

THE OPINIONS OF GAME PLAYERS TOWARDS THE ONLINE BUSINESS GAME

“HAY DAY”



Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

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Project Advisor: Ms. Sopin Chantakloi.

Game players' opinions towards "Hay Day" game were explored in this study. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire consisting of 3 skills – English, business, and social. The participants of the study were 53 "Hay Day" game players working at an American data storage company in Samutprakan. The questionnaire distribution and data collection were conducted in April 2015. The data were analyzed by using percentage, mean scores, and standard deviations.

The results of the study revealed that the game players had a high opinion of the three skills improvement by playing the game. The game players' social skills and business skills improvements were at a high level, while their English skills improvement was at a moderate level. In the sequence of mean, it was found that business skills were the most improved by playing "Hay Day", followed by social skills, and English skills. Findings also revealed the most improved aspect of each group of skills as follows: in terms of business skills, planning improvement was rated the highest; as for social skills, understanding and accepting social rules was considered most improved; and gaining new vocabulary was rated the most improved in the English language skills.

ความคิดเห็นของผู้เล่นเกมที่มีต่อการเล่นเกมธุรกิจออนไลน์ “เฮย์ เดย์”



บทคัดย่อ
ของ
วัลญา เสนาภักดิ์

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ

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อาจารย์โสภิตน จันทะคล้อย.

การวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นของผู้เล่นเกมที่มีต่อการเล่นเกมธุรกิจออนไลน์ “เฮย์ เดย์” เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ แบบสอบถามซึ่งประกอบด้วย 3 ทักษะ ได้แก่ ทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษ ทักษะด้านธุรกิจ และทักษะด้านสังคม กลุ่มประชากรในการวิจัยคือผู้เล่นเกม “เฮย์ เดย์” จำนวน 53 คน ที่บริษัทผลิตภัณฑ์สำรวจข้อมูลสัญชาติอเมริกันในจังหวัดสมุทรปราการ ผู้วิจัยได้ดำเนินการแจกแบบสอบถามและเก็บข้อมูลในเดือนเมษายน พ.ศ. 2558 และนำข้อมูลที่ได้มาวิเคราะห์ผล โดยใช้ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าความคิดเห็นโดยรวมของผู้เล่นเกมต่อการพัฒนาทักษะทั้งสามด้านจากการเล่นเกม “เฮย์ เดย์” อยู่ในระดับสูง โดยการพัฒนาทักษะด้านสังคมและด้านธุรกิจของผู้เล่นเกมอยู่ในระดับสูง การพัฒนาทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ตามลำดับค่าเฉลี่ย พบว่าการเล่น เกม “เฮย์ เดย์” มีผลสูงสุดในการพัฒนาทักษะด้านธุรกิจ รองลงมาคือทักษะด้านสังคม และทักษะด้าน ภาษาอังกฤษ ทั้งนี้ ทักษะด้านธุรกิจ พบว่า การพัฒนาด้านการวางแผนอยู่ในระดับสูงสุด ทักษะด้าน สังคม พบว่า การพัฒนาด้านการเข้าใจและยอมรับกฎเกณฑ์ของสังคมได้รับการพัฒนามากที่สุด และ ทักษะด้านภาษาอังกฤษ พบว่า การได้รับคำศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษใหม่ๆเป็นด้านที่ได้รับการพัฒนาสูงสุด

The Master's Project

titled

'The Opinions of Game Players towards the Online Business Game "Hay Day" '

By

Wanlaya Senapak

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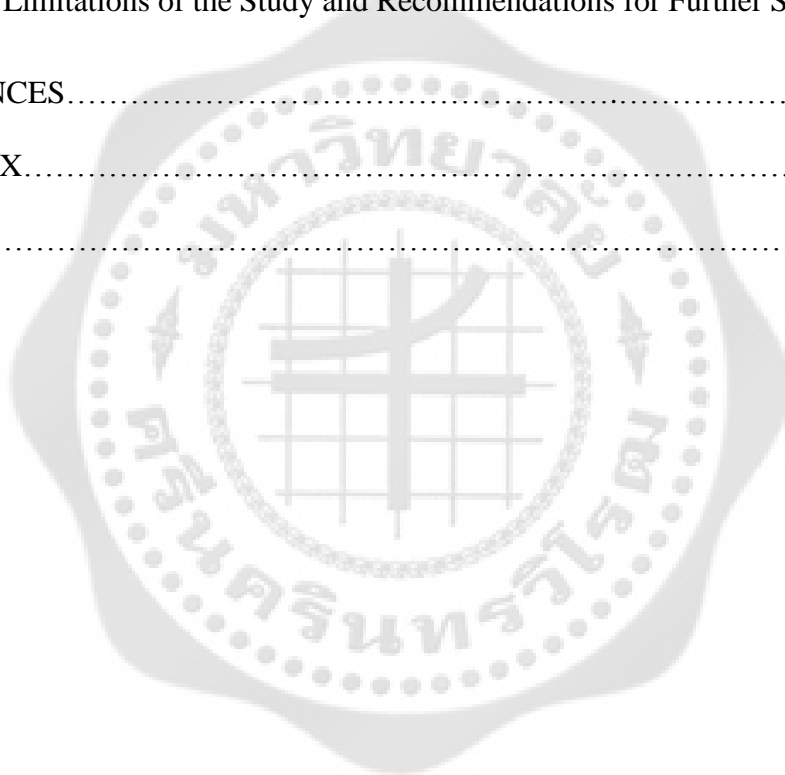
Wanlaya Senapak

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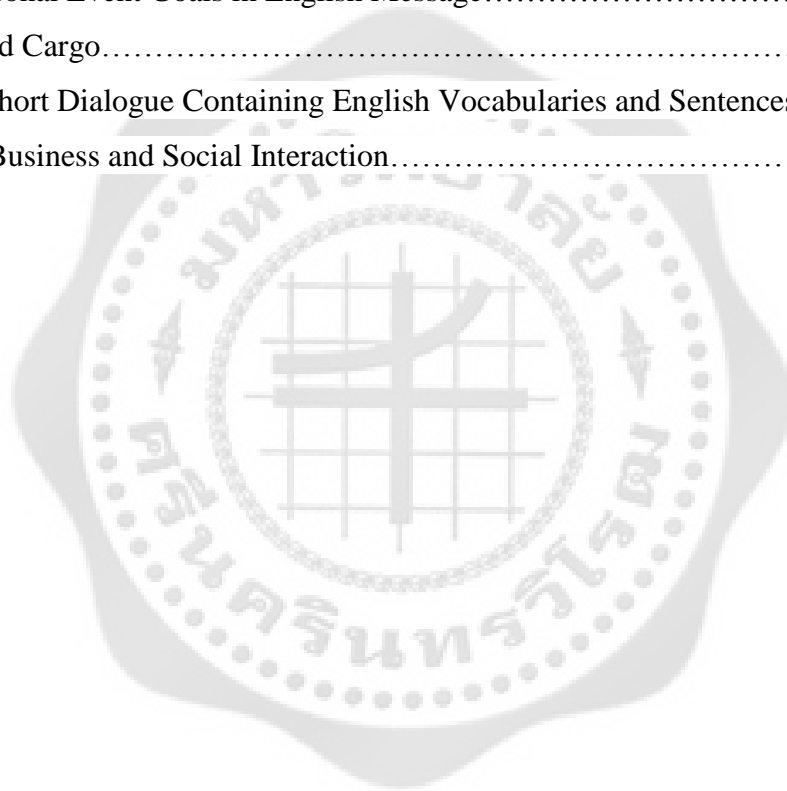
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the digital world, the Internet has been a part of modern human life in all aspects. Nowadays, it is a lot easier to access to the Internet than it used to be. It has become a great source of information, services, and entertainment. With better quality and lower price, many things can be done online such as sending and receiving emails, banking, and telephoning or making video calls. One of interesting activities worldwide on the Internet now is playing and downloading games (Office for National Statistics, 2012, Figure 1).

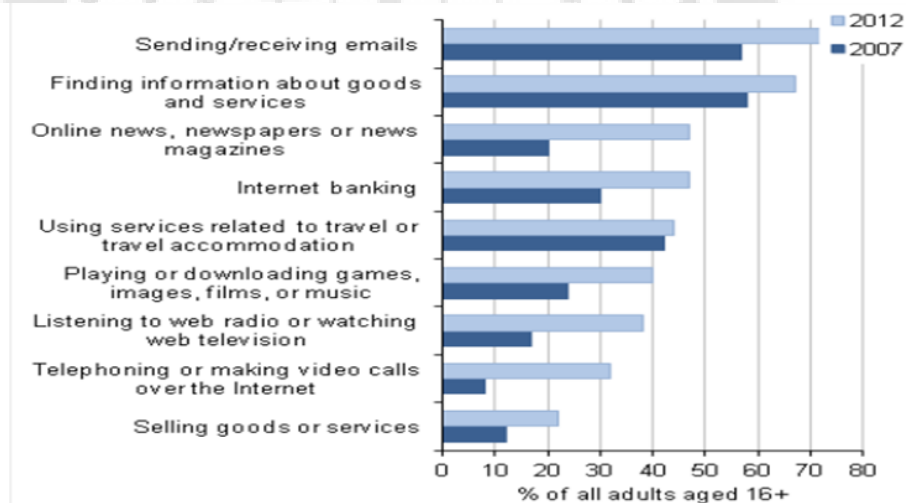


Figure 1 Online Activities Comparing between 2007 and 2012.

Reprinted from Internet Access - Households and Individuals, 2012 Part 2, by Office for National Statistics, 2012, Retrieved from http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_301822.pdf. Copyright 2012 by Office for National Statistics.

This study focuses on online games that are connected to the Internet or LAN (Local Area Network). According to the Internet improvement and the growth of mobile device, people can go online and play games via their gadgets anytime and anywhere. They can also invite their friends to join the games through social networks. Online games are linked to the game servers so they can be updated automatically, and the game levels are limitless.

The graph below presents the Dynamics of Online Games Global Market Population between 2009 and 2013 (J'son& Partners Consulting, 2012, Figure 2). The number of online game players in the leading countries of this industry is getting higher especially in USA and Japan. While online game population globally increased from 358 million people in 2009 to 734 million people in 2013.

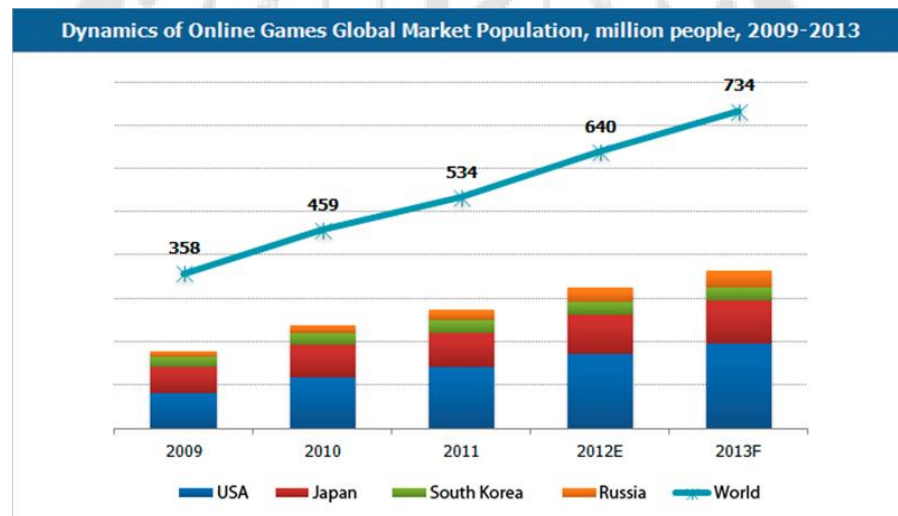


Figure 2 Dynamics of Online Games Global Market Population.

Reprinted from Online Games Market in Russia and in the World, 2009-2013, by J'son&Partners Consulting, 2012, Retrieved from http://www.json.ru/en/poleznye_materialy/free_market_watches/analytics. Copyright 2012 by J'son& Partners Consulting.

Statement of Problem

Up to now, Thai online game market has been expanding in the same way as the world market. MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) is the most popular type of online games played in the country that gains more than a half of the market share (Wee, 2012). Nevertheless, for the market share of online game in Thailand, the majority belongs to import games and just only 3% of them are Thai (“Insight Thai Online Game Market,” 2011). Most of the online games are in English version, and English is the main language for communicating on the Internet as a lingua franca (“Internet,” 2013). Gamers need to have knowledge in English to understand the game instructions and complete each mission especially for those who do not use English as the first language in their communication.

MMORPGs (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games) are the most popular online games in Thailand, partly because, their games allow gamers to be in a variety of characters in different careers that gamers could not be in their real lives. In addition, gamers can develop the abilities of their own characters when they play the games for a period of time depending on each person’s skills. Gamers need to be online for playing games with other gamers or have a real time interaction through the serviced servers (Beehaha, 2005). The games keep improving by adding new features and more missions. As a result, gamers are challenged and motivated to play the games continuously. An outstanding example is “Hay Day.”

From the researcher’s observation, “Hay Day”, an online farming game, is played broadly by various groups of people. The players can be found normally in public such as shopping malls, BTS stations, and restaurants. As an employee in GFS (Global Financial Service) department of an American data storage company in Samutprakarn, the researcher

noticed that most of the colleagues are “Hay Day” players. They have spent their time playing the game before they start working, during lunchtime, after finishing up all works, or whenever they can grab their mobile phones or tablets. Even when they do not play the game, they keep talking about it and using many vocabularies that the researcher does not know. This situation concerns people in management team because sometimes the employees play the game at the workplace during working hours. However, there have been no official warnings or prohibitions about playing the game so far.

In general, there are usually drawbacks mentioned about online games, for instance, games with violent contents may instill aggression to the players that lead to crimes. Also, game players waste their time, money and lose their relationship with people around (Brown, 2009). These are the reasons that make parents go against online games and do not allow their children to play the games. In contrast, many studies indicated that online games somehow can be such a good hobby. Some people find their new social groups or even earn real money from this activity. Playing games online allows gamers to have an interaction with the others around the world. This is a real two-way communication not merely between a program and a player, but it happens with a player and other hundred players (“Millions Spent on Casual Gaming,” 2010). Moreover, games have been used as a tool of learning and developing for many kinds of skill (Alfeshio, 2011).

Concerning all the information, as playing online games have both advantages and disadvantages, the researcher was interested in studying the opinions of game players towards the online business game “Hay Day.”

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to examine the opinions of game players towards the online business game “Hay Day” regarding English skills, social skills, and business skills.

Research Question

How does the online game “Hay Day” influence the game players regarding English skills, social skills, and business skills?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study can benefit the game players as they can gain insights into the impacts of the online game they play. The game players can also realize the advantages or disadvantages of the game which they can utilize to improve their abilities in the related skills used in the game.

Next, the findings would help the management team in the organization where the game players work aware of the pros and cons of the game in terms of personnel development because this study explored the game in three skills – English skills, business skills, and social skills that relate to the game players’ jobs. The findings can possibly change the attitude of the management team towards online games, and this can be a factor for making a decision whether the games should be adapted to an in-house training. As games can make things more fun and interesting, difficult and complicated contents such as job procedures might be easier to understand when communicating in a form of games.

Lastly, the findings should also be useful information to online game developers as many game players have turned to this kind of game. The developers can see feedbacks

from their targets and foresee the trend of the market. As a result, they are able to develop their games to respond to the needs of their customers best.

Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore the opinions of game players towards the online business game “Hay Day” regarding English skills, social skills, and business skills. The instrument was a questionnaire. Fifty-three employees of an American data storage company who played “Hay Day” game were asked to participate in this study by completing the questionnaire. The data were collected in April 2015.

Definition of Terms

Definition of the terms used in this study is defined as follows:

Online games: computer games that require the Internet connection so people around the world can play together.

Hay Day: an online farming game which was created by a Finnish game studio named Supercell.

Game players or gamers: people who play interactive games especially video games and computer games.

Game platforms: in this study means computer hardware. Machines designed to use primarily for playing games. They are PCs (Personal Computers), notebooks, tablets, mobile phones, game consoles (Xbox, Play station, Nintendo, Family), handheld games (Gameboy, DS, PSP), and arcades machines.

Social Network: a communication via website that connects people by operating systems or programs.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents an overview of related literature providing details and concepts as guidelines for this study.

The History and Genres of Online Game

Nearly 30 years ago, computers were not used broadly as today. Moreover, the main objective of inventing them was not for supporting any games, but for calculating and storing data (Hames, 2011). Video game consoles, handheld game consoles, and arcade machines were kind of brand-new adventuring and exciting game platforms at that time such as Nintendo, PlayStation, and Gameboy. Video games were what people played at home. For arcade games, they were normally found at shopping malls or game centers (Sheff, 1994) while handheld game consoles were portable using dry batteries as the power source. Pac-Man in 1980, Super Mario in 1985, Contra in 1987, and Street Fighter in 1987 were well-known offline games at that time (“1980s in video gaming,” n.d.).

An online game is another form of a video game that is played through a computer with the Internet connection. In the 1950s, the idea of creating an online game emerged when the capabilities and advancements of computers were discovered. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) created one of the very first computer games in 1962. The game was a space mission type called as “Spacewar” (Bellis, n.d.). It was an inspiration for transforming home game consoles to personal computers. Around the 1980s, Infocom, a big computer game developer at that time, made changes in personal computer games by releasing games with role-playing and simulation plots that initiated multiplayer

capabilities. However, online gaming began to be broad in the 1990s with the influence of Internet innovation like Flash and Java, vector-graphic animation technologies, which helped computer games more realistic and attractive. In addition, there are also new technologies in game machines that people can now enjoy using as a game platform not only PCs (Personal Computers), but also notebooks, mobile phones, tablets, or any other electronic gadgets that support online game applications.

Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs)

Focusing on the computer games that are played online, MMOG is the term that should be considered for categorizing the games because of the capability to support numerous gamers simultaneously. In general, MMOGs are available as the followings (“Massively Multiplayer,” n.d.):

1. **Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG)**

It is a role-playing game that hundreds of players are able to interact with each other.

Players assume that they were game characters then take control over those avatars’ actions.

The game virtual world of MMORPG still exists and develops even when the players are offline or have no interaction in the game. It is called as a “persistent world” created by Richard Bartle.

2. **Massively Multiplayer Online Real-Time Strategy (MMORTS)**

It is a kind of war game that players’ main objective is to secure their land and destroy their opponents by positioning and maneuvering their units and structures. Gamers are possibly able to add more units and structures during the game. Moreover, some of MMORTSs contain features about resource gathering, base building, in-game technological developing, and indirect unit controlling.

3. **Massively Multiplayer Online First-Person Shooter (MMOFPS)**

It is a shooting game that is centered on gun or projectile weapon combat. Gamers view the game situations through a first-person perspective or the protagonist, but can be the antagonist in some cases.

4. Massively Multiplayer Online Social Game (MMOSG) It focuses on socializing among players instead of accomplishing game missions. “Online Communities” and “Virtual Worlds” are usually referred in this type of game.

Hay Day

“Hay Day”, a combination of MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) and MMOSG (Massively Multiplayer Online Social Game), is the latest online farming game created by Supercell, a Finnish game studio. Supercell has launched some well-known online games such as Angry Birds in December 2009 and Clash of Clans in August 2012. For “Hay Day”, its first version was released on June 21, 2012 for iOS (iPhone Operating System) only (“Version History,” n.d.). However, it has been available for Android since November 2013. The game content is in Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Cyrillic, Danish, Dutch, English, the Finnish language, French, German, the Indonesian language, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Korean, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish (“Hay Day,” n.d.). Gamers are able to add friends to the game through Game Center and Facebook, one of the most popular social networks now. Although Thai people have already experienced many online-farming games, Hay Day is quite different from all the former ones because it is realistic. Moreover, it presents lovely characters, nice colors, and lively features (“Down on the farm again,” 2012). The players do not merely grow crops, rear animals, or sell products with no level limitation, but also focus on the whole production chain. Although at first the game was not available for Android device, it was a rising star

as Supercell announced that it earned more than \$1,000,000 a day from “Hay Day” (Blitz, 2012).

In Hay Day, the players have their own farms, houses, and towns. In addition, there are barns and silos, areas to grow crops, and different kinds of machine for transforming raw materials to finished goods. They also feed pets and cattle or even do fishery. Coins and diamonds, Experience (XP) and Reputation points are needed to buy everything and unlock all game levels. Gamers can trade or exchange their products with their neighbors, in other words, other gamers. This way can help the gamers to collect coins to expand and decorate their lands with many items. No highest level is set in the game because it keeps updating. No winner or loser either. Though there is no finish line to motivate the gamers to keep playing, there are lots of new things in the game waiting for the gamers to explore such as new achievements, new themes, and new items. The game can be downloaded in AppStore application for iOS (iPhone Operating System) and Google play or Play store for Android. (All about “Hay Day” can be found on “We Love Hay Day” website <http://www.welovehayday.net/2013/02/hay-day-2013.html> and “Hay Day Wiki” website <http://hayday.wikia.com/wiki/>)

Game Features:

1. Free to download
2. Produce food from natural ingredients
3. Sell and buy materials and ingredients from other farms or the market
4. Trade all things in the game with friends through Game Center and Facebook
5. All equipment needed in farming provided in the game
6. Beautiful and lively graphics
7. Real sense of farm running

To connect to a social network “Facebook” gives gamers a channel to buy and sell more. The more friends they have, the more diamonds they will get. Moreover, the players will have more chances to find treasure boxes in their friends’ farms. Adding friends can be done by clicking social button at the right corner on the game screen, then choose Facebook or G+.



Figure 3 A Screen of Hay Day Game.

Reprinted from Hay Day for Android Latest version and old version Download!!!, 2013, Retrieved from <http://haydaygameplay.com/hay-day-for-android-latest-version-and-old-version-download/>. Copyright 2013 by Hay Day Game.

In the game, the gamers will find the followings:

Achievements are tasks the gamers have done in the game. The gamers will win diamonds and EXP (or blue stars) by completing Achievements.

When the gamers go into the house, they will see the followings:

Beep Beep! - Deliver truck order in time

Patronage III - Sale products to visiting customers

Cha-Ching! - Sale product on the stand in front of the farm and earn the required coins

Stevedore - Complete boat orders in time and earn the required coins

Egghead - Collect the required eggs

Got Milk - Milk the required amount of cow milk

Baconator - Collect the required bacon

Sheep Shearer - Collect the required sheep hair

Goat Goader - Milk the required goat milk

Hyper Herder - Harvest all crops in the farm in time

Turbo Trucker - Deliver truck or boat orders in time

Hyper Herder - Collect products from cattle in time

Captain - Achieve boat orders

Citizen Kane - Advertise via the newspaper in the required times

Farm Tycoon - Buy the required production machines

Dream Farm - Buy farm decorating items to earn the required coins

Fruit Farmer - Collect the required fruits

Berry Thump - Collect the required berries

Green Thumb - Water the required friends' trees and berries

Gold Miner - Explode the required gold mines

Helter Smelter - Produce the required gold bars and lead bars

Best Friends - Buy the required pets

Tasty Treats - Feed pets and cattle in time

Co-Op - Deliver products to others' boats

Land Owner - Expand farm areas

High Roller - Spin the fortune wheel

Barn is used to store all processed products and equipment (bolts, planks, and duct tapes) for upgrading the barn and expanding the farm area.

Silo is used for storing crops. It can be upgraded by using nails, screws, woods, and panels.

Grow Crops are plots for growing any crop the gamers want. Each crop needs different period of time to grow. There are 22 types of crop the gamers can cultivate on their farm land. Below are examples of crops, the durations to mature, and the unlocked levels in the game.

1. Wheat (2 minutes/ level 1)
2. Soybeans (20 minutes/ level 5)
3. Indigo (2 hours/ level 13)
4. Olives (24 hours/ level 57)
5. Lettuce (3 hours 30 minutes/ level 58)

Animals There are three types of animals in the game: farm animals (which produce goods to make many products), pets (which give experience points and supplies), and other animals (which give life to the game but do not have any other functions.) Like crops, each animal needs different period of time to produce goods.

1. Chicken (20 minutes/ level 1)
2. Sheep (6 hours/ level 16)
3. Goat (8 hours/ level 32)

4. Honey bee (35 minutes/ level 39)
5. Lobster (12 hours/ level 44)

Products are items made or collected from production buildings. There are more than a hundred products in the game. All of them let the players fill truck, boat and town orders and also earn Experience points except lures, nets, traps and ore. Each product requires different durations, ingredients or materials, and unlocked levels as the examples below.

1. Apple juice (2 hours/ 2 apples/ level 28)
2. Blackberry muffins (45 minutes/ 1 wheat, 2 eggs, 2 blackberries/ level 26)
3. BLT Salad (1 hour 45 minutes/ 3 heads of lettuce, 1 roasted tomato, 2 bacon strips, mayonnaise/ level 62)
4. Top hat (3 hours 30 minutes/ 3 rolls of cotton fabric, 1 refined coal, 1 duck feather/ level 72)
5. Diamond ring (4 hours/ 2 gold bars, 2 platinum bars, 1 diamond/ level 40)

Roadside shop is a stand to sell all products from a farm. The gamers can set the prices and the amounts of the goods themselves. They can also advertise their products in the in-game newspaper to make the products sold quicker. To add more roadside shop space, the gamers have to add more friends on Facebook or use diamonds.

Daily Dert is newspaper in the game used to advertise products at the roadside shops and find goods the gamers want to buy.

Shopping Center is a place the gamers can buy everything in the game such as grow crops, machines, pets, and farm decorating items by using coins and diamonds.

The shop is divided to five sections:

1. No.1 - grow crops, chicken coops, cow pestilences, pig pens, and so on

2. No.2 - chicken, cows, pigs, and so on
3. No.3 - bread makers, feed mills, BBQ grill, and so on
4. No.4 - apple trees, raspberry bushes, coffee bushes, and so on
5. No.5 - holiday gifts, toy soldiers, candy poles, and so on

Game Events are temporary activities the players can participate to win rewards.

There are 3 categories of event as follows:

1. Bonus events are events that the players can win coins, Experience points, and Reputation points or vouchers by completing truck, boat and town orders, and selling products to visitors. These events usually last for 4 days, except for the visitors bonus which lasts for 24 hours.
2. Global events are for the players from all around the world to complete the community's common goal then they will get a global reward. The players can also win personal rewards by reaching the five goals given to them. By reaching their personal goals, the player will get win supplies and vouchers. They will get five diamonds when reaching the common goal. These events usually last for 4 days.
3. Holiday events are global events for special occasions. These events provide the players holiday decorations, supplies and vouchers when reaching their personal goal, and a special decoration or diamonds when reaching the common goal.

The Neighborhood chat feature

“Hay Day” provides its gamers a channel to communicate with each other in the game by chatting. The gamers will find this feature after joining a neighborhood. They can create their owns or join existing ones. A gamer can be in only one group at a time. In “Hay Day”, neighborhoods are divided into three types (“Neighborhood,” n.d.) as follows:

1. Open neighborhood

This group is accessible for every player.

2. Locked neighborhood

Gamers need to send a request and wait for an approval from the leader or co-leaders of the group.

3. Private neighborhood

Only gamers who receive an invitation can enter to this group.

There is a yellow arrow in the middle left of the screen. The players need to tab the arrow to expand the chatting box then enter texts to start a conversation (“How do I chat?,” n.d.).



Figure 4 The Neighborhood Chat Feature.

Reprinted from How do I chat?, by Supercell Player Support, n.d., Retrieved from <https://supercell.helpshift.com/a/hay-day/?p=web&f=how-do-i-chat&s=neighbourhoods-derby>. Copyright 2015 by Supercell.

In the setting field, the gamers can find all the details of their group (the name, the type, the emblem.) The settings are all changeable. Each group has its leader, co-leaders, elders, and members. They have different roles and rights as follows:

1. Leader: Edit settings, invite and accept, promote, demote, kick the players
2. Co-leader: The same as the leader but cannot edit the leader or co-leader rights
3. Elder: Invite and accept new players to the neighborhood
4. Member: No special rights

English, Business, and Social Skills in “Hay Day”

“Hay Day” players can experience the three skills found in the game as listed below:

English Skills

1. Learn plenty of vocabularies (Ex. the name of plants, animals, equipment, and menus)
2. Learn short dialogues for greetings, complimenting or dealing business
3. Read long English messages from game event goal screens
4. Make phrases, sentences, or conversations independently in the Neighborhood chat feature



Figure 5 Personal Event Goals in English Message.

Reprinted from Event Board: Halloween season, n.d., Retrieved from http://hayday.wikia.com/wiki/File:Personal_Event_Goals.jpg. Copyright 2015 by Wikia.

Business Skills

1. Do farming, ranching, fishing, and mining
2. Produce food and products from those materials and ingredients
3. Operate machines for some kinds of product
4. Sell products by setting the prices and the quantities by the players themselves
5. Load cargo (truck order/ boat orders) within time limitation
6. Repair buildings, the dock, the train station to open for business
7. Serve the visitors in the town to win bonuses for both the town owner and the neighbors

8. Get Experience points for leveling up as the players sell goods to the visitors, harvest crops, craft sellable stuff, fill boat orders, and complete many more tasks



Figure 6 Load Cargo.

Reprinted from Hay Day - Fill a boat, Get help and Send Thanks by R. Burnett, 2014, Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L5ymu1pFp0>. Copyright 2014 by YouTube.

Social Skills

1. Help other players by watering plants, feeding pets, or anything they ask for
2. Get gifts, gift cards, and compliments from those people
3. Also ask for help from other people
4. Show gratitude to people who offering help by sending them thank you letters

5. Join a neighborhood to be a part of a group and communicate with other members
6. Create a neighborhood to be the leader and manage everything in the group
7. Get Reputation points that represents how happy the visitors are after being served



Figure 7 A Short Dialogue Containing English Vocabularies and Sentences about Business and Social Interaction.

Reprinted from Hay Day - Introduction to Everything by R. Burnett, 2014, Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcVOQiAUMQA>.

Copyright 2014 by YouTube.

Related Studies

There are many studies relating to the opinions of gamers towards online games. Some of them are summarized as below.

Biggins and Udomruengkiat (2008) studied “*Building up the virtual community in online games and “onlineaholics”*” behavior of adolescents in Bangkok metropolitan.” The research methodology was a mix of quantitative and qualitative method regarding “Ragnarok Online” game. The research tools were interviewing questions and a questionnaire. The sample groups including 10 online game players, academics, an ICT officer, two youth psychologists, an online game specialist, and 835,447 adolescents aged between 15-24 years old in Bangkok Metropolitan. The finding revealed that the effects of playing online games on daily life the participants perceived including its advantages which were typing faster, learning more English vocabularies, earning more income, having new friends, and learning about planning. Moreover, the participants set their goals and looked for ways to reach those goals when they played the game. The conversations made in the game were about how to play the game, trading, and beating “Guild War.”

Another study entitled “*Computer gamers’ requirements on flash online games*” was carried out by Maneerote (2010). She used a questionnaire as a main tool to collect data from 385 flash online game players. The results revealed that the main requirements from flash online games in terms of aesthetics (the design of scenes and characters, the ability of coordinating with other players, and the reality of games) and esteem (be respected as a game leader, be at the highest level, and be famous) were at a high level. Whereas, social relation (communicate with other players, make new friends, seek a mate) and game characteristic were at a moderate level.

Gomes and Teixeira (2011) explored four MMOGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Games) in three dimensions – problem solving, motivation towards tasks, and communication and online interaction. The four games were OGame, Ikariam, Metin2, and Gladiatu. A questionnaire was developed to collect data from 321 game players who played the four MMOGs. The result showed that participants regarded motivation for task performance, problem solving, and online interaction and communication during the games

at a high level with mean score 4.02, 3.66, and 3.48 respectively. Moreover, the research identified the aspects that motivated the players to continue playing the four MMOGs. There were 10 motivational factors including friends, personal success, entertainment, challenges, strategies, alliances, game environment, free time, combat, and competition.

Additionally, “*Adolescents and online games at the present time*” was conducted by Bangkok Poll Research Center (2003). It did a fieldwork with 899 people aged between 10-25 years old. The survey revealed that 88.20% of the participants thought playing online games could improve computer skill, 75.10% of them could find new friends, and 64.40% of them thought that playing online games had more advantages than disadvantages.

Seay, Jerome, Lee, and Kraut (2004) studied online gaming communities. A 69-item survey was employed as a main tool. The survey was done online by 1,836 respondents. The findings indicated that the contents of the respondents’ in-game communication were for support and advice exchanges, social exchanges, small talk, coordination and scheduling of activities, sharing personal experience, and dealing with guild management issues.

In conclusion, the selected studies demonstrate the requirements gamers expect and the actual effects they received from playing online games. All of them mentioned about social relationship. However, a study relating to all three skills – English skills, social skills, and business skills has not been carried out. Neither has a study of “Hay day.” Therefore, this study attempts to explore the opinions of game players towards “Hay Day” regarding the three skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology and process of the research. It contains three sections: participants of the study, research instrument, and procedures of the study. The details are as follows:

Participants of the Study

This research employed a purposive sampling method to select the participants. They were employees in an American data storage company in Samut Prakarn province. All of them worked at GFS (Global Financial Service) department including both men and women aged 22 years old and above. They all played an online business game “Hay Day”. First, the researcher surveyed the number of the participants in the department. There were 152 people in total and 53 of them were “Hay Day” players. After that, the researcher approached all the participants and asked them to complete the questionnaire.

The American data storage company is the leading provider of hard disk drives and storage solutions which was founded in 1979. The company has been launched many models with new technology to store data such as documents, music, movies, and games. At the beginning of 2013, the company shipped the two billionth hard disk drive to its customer. (Smith, 2013). The company is multinational that has lots of subsidiaries in Asia, Europe, and USA. There are two branches in Thailand – Teparuk, Samutprakarn and Korat, Nakhon Ratchasima.

English is very important for the staff in all departments, especially in GFS (Global Financial Service) department. The department is the central financial office in Samutprakan so the staff here takes responsibility in finance for all the company's branches around the world. The ability to communicate in English is essential because the staff needs to deal with colleagues and customers from Asia, America, and Europe. There is diversity in the English they use, cultures, and working styles. So, GFS staff needs to keep learning, adapting, and adjusting themselves to all conditions they face with to give the best service to the customers.

Research Instrument

The instrument in this research was a questionnaire divided into four parts. The questionnaire was in English version because the participants had the ability to communicate in English well. Before being hired, all GFS staff had to pass an English test arranged by the company and also English interviews with HR staff, supervisors, and managers. For applicants who have TOEIC score above 600, they do not have to take the company's exam but the interviews.

The questionnaire consists of four parts as follows:

Part 1: General information of the participants

This section consisted of questions regarding general information of the participants including their gender, age, and education background.

Part 2: The participants' behaviors in playing "Hay Day"

The second part was designed to explore the participants' behaviors in playing the game. The questions in this section including the period of time they played the game, the

frequency of game playing, the duration they played the game each time, the current game level, the operating system they used, and the objectives of playing the game.

Part 3: The participants' opinions towards "Hay Day"

This section contained a measurement of the participants' opinions towards the game. The questions were grouped in three skills – English skills, business skills, and social skills. Because "Hay Day" contains English content about farming and trading. Its gamers interact with each other to buy and sell products. So, the three skills were included in this part of the questionnaire. There were different numbers of question in each group – 10 questions for English skills, 12 questions for business skills, and seven questions for social skills. A five-point-Likert scale was employed to measure the participants' opinions. They were asked to indicate their agreement and disagreement by checking only one column for each question. Each column represents different rating scale, which are 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree).

Part 4: Additional comments or suggestions about "Hay Day"

This section allowed the participants to add their opinions freely about the game.

Procedures of the study

Pilot Test. The early drafts of the questionnaire were revised after a few trials to make the effective final draft that best served the research objective. The researcher conducted a pilot test by selecting five employees who played "Hay Day" in the same company but worked in a different department. However, they passed the English test and interview the same as the GFS staff.

Data Collection. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the survey was conducted by the means of questionnaires at GFS (Global Financial Service) department of an American data storage company in Samutprakan province. All the participants were pre-selected by the purposive method. The participants were asked individually if they played “Hay Day” game. If they did, they would be requested to participate in the study by completing the questionnaires. They were also informed that their names and all information gained from the study would be confidential.

Data Analysis. After receiving all completed questionnaires, the data were analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The outcomes were presented through descriptive statistics: percentage, standard deviation, and mean. The percentage was used to analyze the general information of the participants. The standard deviation (*S.D.*) was used to present the variation in the distribution of the data. The mean (\bar{X}) was used to describe the average number of the data.

According to Pisanbut (2007), the value of the mean score was interpreted as the following range.

1.00 to 1.80	=	Very Low
1.81 to 2.60	=	Low
2.61 to 3.40	=	Moderate
3.41 to 4.20	=	High
4.21 to 5.00	=	Very High

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings of the study consisting of the demographic data of the participants; their behaviors in playing the game; and also their opinions towards improvements regarding English skills, business skills, and social skills from playing “Hay Day”. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program was employed to analyze the raw data gathered from 53 “Hay Day” game players working at an American data storage company in Samutprakarn province. Then the data were presented in frequency (F), percentage (%), mean (\bar{X}), standard deviation (*S.D.*), and followed by descriptive analysis.

General Information of the Participants

This part provides the general information of 53 “Hay Day” game players working at the American data storage company including gender, age, and education background. The collected data are presented in terms of frequency (F) and percentage (%). The findings are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 General Information of the Participants ($N = 53$)

General Information	F	%
Gender:		
Male	17	32.1
Female	36	67.9
Age:		
22 - 30 years	32	60.4
31 - 40 years	16	30.2
41 - 50 years	3	5.7
51 - 60 years	2	3.8
Education background:		
Bachelor's Degree	42	79.2
Master's Degree	11	20.8

Table 1 shows that in terms of gender, the majority or 67.9% of the participants were female. The remaining (32.1%) were male.

Regarding the findings on age, most of the participants were between 22 - 30 years old or 60.4%. Only 3.8% of them were between 51 - 60 years old.

In terms of education background, the majority or 79.2% of the participants graduated from a university with a bachelor's degree, whereas 20.8% of them graduated with a master's degree.

The Participants' Behaviors in Playing "Hay Day"

This section shows the participants' behaviors in playing "Hay Day" concerning the period of time they played the game, the frequency of game playing, the duration they played the game each time, the current game level, the operating system they used, and the objectives of playing the game. The data are presented in frequency (F) and percentage (%) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The Participants' Behaviors in Playing "Hay Day" ($N = 53$)

Behaviors in Playing "Hay Day"	F	%
Period of game playing:		
Less than 6 months	6	11.3
6 months - 1 year	15	28.3
1 year - 2 years	22	41.5
More than 2 years	10	18.9
Frequency of game playing:		
Everyday	20	37.7
Every other day	3	5.7
Once a week	4	7.5
At free time	26	49.1
Time duration of game playing each time:		
Less than 30 minutes	17	32.1
30 minutes	18	34.0
1 hour	7	13.2
1 hour - 2 hours	10	18.9
Others	1	1.9

Table 2 (Continued)

Behaviors in Playing “Hay Day”	F	%
Current game level:		
Level 1 - 50	13	24.5
Level 51 - 100	38	71.7
Level 101 - 150	2	3.8
Operating system:		
iOS	41	77.4
Android	7	13.2
Both of them	5	9.4
Purpose of game playing (chose as No.1):		
To have fun and relaxation	47	88.7
To develop English and communication skills	1	1.9
To develop business skills	3	5.7
To develop social skills	1	1.9
Others	1	1.9

Table 2 reveals that the highest number of the participants (41.5%) played the game for 1 - 2 years, whereas a little number of them (11.3%) played the game less than 6 months.

Additionally, concerning the frequency of game playing, 49.1% of the participants played the game at free time, while only 5.7% of them played the game every other day.

The findings also show that 34.0% of the participants played the game for 30 minutes, and 32.1% of them spent less than 30 minutes each time.

Concerning current game level, the majority of the participants (71.7%) were between level 51 - 100, while a few of them (3.8%) were between level 101 - 150.

Most participants (77.4%) played the game via iOS (iPhone Operating System),

while 13.2% of them used Android for playing the game. Only 9.4% of them used both operating systems.

Regarding the purpose of playing “Hay Day”, the majority (88.7%) played the game in order to have fun and relaxation. Only 5.7% of them wanted to develop their business skills.

The Participants’ Opinions towards the Online Business Game “Hay Day”

This part reveals the game players’ opinions towards “Hay Day” regarding three aspects – English skills, business skills, and social skills. The five-point Likert scale was employed to measure the opinions. According to the questionnaire, the scales 1 to 5 ranged from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The questionnaire consisted of 29 aspects in total and they were grouped in three – 10 aspects for English skills, 12 aspects for business skills, and seven aspects for social skills. The data in this part are presented in mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (*S.D.*) followed by a brief explanation of the findings. Mean (\bar{X}) was used to describe the average degree of the participants’ opinions towards the game. The mean scores were interpreted according to the mean range introduced by Pisarnbut (2007) as described in chapter 3 (see page 27). The standard deviation (*S.D.*) indicated the variation in the distribution of the data. The results are presented in Tables 3 - 6.

Table 3 Opinions of Game Players towards “Hay Day”

Type of Skills	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Business skills	3.81	0.904	High
Social skills	3.62	0.971	High
English skills	3.19	0.893	Moderate
Total	3.54	0.923	High

According to Table 3, the participants indicated that all of the three skills – business skills, social skills, and English skills were overall highly improved by playing “Hay Day” ($\bar{X} = 3.54$). Among the three skills, business skills and social skills improvements were rated at a high level with mean scores 3.81 and 3.62 respectively. English skills improvement was rated at moderated level ($\bar{X} = 3.19$).

Table 4 Opinions of Game Players towards “Hay Day” regarding Business Skills

Business Skills	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Planning	4.40	0.631	Very high
Time managing	4.17	0.935	High
Product storing and distributing	4.08	0.829	High
Decision making	3.94	0.969	High
Being creative	3.87	0.761	High
Marketing and advertising	3.83	0.871	High
Pricing	3.74	0.902	High
Bargaining	3.60	0.906	High
Risk managing	3.55	0.911	High

Table 2 (Continued)

Business Skills	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Problem solving	3.55	0.992	High
Trading and online trading (E-commerce)	3.51	1.012	High
Learning how to run a real business	3.45	1.136	High
Total	3.81	0.904	High

According to Table 4, the findings reveal that the overall opinion towards business skills improvement by playing “Hay Day” was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.81$). The questionnaire asked the participants whether playing the game would improve their business skills listed in the questionnaire. Planning was the only one among fourteen aspects that was rated at a very high level ($\bar{X} = 4.40$). The other aspects were all rated at a high level. They were time managing ($\bar{X} = 4.17$), product storing and distributing ($\bar{X} = 4.08$), decision making ($\bar{X} = 3.94$), being creative ($\bar{X} = 3.87$), marketing and advertising ($\bar{X} = 3.83$), pricing ($\bar{X} = 3.74$), bargaining ($\bar{X} = 3.60$), risk managing ($\bar{X} = 3.55$), problem solving ($\bar{X} = 3.55$), trading and online trading (E-commerce) ($\bar{X} = 3.51$), and learning how to run a real business ($\bar{X} = 3.45$).

Table 5 Opinions of Game Players towards “Hay Day” regarding Social Skills

Social Skills	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Understanding and accepting social rules	3.77	0.891	High
Offering help	3.75	1.054	High
Interacting with other players	3.74	0.984	High
Having patience and effort	3.66	0.876	High
Becoming the member of society	3.55	0.889	High
Finding new friends	3.49	1.120	High
Having self-confidence and self-esteem	3.40	0.987	Moderate
Total	3.62	0.971	High

Table 5 shows that the overall mean score of the participants’ opinions in terms of social skills improvement by playing the game was at a high level with the total mean score 3.62. The participants were asked whether playing the game would improve their social skills listed in the questionnaire. The six aspects that were considered as highly improved including understanding and accepting social rules ($\bar{X} = 3.77$), offering help ($\bar{X} = 3.75$), interacting with other players ($\bar{X} = 3.74$), having patience and effort ($\bar{X} = 3.66$), becoming the member of society ($\bar{X} = 3.55$), and finding new friends ($\bar{X} = 3.49$). Having self-confidence and self-esteem was the only one aspect rated at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.40$).

Table 6 Opinions of Game Players towards “Hay Day” regarding English Skills

English Skills	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Gaining new vocabulary	3.87	0.810	High
Knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game	3.74	0.812	High
Reading	3.66	0.999	High
Using the vocabulary in the game in real life	3.45	0.798	High
Using formal business language	3.23	0.974	Moderate
Using correct grammar	3.09	0.815	Moderate
Pronouncing	2.83	0.871	Moderate
Listening	2.77	0.869	Moderate
Writing	2.72	0.863	Moderate
Speaking	2.55	1.119	Low
Total	3.19	0.893	Moderate

Table 6 presents the result of the participants’ opinions towards English skills improvement by playing the game in 10 aspects. The questionnaire asked the participants whether playing the game could improve their English skills listed in the questionnaire. The participants indicated that playing “Hay Day” could moderately improve their English skills ($\bar{X} = 3.19$). There were four aspects rated at a high level – gaining new vocabulary ($\bar{X} = 3.87$), knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game ($\bar{X} = 3.74$), reading ($\bar{X} = 3.66$), and using the vocabulary in the game in real life ($\bar{X} = 3.45$). The other five aspects were rated at a moderate level including using formal business language, using correct grammar, pronouncing, listening, and writing with means of 3.23, 3.09, 2.83, 2.77, and 2.72 respectively. The only one aspect that was rated at a low level was speaking ($\bar{X} = 2.55$).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains three main sections: conclusion, discussion, and limitations of the study and recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore game players' opinions towards the online business game "Hay Day." The instrument of the study was a questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) general information of the participants; (2) the participants' behaviors in game playing; (3) the participants' opinions towards the game regarding English skills, business skills, and social skills; (4) the participant's additional comments and suggestions. The participants of this study were 53 game players working in GFS (Global Financial Service) department of an American data storage company located in Samutprakarn during the research period. Copies of questionnaire were distributed during April 20-30, 2015. The data from the collected questionnaires were analyzed through the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) and presented through descriptive statistics: percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The study found that the participants' business skills and social skills were highly improved by playing the game, whereas English skills were improved at a moderate level.

Discussion of Major Findings

In this research, the participants were asked to indicate their opinions towards the game "Hay Day" regarding three skills – English skills, business skills, and social skills.

The following sections present the major findings in accordance with the objective of the research regarding major aspects that the participants thought were significantly improved by playing “Hay Day.”

The participants consisted of 53 staff, 17 males and 36 females, working in GFS (Global Financial Service) department of an American data storage company in Samutprakarn. Thirty-two participants were between 22-30 years old and the majority of them held bachelor’s degree. Regarding the participants’ behaviors in playing “Hay Day”, 22 participants have been playing the game for one to two years. Twenty six participants played the game at free time, and 18 participants spent 30 minutes each time. The majority or 38 participants were at game level 51-100, and 41 participants played it through iOS (iPhone Operating System). Regarding the purpose of playing the game, 47 participants wanted to have fun and relaxation by playing the game.

The findings showed that business skills were rated at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 3.81$), followed by social skills ($\bar{X} = 3.62$), and English skills ($\bar{X} = 3.19$) (see Table 3).

According to the research questionnaire, 12 aspects of business skills including planning, time managing, product storing and distributing, decision making, being creative, marketing and advertising, pricing, bargaining, risk managing, problem solving, trading and online trading (E-commerce), and learning how to run a real business were explored. Among the 12 aspects, the game players perceived the improvement of planning skill at a very high level while the others were all rated at a high level. It can be plausibly assumed that the content in “Hay Day” positively enhanced the game players’ business skills the most in terms of planning, while the other 11 aspects were considered to help improve the game players’ business skills as well.

One possible explanation for the findings concerning the improvement of planning, a global aspect, is that “Hay Day”, as a business game about growing and harvesting crops and animal goods and serving customers, has the whole process of one large farming business. Players need to start at the beginning with an empty plot then select plants and animals to grow and feed. Next, they harvest and transform the offspring to many kinds of food and product. The players need to plan what crops/ plants or animals they should have in order to get the right end products to satisfy customers and gain the maximum profit. Besides, there are services in the game; for example, the game provides personal trains and many kinds of service building that the players need to repair and upgrade for attracting visitors to their farms to buy goods and services (“Hay Day,” n.d.). To be precise, the players have to plan for every single process of the game as real entrepreneurs do. In general, planning draws the overall direction of the organization and helps businessmen to be focused and make the right decision. Therefore, the game players in the research regard the game as the most benefit on planning aspect. In addition, the result can be well supported by the participants’ comments about the planning improvement in part four of the questionnaire. For example, one of the participants pointed out that the game enhanced the player’s imagination of all the processes in real farming and the proper amount of animals in a farm for producing and selling products. Moreover, the game keeps updating, so there are many new challenging activities to do in Hay Day. This can be plausibly assumed that when the game changes, the players need to adjust their plans accordingly. Another participant stated that a game player liked planning and managing raw materials and finished goods in the farm. This can be plausibly assumed that the game activities were fun, realistic, and good for planning and managing improvement.

Additionally, the study also revealed that among the 12 aspects of business skills, time managing, product storing and distributing, decision making, being creative, marketing and advertising, pricing, bargaining, risk managing, problem solving, trading and online trading (E-commerce), and learning how to run a real business were all rated at high level. In terms of time managing, the time using on specific activities, every producing activity in “Hay Day” has its own duration. For example, wheat needs two minutes to grow whereas olives need 24 hours. Chicken need 20 minutes to lay eggs while sheep produces wool every six hours (“Hay day,” n.d.). Also, boat, truck, and town orders take different lengths of time to be completed. Therefore, the players need to prioritize in order to be most productive.

Furthermore, product storing and distributing was also highly improved by playing the game. This can be well explained by the fact that, in “Hay Day”, the players learn to manage goods stored in a barn and a silo. The two storages are used differently – a barn is for all processed products and equipment, while a silo is for crops (“Hay day,” n.d.). Both of them have limited capacities so that the players have to choose what to store and what to distribute. There are many ways for distributing those goods such as exchanging them with neighbors, selling them directly to the visitors, putting them at the roadside shop in front of the farm, or filling the truck orders. Therefore, it can be assumed that the processes in the game beneficially affected the players’ ability of managing their resources.

Another aspect of business skills rated at a high level is decision making. This is consistent with the fact that the game always provides the players alternatives such as types of crops, animals, menus, products, services, or ways of distributing goods. According to planning aspect, which was rated at a very high level, it could help the players to make the right decision. This can be plausibly assumed that when the players are well-planned, they

can choose the most suitable option at that moment to obtain the maximum benefit. This can be well supported by a participant's comment from the questionnaire that the game helped improving business skills especially for decision making aspect.

Regarding being creative, another highly improved aspect of business skills, the participants showed their abilities to make new things or think of new ideas by creating, decorating, and naming their farms, their neighborhood, and their towns. This can be well supported by comments of the participants that the game allows its players to design and decorate their farms and their towns themselves in order to increase members and visitors. This makes "Hay Day" distinct from other farming games. It can be plausibly inferred that "Hay Day" players independently utilized creativities in their business to make it more attractive for their customers.

Another business aspect rated at a high level is marketing and advertising. This can be well supported by the explanation of being creative aspect that interesting farms can maintain existing customers and attract new ones. Moreover, the players could advertise the goods placed in the roadside shops by using the in-game newspaper called the "Daily Dert" ("We love Hay Day," 2013). Players can browse this paper any time as it is available every five minutes ("Hay Day," n.d.). Advertising via the Daily Dert could help selling goods quicker.

With regard to pricing and bargaining improvement, it was found that both aspects were also rated at a high level. This can be well explained by the fact that there are game characters in "Hay Day" that occasionally visit the players' farms with trade offers. It is the players' options to make a deal with the visitors or ignore them. Moreover, the game players themselves can bargain by using the in-game chat feature. The players can bargain not only

for lower prices, but amounts and types of goods and services. “Hay Day” allows its players to set price of everything they want to sell independently. One participant stated that this game is good for bargaining and pricing. It provided an open market to all players. As a result, the players can have their own strategies to manage and sell their products. It can be plausibly assumed that the game players found “Hay Day” as their real own business where they can set products’ prices themselves.

Concerning risk managing and problem solving, they were other two business aspects rated at a high level. According to the explanation of planning aspect, when the game provides updates, the players need to adjust their plans because they face with uncertainties. For example, one update provided premium farm decorating items with very high prices (“We love Hay Day,” 2013). Therefore, the players had to manage the risk from spending coins on the decorating items if they wanted to make the farm more attractive instead of using those coins for other purposes. This can be plausibly assumed that when the players found risks or problems in the game they had to utilize the problem solving aspect to find solutions. This can be well supported by one participant’s comment stated that some players used coins and diamonds to receive special treatments such as to shorten the production process, to receive an assistance, and to expand production space. Furthermore, the results were consistent with the study entitled, “*Computer Game Studies: Research and Educational Designs*” conducted by Gomes and Teixeira (2011). They studied four MMOGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Games) which were OGame, Ikariam, Metin2, and Gladiatu. The study revealed that the participants perceived problem solving in the games at a high level.

Lastly, the findings showed that the participants perceived trading and online trading (E-commerce) and learning how to run a real business aspects as highly improved by playing “Hay Day.” This can be well explained by the fact that trading is the core activity in the game. A player can be both a seller and a buyer. The game players’ revenues are mainly from selling goods. Besides, the players can learn the trading process online in the same manner as E-commerce. Finally, the whole activities provided in the game foster the knowledge of running a real business. This can be well supported by comments from the participants in the questionnaire. One participant stated that she wished she could be a business owner in real life. She had no experience about trading so she learned it from this game. Another participant stated that the game made all the farming processes easy to understand.

In conclusion, the participants considered the overall of business skills at a high level. Planning was the only one aspect rated at a very high level. One possible explanation is that planning plays a crucial role in business running. Without planning, an organization will face with many unexpected situations that give it a hard time because of being unprepared. Furthermore, the results of the study were consistent with the findings of Biggins and Udomruengkiat (2008) who studied building up the virtual community in online games and onlineaholics behavior of adolescents in Bangkok metropolitan. Their study revealed that the gamers learned how to plan from the online games they played. For the other 11 aspects of business skills including product storing and distributing, decision making, being creative, marketing and advertising, pricing, bargaining, risk managing, problem solving, trading and online trading (E-commerce), and learning how to run a real business were also positively affected by playing the game.

Social skills were found to be the second skills which were highly improved by playing the game. Seven aspects of social skills including understanding and accepting social rules, offering help, interacting with other players, having patience and effort, becoming the member of society, finding new friends, and having self-confidence and self-esteem were explored (see Table 5). The game players perceived most of all aspects at high level except for having self-confidence and self-esteem which was rated at a moderate level. This is consistent with the fact that the game content apparently demonstrates the first six aspects more. In terms of understanding and accepting social rules, there are game rules and instructions in “Hay Day” that all the game players follow in order to get rewards (coins, points, diamonds, and so on) and be able to make a deal and have a good relationship with other players. The rules in the game are in a form of social rules. This can be well explained by the fact that “Hay Day” is a mixture of MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) and MMOSG (Massively Multiplayer Online Social Game). The players gather in an online community (“Massively Multiplayer,” n.d.) and satisfy their neighbors and visitors who can become their potential customers. Furthermore, this can be well supported by the participants’ comments indicated that playing the game boosted the players’ social skills because a multiplayer game can become a virtual social community. The participant learned to play comfortably with all rules and conditions in the game. This can be plausibly assumed that the game rules are similar to the social rules in the real world that people have to follow in order to live together peacefully.

Offering help is another aspect of social skills that was rated at a high level. This can be plausibly explained by the fact that some activities in “Hay Day” are too difficult for a single player to accomplish such as global events that require supports from players in the

community (“Hay Day,” n.d.). Moreover, when the players help others by filling their boat crates or revive their trees and bushes, the players will receive gifts, gift cards, and farm decorating items that are not for sale (“Hay Day,” n.d.). The givers will possibly get a thank you letter and some help back later. This can be well supported by one participants’ comment that the game allowed the players to assist not only their friends but also unknown players. Helping other players is the only way to acquire gift cards which can be used to buy mystery packages from the game catalogue.

Next aspect of social skills that was highly improved is interacting with other players. Being one of MMOGs (Massive Multiplayer Online Games), Hay Day is played by huge amount of people simultaneously so that the players have a real time interaction to trade, exchange, chat, and do some missions together (“Massively Multiplayer,” n.d.). The results of the study were consistent with the findings of Maneerote (2010) who studied computer gamers’ requirements on flash online games. The study revealed that the ability of coordinating with other players was required at a high level. It is possible to affirm that this is one advantage of playing online games the gamers seek for as “Hay Day” encourages player-to-player interaction via the players’ avatars.

Additionally, the participants perceived having patience and effort aspect at a high level. This can be well explained by activities provided in the game. All crops and animals in “Hay Day” required different durations to grow and raise. Furthermore, besides realizing how long it will take to cook each menu or produce each product, the players have to collect all the required ingredients or materials. Otherwise, they cannot make it. For instant, to make a blackberry muffin, it requires one unit of wheat, two eggs, two blackberries, and the “Bakery.” Each muffin takes 45 minutes to be produced or 38 minutes in a mastered

machine (“Hay day,” n.d.). As a consequence, the players have to find all the required items and wait until a product or a menu is completed. The players will get coins or diamonds if they can deliver the orders in time. This can be well supported by a comment from one participant stated that each machine had a different production periods. The players had to estimate time to produce enough goods per boat ordered or to support other players in community. Another participant stated that the game helped the players to understand the feeling of a real farmer who gives hard effort to grow crops.

Another aspect of social skills considered as highly improved is becoming the member of society. This may have resulted from the fact that “Hay Day” is a social game which the players have interaction with each other to get points for levelling up. One can possibly play the game alone without any friends in the game, but that player will have a gradual progress. In the game, each player has his own town, farmhouse and neighborhood, in other words, his own community. Therefore, everyone is a part of the game society. Furthermore, when the players create or join a neighborhood in the neighborhood chat feature, they will be a part of the chat group and have different roles and rights (the leader, co-leaders, elders, and members) and can communicate with other members by texting (“Neighborhood,” n.d.). This can be well supported by a participant’s comment that the game was good for learning how to lead a group and communicate with other players in the society. Another participant indicated that the game was one activity that people spent most of their time to play. The game players felt that they were a part that made the game alive. This is well supported by the study of Seay, Jerome, Lee, and Kraut (2004) concerning online gaming communities. The findings showed that one purpose of the in-game communication was to have social exchanges, small talk, and sharing personal experience.

Therefore, it can be plausibly assumed that “Hay Day” players are able to socialize with others around the world by playing the game.

The last aspect of social skills rated at a high level is finding new friends. According to the explanation of interacting with other players aspect, being played online in multiplayer mode and in an open community gives “Hay Day” players a chance to find new friends. Moreover, they are allowed to add more friends by using Facebook accounts (“We Love Hay Day,” 2013). The more friends they have, the more chances they are able to trade and find stuff in their friends’ farms. The findings were consistent with the results of Biggins and Udomruengkiat (2008) who studied building up the virtual community in online games and onlineaholics behavior of adolescents in Bangkok metropolitan. The study revealed that the participants could have new friends from playing online games. Moreover, another study of Bangkok Poll Research Center (2003) concerning adolescents and online games at the present time showed that the participants could find new friends from the online games they played as well.

Regarding having self-confidence and self-esteem, the result shows that the participants though it was the least improved aspect of social skills as it was the only one aspect rated at a moderate level. This can be plausibly assumed that this aspect cannot be found directly in the game content. Although the game provides its players the Experience and Reputation points and Achievements (tasks that give out diamonds and blue stars), there is on highest game level. This can be well supported by the information in section two of the questionnaire regarding the main purpose of game playing. Most of the participants played the game because they wanted to have fun and relaxation. They didn’t focus on being the winner because there was no winner or loser in “Hay Day”. Additionally, there was a

comment from one participant that releasing stress is one advantage of the game. Another participant pointed out that the game level is limitless without the finish line. The players could play it endlessly anytime they want. The results of the study were consistent with the findings of Maneerote (2010) who studied computer gamers' requirements on flash online games. The study revealed that in terms of esteem (be respected as a game leader, be at the highest level, and be famous), it was required at a high level. This can be plausibly assumed that the game players could not find these things in "Hay Day" so that they considered this aspect at a moderate level.

In brief, the participants realized that six aspects of social skills including understanding and accepting social rules, offering help, interacting with other players, having patience and effort, becoming the member of society, and finding new friends were highly improved by playing the game. Only one aspect, having self-confidence and self-esteem, was explored as moderately improved. It can be plausibly assumed that the game content demonstrated the first 6 aspects clearly whereas the last aspect was not provided directly.

Concerning English skills, the aspects of gaining new vocabulary, knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game, reading, using the vocabulary in the game in real life, using formal business language, using correct grammar, pronouncing, listening, writing, and speaking were explored (see Table 6). According to the findings, the participants were moderately improved their English skills with the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.19$) comparing with business skills ($\bar{X} = 3.81$) and social skills ($\bar{X} = 3.62$).

The study revealed that there were four out of ten aspects rated at a high level – gaining new vocabulary, knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game, reading,

and using the vocabulary in the game in real life. In terms of gaining new vocabulary, there is plenty of English vocabulary in the game such as the name of plants, animals, equipment, buildings, and so on. Moreover, the players can gain new vocabulary in notifications, newspaper, short dialogues or long messages found along the game. A new vocabulary regularly shows up when new items or events are released. Additionally, the game players are able to communicate in English with each other in their groups by texting (“How do I chat?,” n.d.). This can be assumed that the game players were able to obtain new vocabulary by chatting with other players. There was one participant indicated that “Hay Day” provided the players a lot of English vocabulary in various ways. The findings were also ascertained by the study regarding “Ragnarok online” game by Biggins and Udomruengkiat (2008). The results revealed that one of online games advantages perceived by the participants was learning more English vocabulary.

Knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game is another highly improved aspect of English skills. It can be assumed that the players learned the meaning of the game vocabulary by associating the words with the colorful pictures provided together in the game. This helps players easy to understand and remember the meaning of the game vocabulary. It can be well supported by a participants’ comment that the game players can remember the vocabulary in the game by seeing it repeatedly and matching the vocabulary with the pictures and the game context. Another participant stated that, in general, game players do not like reading long passages, but sometimes they are curious to know what the meanings of those words are in order to perform the right actions.

Regarding reading aspect, the findings indicated that it was also rated at a high level. This can be well supported by the reasons of the first two aspects (gaining new vocabulary

aspect and knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game aspect.) It can be well explained by the fact that when the participants know more English vocabulary, they can understand in what they read better. Furthermore, every time the participants play the game, they find English language in many forms. This can be well supported by many participants who revealed that the game fostered their reading ability. They felt familiar with the game environment that is full of English language.

Using the vocabulary in the game in real life is the last aspect of English skills that was highly improved by playing the game. This is consistent with the fact that all the vocabulary found in the game relates to things found in daily life, business, and farming as well such as sugarcane, lettuce, rice noodles, coffee kiosk, smelter, horse stable and so on. It can be plausibly inferred that the game vocabulary is not too technical to be applied in everyday life.

Regarding the four main aspects of language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the result shows that reading was improved the most followed by listening, writing, and speaking. When consider the game content related to the four aspects, it can be plausibly explained that most of the English language found in the game are in a form of letters (words, messages, short dialogues, letters, notifications, and instant messages). While listening and writing skills were rated at moderate level with similar mean scores – 2.77 and 2.72 respectively. This may have resulted from the fact that the game players could moderately improve the two skills in an indirect way. In other words, they do not have to listen and write anything in the game to complete a task, but learn from the English used in the game and adapt those things to improve their abilities. This can be well supported by one participant's comment that although the English in the game could not help its players to

speak better or to construct a full sentence, a lot of phrases and English vocabulary in the game are useful. The players know how to spell and pronounce those words correctly.

Concerning speaking, the study revealed that it was the only one aspect the participants viewed their improvement at a low level ($\bar{X} = 2.55$). One possible explanation is that, in “Hay Day”, the players do not have to say anything to complete a mission or communicate with others by speaking. Therefore, it cannot help them in their everyday speech much. Additionally, there was no one mentioned about speaking aspect in part 4 of the questionnaire.

In short, only four out of ten aspects of English skills were highly improved by playing “Hay Day” and one of them was reading. When consider the four main language aspects – listening; speaking; reading; and writing, reading was the only one aspect rated at a high level. This can be explained by the fact that practice makes perfect. According to Makkos (2013), to learn and improve English language, practice is the best way. It can be well supported by the fact that reading is the only one language aspect that can be practiced directly through the game because there are lots of English vocabulary, notifications, dialogues, and messages to read in order to accomplish the players’ goals.

According to the findings in answering the research question, it can be concluded that the online game “Hay Day” positively influenced the participants’ business skills, social skills, and English skills. The game could significantly improve business skills and social skills of the participants, whereas it could moderately improve their English skills. The result suggested that business skills were considered as the most improved skills, especially in terms of planning. Moreover, additional comments of the participants revealed that, from their points of view, “Hay Day” is a good game. It made them feel like a real entrepreneur

not only how to run a business efficiently but also how to think thoroughly. The participants viewed agriculture as more interesting and valuable. Though their main purpose of playing the game was to have fun and for relaxation, the findings showed that what they actually gained was more than what they expected. Also, according to a study of Bangkok Poll Research Center (2003) titled “*Adolescents and online games at the present time*” indicated that the majority of the gamers thought that playing online games had more advantages than disadvantages. As a result, the management team of “Hay Day” players in this study and online game developers should realize the strengths of online games. The study revealed another angle of online games as a self-developing tool that could be used within the relations of teaching and learning. Since “Hay Day” provides a long-term service with limitless level and offers its players enjoyment, farming experience, and technical supports, the game has been popular in the online game market until now. Therefore, the advantages of playing “Hay Day” show that other online game developers may consider creating game contents of “Hay Day” as a guideline.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendation for Further Studies

Limitations and recommendation for further studies are as follows:

1. The number of participants was limited to 53 game players who played “Hay Day.” They all worked in GFS (Global Financial Service) department at a certain company. This might not represent overall game players’ opinions in general. Therefore, further studies should be conducted with a larger number of game players, and work in different departments or different businesses. This information will provide more useful insights to effectively generalize the overall opinions towards “Hay Day”.

2. The study employed a five-point-Likert scale questionnaire focusing of the game players' opinions towards "Hay Day." Thus, it may not provide an in-depth result.

Therefore, an open-ended questionnaire, an in-depth interview with game players, and/or an observation leading to in-depth results are recommended for further studies to effectively capture more player personal perspectives on the game.

3. The study was conducted in a short period of time, and the participants reflected the game for a certain time only. Because the game has been constantly evolving, there are new features provided periodically. The results could plausibly be changed according to the updates. For the optimum results, further studies should be conducted when the game adds more significant features.

4. The study concerned only the participants' opinions towards "Hay Day." Further studies should take demographic characteristics into consideration because more information of the participants can benefit the in-depth analysis of the study.



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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Opinions of Game Players towards the Online Business Game “Hay Day”

This questionnaire is designed for a Graduate Research Project in Business English for International Communication at Srinakharinwirot University on the topic of The Opinions of Game Players towards the Online Business Game “Hay Day.” Your responses to the questionnaire will greatly provide vital information to this research. All information you provide will be treated confidentially.

Instructions: Please mark ✓ for the most appropriate answer.

Part 1: General Information of the Participants

1. Gender

Male

Female

Others

2. Age

22 - 30 years

31 - 40 years

41 - 50 years

51 - 60 years

3. Education background

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctoral Degree

Part 2: Behaviors in playing “Hay Day”

1. How long have you been playing the game?

Less than 6 months

6 months - 1 year

1 year - 2 years

More than 2 years

2. Please indicate the frequency of game playing.

- Everyday

 Every other day
 Once a week

 At free time
 Others (please indicate)

3. How long do you play the game each time?

- Less than 30 minutes

 30 minutes
 1 hour

 1 hour - 2 hours
 Others (please indicate)

4. What is your current level of the game?

- Level 1 - 50

 Level 51 - 100
 Level 101 - 150

 Level 151 - 200
 Level 201 - 300

5. What operating system do you use for playing the game?

- iOS

 Android

 Both of them

6. Please indicate 1,2,3,4, and 5 according to the level of your purpose of playing the game (From the most important to the least)

- To have fun and relaxation
 To develop English and communication skills
 To develop business skill
 To develop social skill
 Others (please indicate)

Part 3: Please indicate your opinion towards the following statements by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box.

“Hay Day” helps improving the followings:	The agreement/ disagreement				
	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. English skills					
1.1. Gaining new vocabulary					
1.2. Using the vocabulary in the game in real life					
1.3. Knowing the meaning of the vocabulary used in the game					
1.4. Listening					
1.5. Reading					
1.7. Speaking					
1.8. Pronouncing					
1.9. Using correct grammar					
1.10. Using formal business language					
2. Business skills					
2.1. Bargaining					
2.2. Pricing					
2.3. Planning					
2.4. Product storing and distributing					
2.5. Marketing and advertising					
2.6. Time managing					
2.7. Risk managing					
2.8. Problem solving					
2.9. Decision making					
2.10. Being creative					
2.11. Trading and online trading (E-commerce)					
2.12. Learning how to run a real business					
3. Social skills					
3.1. Interacting with other players					
3.2. Finding new friends					
3.3. Offering help					
3.4. Having patience and effort					
3.5. Understanding and accepting social rules					
3.6. Becoming the member of society					
3.7. Having self-confidence and self-esteem					



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