% from the government school (not over than 60,000 Baht per month), the allowances enjoyed by the two groups seemed to be the same at 500 Baht-1,000 Baht per week. Regarding their ownership of videogame systems, a vast majority of the respondents (97.4%) had a computer in their house. 62% of the respondents reported that they also owned at least one handheld game and Game Boy advance was the most popular one (37.3%) among them. Moreover, 83 students (55.3%) had at least one videogame console at home and Play Station 2 was reported as the most popular videogame console (47.3%). From a total of 150 students, there were only 15 people (10%) who reported that they did not play videogames because they preferred doing other activities. By contrast, the purpose of relaxation was the reason making over half of gaming students (55.6%) play videogames.

5.2.2 Characteristics of Videogame Playing Behavior

The results in Chapter 4 show that the videogame playing styles between students from the two schools were partly different. On average, most gamers (34.1%) played videogames 1-2 days a week. However, at the government school, 40.6% of the students played videogames at least 5 days a week compared to those at the private school at 16.6%. Similarly, the next finding shows that most of the students from the government school (55.1%) preferred playing videogames everyday compared to only 22.7% from the private school because three-forth (75.8%) of the private school students usually played during holidays, as well as 40.6% from the government school.

Additionally, 41.0% of the students from both schools preferred playing videogames between 16.00-20.00 hours; there were very few of them (2.2%) who played after midnight. On average, 55.9% of gamers from the government school and 84.9% from the private school spent 3 hours at most on videogames. However, 44.1% from the government schools reported that they spent more than 3 hours and 11.8% even played more than 5 hours on average. The longest time students spent on videogames varied between 2-4 hours to more than 8 hours.

Furthermore, 54.5% of the respondents reported they spent money on videogame playing and a computer was the most popular device which gamers used to play both online and offline game, followed by the videogame console (offline), mobile phone game and handheld game respectively. Moreover, their preferences of the types of videogames were varied but the top three were action and adventure games, strategy and simulation games, and MMORPG respectively. While 40.6% of students from the government school preferred playing videogames at the Internet café, only 15.2% from a private school preferred such a place. There were only 10 gamers who reported that they usually play videogames with their parent. Among the 132 gaming students, 63 or 47.7% of them had ever felt like they were addicted to videogames while 14.4% were not sure of their feelings.

5.2.3 Attitudes About Videogames

Even though most gaming students liked playing videogames, they did not mind if they could not play it in the future. Students from both schools had a good attitude towards the advantages of videogames. While students from the private school felt neutral about the disadvantages of videogames, students from the government school agreed that videogames resulted in some problems such as wasted time or wasted money, and health problems.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

This section involves discussions on interesting issues drawn from the summary of the findings in this study.

5.3.1 According to the finding in this study, even though most students played videogames, they still performed very well at school. This finding was supported by Sutthiporn Nirapath (สุทธิพร นิราพาธ, 2547, น. 53) in *The Relationship between Playing Computer Games, Academic Achievement and Aggressive Behavior of Senior High School Students*. According to her findings, she did not find a relationship between playing computer games and academic achievement. She concluded that there were many factors affecting students' school performance such as physical factors, self-development factors and self-adjustment factors, and playing videogames was not one of those factors.

5.3.2 Most young gamers in this study played videogames for the purpose of relaxation, followed by personal preference and meeting or socializing with friends. Similarly, according to Tuanglap Piamyoosuk's online gaming behavior study *Patterns of Behaviour in The Playing of Online Games by Children and Adolescents* (ตวงลาภ เปี่ยมอยู่สุข, 2549, น. 127), it was revealed that enjoyment was the reason making teenagers like to play an online game. He concluded that this finding originated from Sucha Chan-aim's "teenager's social characteristics" of loving enjoyment in order to relax and relieve their stress. Moreover, Pornumpai Viravan

(2005, p. 24), in *The Study of Online Game Players' Behavior: A Case Study on Online Game Shops in Siam Square*, found that the first reason making almost half of gamers like to play online games was their personal preference, followed by their friends. The purpose of relaxation did not appear in her findings because she did not provide for the factor of relaxation in her questionnaire.

5.3.3 In this study, even friends come third in the reasons making young gamers play videogames, most of them agreed that videogames could give opportunities to socialize with friends and created new connections with others. Moreover, they usually played videogames with friends but seldom with parents. This finding was related to Pornumpai's study (2005, p. 50) in that most of the male online gamers loved to play with their friends. In addition, this finding can be explained by Maslow's theory of "Self-Actualization" (as cited in McConnell & Philipchalk, 1992, pp. 179-180). Children loved playing videogames because of their social needs. According to Maslow's level of belongingness, children tried to affiliate with their friends through videogame playing in order to receive a sense of approval and belonging from their friends. Moreover, they can broaden such a sense by creating relationships with new friends via videogame playing as well.

5.3.4 According to the findings in this study, an online computer game was stated firstly as a type of videogame system most gaming kids usually play. This finding is also related to the type of videogames genres over half of gaming kids usually played, MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game). Nowadays, an online game especially MMORPG, allowing gamers from every corner of the world to play in the same virtual world, was accused by many reports as the cause of problems from the overplaying of videogames such as aggressive behavior and health problems. For instance, Counter-Strike, an online game in the type of MMORPG which allows gamers to play as an assassin team member carrying weapons or bombs to kill the bad guys, was believed to be particularly influential over the terrifying behavior of a gun man at Taladthai on May 23, 2007 ("จาก "เกม" ถึงของจริง," 2550; "ตายเกลื่อนตลาดไท," 2550). Moreover, overplaying an online game can be the

cause of death as well. In 2005, Lee, a 28-year-old South Korean man, died of heart failure at an internet café after having played the online game for almost 50 hours at a time. (“S Korean,” 2005)

5.3.5 The findings in this study show that more young Thai gamers admitted that they had felt a videogame addiction than young American gamers. According to Martin and Oppenheim (2007, p. 5), 30% of teen males aged between 13 to 18 in America admitted that they had ever felt like they were addicted to videogames, and 9% of them were not sure if they had experienced such a feeling. However, almost half of the male gamers (47.7%) in this study agreed with the young American gamers while 14.4% of them reported uncertainty.

5.3.6 A comparison of gaming students from the private school to those from the government school shows that the government school gamers spent more time playing videogames in terms of endurance and frequency than those from the private school. The differences in family income between the two schools did not seem to be related to the students’ gaming habits because the average school allowance between them was very close. To support this finding, this study also found that most gamers did not have to spend or spent less money on videogame playing than other past times.

Moreover, it can be implied that the differences in their lifestyles affected their gaming behaviors. Everyday the parents of private school students give their children a ride to school in the morning and pick them up after school while most students from the government one have to travel to school by themselves. As a result, students from the government school have more free time than those from the private school. Not under supervision of their parent, children from the government school go along with their friends to play videogames elsewhere instead of going back home while those at the private school had to wait for their parents at school to go straight home. This was also supported by the findings of this study: it shows that other than home the government school students also preferred playing videogames at internet cafés

(40.6%) and at friend's homes (20.3%) while less students from the private school preferred playing at such places as the internet café (15.2%) or their friend's home (12.1%). Consequently, the government school students played videogames more than those from the private school.

5.3.7 Comparing attitudes of non-gaming and gaming students towards videogames, gaming students had a more positive attitude towards videogames than non-gaming ones. This finding could be explained by the concept of attitudes by Freedman's study (อ้างถึงใน ตวงลาภ เปี่ยมอยู่สุข, 2549, น. 22-23). From the component of attitudes, the affective component or emotions can indicate what people feel towards things they have an attitude on. Emotions come from their beliefs, past experience and other feelings they receive without their awareness. Therefore, gaming students have good experiences playing videogames such as having closer friendships or receiving more knowledge so their attitudes toward videogames were positive. However, the non-gaming ones might never have experienced the advantages of videogames so their feelings were neutral about them or they even have bad attitudes towards the problems occurring from videogames.

5.3.8 The non-gaming kids in this study reported that they did not play videogames because they preferred doing other activities. Moreover, their attitudes toward videogames were a little bit negative because they felt neutral towards advantages of videogames but agreed with the disadvantages.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The problems resulting from videogame addiction in the youth have become the concern for parents and our community these days. The findings from this study will help those concerned with understanding children's behavior in terms of videogame playing in order to keep them away from future problems. The findings from this study can be concluded as follows:

Overall, most kids loved playing videogames because they wanted to ease their stress. Most of them usually played an online computer game which was reported from many sources as the causes of problems from overplaying videogames. However, students in this study did not confront any severe problems from gaming. Their academic performance was still very good. Most of the students' gaming habits were at an acceptable level, and they played at the most 2 days a week on the weekend or on holiday and not over than 3 hours at a time. However, some of them need close supervision from their parents to prevent them from overplaying videogames because their gaming habit was approaching an excessive level.

Moreover, gamer kids usually played videogames with friends but seldom with parents. They played videogames to gain social benefits because they believed that playing videogames can allow them opportunities to socialize with friends and can create new relationships with others.

In addition, this study found that gaming students from the government school played videogames more than those from the private school because they had different lifestyles which allowed children from the government school to have more free time to play videogames with friends than those from the private school.

Consequently, parents or guardians should be aware of their kids' gaming habits because there were nearly 50% of gaming kids admitting that they had ever felt of videogame addiction. Moreover, MMORPG, reported by many sources as a harmful game, was reported by over half of gaming kids as their favorite game. These signs should warn parents to do something to prevent their children from getting into trouble. What parents should do is, for example, to follow the guidance from the non-gaming children in this study. The non-gaming children gave an interesting reason for not wanting to play videogames which was doing other activities. Therefore, other than playing videogames with the children, parents should introduce their children to other family activities such as playing sports or traveling. Not only can this solution keep the gaming children away from videogames but the relationship among family members can also become closer.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research.

5.5.1 The method of data collection in this study was accidental sampling letting teachers from the two schools choose their Mathayom 3 students, who then agreed to participate in the study arbitrarily. As a result, most of the respondents had a very high academic performance at the school by chance. Therefore, the next study may employ quota sampling instead of the convenience one in order to cover students with every level of school performance and get a larger sample for the next study.

5.5.2 The sample of this study was only represented by students from one private and one government boy's school which were neighbors in the center of Bangkok. The family income of students from the two schools were not too different. Consequently, the sample size of students from both types of schools should be larger to cover all areas in Bangkok and all secondary education in order to obtain more accurate results.

5.5.3 In this study, the number of non-gaming students was very few (15 people), so the result of their attitudes toward videogames and their reasons for loving to do other activities more than gaming might not represent precise results. Therefore, further study may focus on young people who do not play videogames in order to confirm the accuracy of their results in this study. Further research may study their activities in leisure time or find out their reasons for "not-gaming".

5.5.4 In this study, the statement "I like playing videogames." required only a gaming students' response. For the further research, such a statement should require attitudes from both gaming and non-gaming students because an opinion on this statement would represent exact attitudes of non-gaming students toward videogames.