

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and Significance of Research Problem

According to Newzoo's global Game Market report (2021): With the development of global video game network and the popularity of intelligent mobile terminals, the globalization of Internet mobile games is an important development trend. The mobile game market has become broader, larger, and more diversified than ever before. Global smartphone users are rapidly approaching the 4 billion mark, with the Asia-Pacific region accounting for more than half of the smartphone users in 2021, mainly thanks to more populous countries such as China and India. In 2021, the number of smartphone users worldwide will reach 3.9 billion, up 6.1% year on year; in 2021, 4.6 billion are active smartphone devices, with 5G smartphones accounting for 15%, a significant increase from 5% in 2020. (Figure1) (Newzoo's global Game Market report , 2021).

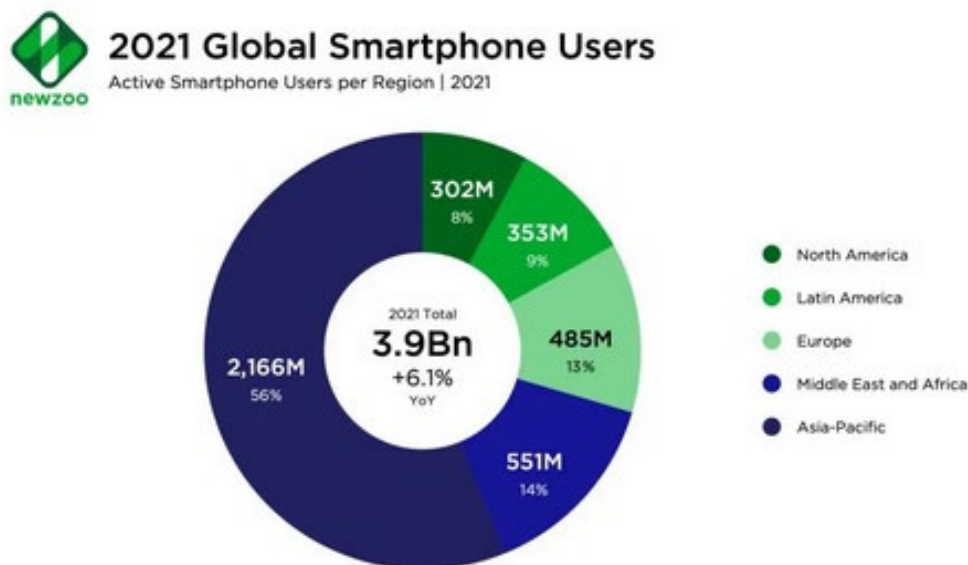


Figure1.1. Global Smartphone Users (Newzoo's global Game Market report ,2021)

2022, by gaming revenue (\$ billion)

2022 (by revenue)

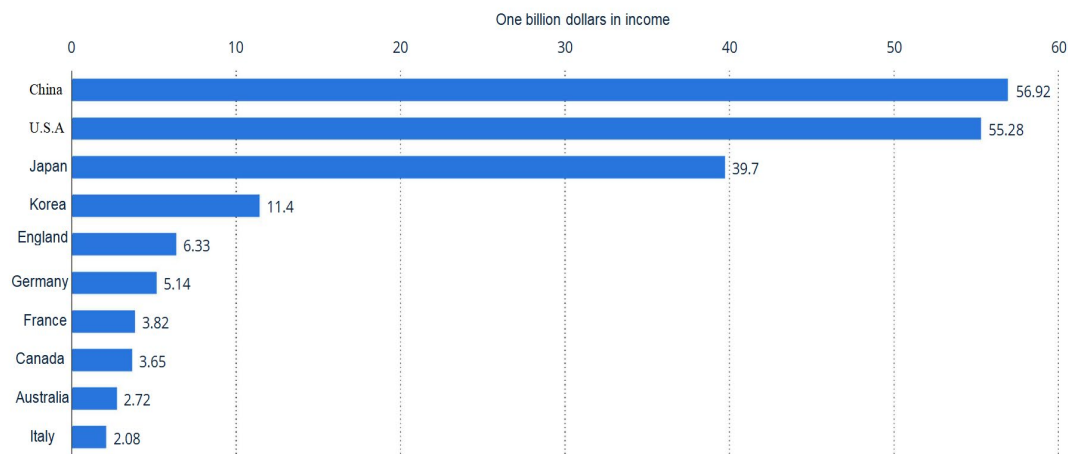


Figure1.2. Gaming revenue (Analysis of China's game industry ,2022)

As can be seen from the analysis (Figure 2) of China's game industry in 2022: Mobile games are the future direction of game development. There are many user groups and large profit margins in China. In order to occupy a better, faster and more market share, various manufacturers constantly invest heavily in marketing.(Yuanzhuo Consulting, 2022, p. 5)

The COVID-19 epidemic in the past two years has also brought about major changes in people's lifestyle. One of the most noticeable changes is the increasing use of mobile devices for entertainment, especially for playing mobile games. In China, the mobile gaming industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the trend (Chen, 2020, pp. 123-140).

In 2023, as the world recovers from the pandemic, the COVID-19 situation in China improves and restrictions are lifted, and the way people live and work gradually returns to normal, it is important to consider what factors will affect the future of China's mobile gaming industry. The decision of whether to continue playing mobile games after the pandemic is over may be influenced by various factors.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, several changes are expected to occur that can influence mobile phone use behavior.

Shifting preferences towards online activities: With social distancing measures and restrictions on physical gatherings, people turned to online activities for social interaction, leisure, and entertainment. Mobile games provide a convenient and accessible option for individuals to engage in virtual socialization and entertainment.

Shift in work and study routines: As workplaces and educational institutions resume in-person operations, individuals have less time available for leisure activities, including playing mobile games. The return to regular work and study routines necessitates a greater focus on professional or academic responsibilities, leaving less time for gaming.

Increased offline activities: As people regain the ability to engage in social interactions, outdoor activities, and other forms of entertainment outside of their homes, the amount of time spent on mobile phone usage, including playing gamers, may decrease.

On the other hand, as the world recovers from the pandemic and restrictions are lifted, individuals may shift their priorities and reduce their excessive mobile phone usage (Ryu & Cho, 2022, pp. 591-600).

F Company was founded in 2011, is a mobile game company headquartered in China, including e-commerce, games, movie tickets and other businesses, connecting people and service entertainment business ecology, leading the diversified development of Internet business models. With the development of the Internet and mobile phone network, F Company has set up a mobile game publishing department.

F Company has demonstrated strong research and development capabilities, resulting in the development and release of numerous mobile game products catering to a wide range of gamers. The company offers a distinct selection of games that have resonated with gamers. For instance, their casual game, Kitten Match, their strategy game, Battle Warship: Naval Empire, and their RPG game, Goblin's Tail.

These games have attracted gamers for several reasons, showcasing F Company's distinguishing features:

Fast Leveling Up: F Company's games may incorporate mechanisms that allow gamers to progress quickly within the game, offering a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Unique User Interface: F Company games may possess a visually appealing and user-friendly interface, enhancing the overall gaming experience and drawing gamers in.

In the mobile game industry in China, F Company commands a significant presence and influence. They have capitalized on the market opportunities arising from the widespread adoption of mobile gaming and have made substantial investments in marketing to gain a competitive edge.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about changes in gamers' behavior, which may present both opportunities and threats to F Company. With the pandemic gradually subsiding, some potential marketing opportunities and threats include:

Opportunities: As people resume their normal lives, there may be a surge in demand for mobile games as a form of entertainment. F Company can capitalize on this trend by strategically promoting their games and engaging with the returning gamer base (Xing, Zhang, Li, & Li, 2018, pp. 153-161).

Threats: The post-pandemic period may also see a decline in the excessive use of mobile phones for entertainment as people re-engage with offline activities. F Company needs to adapt its marketing strategies to ensure sustained engagement and retention of gamers.

The research conducted in this study, which analyzes the factors influencing gamers' decision to continue playing mobile games after the pandemic, can provide valuable insights to F Company. The results of this research can guide the ongoing projects of F Company, enabling them to optimize their games and marketing strategies to enhance gamer satisfaction, increase user retention, and ultimately drive greater profits. By understanding the factors that influence gamers' behavior, F Company can make informed decisions and stay ahead in the competitive mobile game industry in China.

In this paper, F Company is taken as a case study to analyze the main factors that affect gamers' continuing to play mobile games after the epidemic reducing (Li, & Zhang, 2021, pp. 45-58).

Research Objectives

1. To study Chinese gamers behavior for playing mobile games.
2. To examine factors influencing Chinese gamers decision to play mobile game: a case study of F company.

Research Hypothesis

1. Marketing strategy factor influences Chinese gamers decision to play a mobile game.
2. Social interaction factor influences Chinese gamers decision to play a mobile game.
3. Self-determination factor influences Chinese gamers decision to play a mobile game.

Scope of the Study

1. This study is limited to the development status of the domestic mobile game market in the recovery of Novel Coronavirus.
2. The study will be conducted on September 2023, and will sample only F Company gamers.

Conceptual Framework

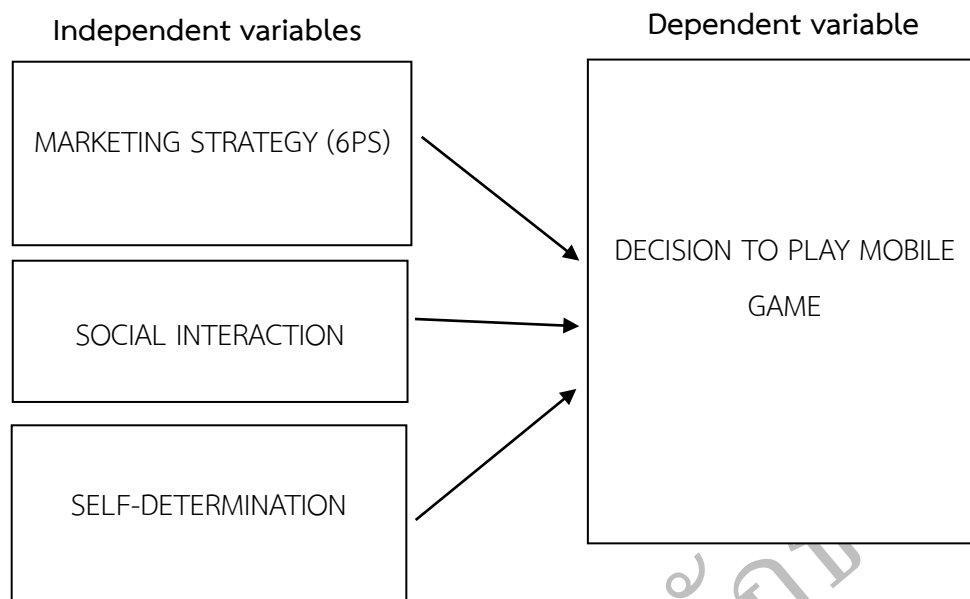


Figure 1.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the 6Ps of marketing strategy, social interaction theory, and self-determination theory.

1. **Marketing strategy (6Ps) Theory:** The "6Ps of mobile game design," was first proposed by Kevin Corti and Jamie Madigan in 2015 in their paper "Getting Gamers: The Psychology of Video Games and Their Impact on the People who Play Them". The authors analyzed factors that influence gamers' decisions to play mobile games and identified six key elements that game designers should consider when creating mobile games. Corti and Madigan's analysis found that these six factors are essential to creating a successful mobile game that will attract and retain gamers.
2. **Social Interaction Theory:** Also known as the Social Interactionist Theory was initially proposed by American sociologist George Herbert Mead. Mead is credited with laying the foundation for this theory in his work, particularly his book "Mind, Self, and Society" (1934). Social interaction refers to the interpersonal communication and relationships that occur within the gaming environment. It includes various forms of

interaction, such as multigamer gaming, in-game chat, guild/clan activities, and social networking features. Social interaction can be measured by the frequency and depth of interactions among gamers, as well as the social features and functionalities provided by the mobile game.

3. **Self-Determination Theory:** The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was developed by psychologists Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has been applied to various domains, including the context of mobile games. The theory offers insights into the underlying psychological needs and motivations that drive individuals' engagement with and enjoyment of mobile games. Gamers' decision to continue playing mobile games will be driven by their sense of autonomy (feeling in control of their gaming experience), competence (feeling a sense of mastery and progress within the game), and relatedness (feeling connected to other gamers or forming virtual communities).

Definition of Terms

1. **Mobile games** refer to a video game that is played on a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet. Mobile games can be downloaded and installed through app stores or other online platforms, and they typically require touch screen controls or device sensors such as accelerometers and gyroscopes to play. For this study, this paper mainly selects the mobile games of F company as the research object.
2. **Casual games** refer to simple games that can be played in short bursts, such as the F company: Kitten Match.
3. **Strategy games** refer to require gamers to use their brains and plan ahead, such as the F company: Battle Warship: Naval Empire.

4. **Role-playing games (RPGs)** refer to allow gamers to create and control a character in a fictional world, and typically involve leveling up, collecting items, and completing quests. such as the F company: Goblin's Tail.
5. **Gamers** refer to in terms of gamers, there are several types of gamers who enjoy mobile games, Casual gamers, Hardcore gamers, Social gamers, Competitive gamers, Free-to-play gamers. In this study, gamers who play the F company games.

Expected Benefits

This research paper can bring several expected benefits to the company and the gaming industry as a whole.

1. The research paper can help F Company to gain insights into the factors that influence Chinese gamers' decision to play mobile games. By understanding these factors, F Company can tailor its game development and marketing strategies to better appeal to the Chinese market. This can lead to increased revenue and profitability for the company.
2. The research paper can contribute to the broader gaming industry's understanding of the Chinese market. With China being the largest mobile gaming market in the world, insights gained from this research can help other game developers and publishers to better understand the unique characteristics of the Chinese market and create games that are more successful in this market.
3. The research paper can provide valuable information to investors and stakeholders in the gaming industry. By highlighting the factors that influence Chinese gamers' decision to play mobile games, investors can make more informed decisions about where to invest their resources in the gaming industry. This can lead to increased investment in games that are more likely to be successful in the Chinese market.
4. The research paper can contribute to academic research in the field of gaming and mobile technology. By conducting a case study on F

Company, the research can provide insights into how game development and marketing strategies can be tailored to specific markets, and the factors that influence consumer behavior in these markets.

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