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A STUDY ON DAILY GAME USE BY JAPANESE PEOPLE

JAPONLARIN GÜNLÜK OYUN KULLANIMI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Özet

Japonya'da yerel oyun pazarının büyüklüğü 2020 ve 2021 yıllarında iki trilyon Japon yenini aştı. Japonya'da oyun oynayan nüfusun 55,35 milyon yani toplam nüfusun yaklaşık yarısı olduğu söylenmektedir. Bu veriler Japonya'da oyun oynamanın çok aktif hale geldiği göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada oyunların Japonya'da neden bu kadar aktif bir şekilde kullanılmaya başlandığı sorusunu açıklığa kavuşturmak için aşağıdaki üç araştırma sorusu belirlenmiş ve incelenmiştir. (1) Japonya'da oyunlar nasıl yayıldı?; (2) Japon halkı oyunlardan ne bekliyor?; (3) Oyunlar gelecekte Japonlar için nasıl bir varlığa sahip olacak? Birinci araştırma sorusunda Japonya'daki oyun tarihinin incelenmesine odaklanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, teknolojik yeniliklerin oyunları kullanıcılar için daha tanıdık bir alana getirdiğini ve oyun oynamayı kolaylaştırdığı söylenebilir. İkinci araştırma sorusunda oyun kullanıcılarının tercihleri ve oyun oynamaktan kopma nedenleri araştırılmıştır. Bireysel tercihler kişiden kişiye farklılık göstermekle birlikte bir oyunla ilgili aktif bir topluluğun varlığının veya yokluğunun, belirli bir oyuna verilen desteğin uzun ömürlü olmasında bir faktör olduğu söylenebilir. Başka bir deyişle, kullanıcılar oyunlardan sadece oyun içeriği değil, aynı zamanda başkalarıyla bağlantı kurmayı da bekler hale gelmiştir. Üçüncü araştırma sorusunda oyunların eğitim amaçlı kullanımı, yaşam tarzıyla ilgili uygulamalar, çevrimiçi hizmetlerin kullanımı, azalan doğum oranı ve yaşlanan nüfus gibi çeşitli konularla oyunlar birleştirildiğinde oyunların gelecekte nasıl kullanılması gerektiği tartışılmıştır. Bu tartışmalar doğrultusunda, oyunların Japonya'da nasıl popülerlik kazandığı ve gelecekte nasıl ele alınacağı açıklığa kavuşturulmaya çalışılacaktır.

Abstract

In Japan, the size of the domestic game market exceeded 2 trillion yen in both 2020 and 2021. The gaming population in Japan is said to be 55.35 million, or about half of the total population, and it can be pointed out that the use of games in Japan is becoming very active. To clarify the question of why games have become so actively used in Japan, the following three research questions were set and examined. (1) How did games spread in Japan?; (2) What do Japanese people want from games?; (3) What kind of presence will games have for the Japanese in the future? In research question 1), the discussion centered on a survey of the history of games in Japan. As a result, we pointed out that technological innovation has brought games into a more familiar space for users and made it easier for them to play games. Research question (2) investigated game users' preferences and the causes of their disengagement from game playing. While individual preferences differ from person to person, it was pointed out that the presence or absence of an active community related to a game is a factor in the longevity of support for a particular game. In other words, users have come to expect not only game content but also connections with others from games. In research question (3), we combined games with various topics, such as educational use of games, lifestyle-related applications, use of online services, and the declining birthrate and aging population, and discussed how games should be used in the future. Through these discussions, we will clarify how games have gained popularity in Japan and how they will be treated in the future. The research method will be the so-called narrative review, in which prior research and case studies that are considered to correspond to each research question will be collected, organized, and discussed by the author.

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

In 2020, numerous industries were impacted by the global pandemic caused by a new novel coronavirus. However, according to a report from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2021), some industries experienced positive effects due to lifestyle changes and increased sales. One such industry was the video game software industry. In April 2020, Japan declared a state of emergency, urging the public to avoid unnecessary outings and adopt preventive measures such as using online apps for shopping and working from home whenever possible. Amidst this atmosphere of self-restraint in Japan, video games (hereinafter referred to as "games") managed to meet the demands of a substantial number of people.

The Nintendo Switch game "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" was launched in March 2020, a month prior to the declaration of the state of emergency, and achieved sales of over 20 million copies within its first year of release according to a report in Famitsū.com (ファミ通.com) (2020). According to Famitsū.com (ファミ通.com) (2022) the domestic gaming population in 2021 amounted to 55.35 million, with the domestic gaming market size surpassing 2 trillion yen. Consequently, the Japanese industry growth prospects remain promising. As such, games play a significant role in the Japanese industry.

According to population estimates published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2024), Japan's population as of January 2024 is approximately 120 million. The gaming population of 55.35 million means that about 46 percent of the total population of Japan is accounted for by the gaming population. Moreover, focusing solely on mobile games, the Game Age Research Institute, Inc. (2023) reported the average monthly cumulative game playing time by age group in 2022 as follows: 37.5 hours for teenagers, 32 hours for those in their 20s, 38.7 hours for those in their 30s, 43.4 hours for those in their 40s, 42.7 hours for those in their 50s, and 40.2 hours for those aged 60 and above. Considering only the time spent on mobile games, all generations, on average, play games for more than one hour daily. By examining the recent market size of the gaming industry, the number of gamers, and the time spent gaming each month, it becomes evident that games have firmly embedded themselves into the daily lives of countless Japanese-people. The question arises like this: Why have games

[1] I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Oriental Languages at the University of Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli for giving me the opportunity to write this paper and for their generous support regarding the rules of writing. Finally, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Brad Smith and Davy Claude and Nikola Kovačević for their gentle corrections and comments on my English text.

become such an integral aspect of Japanese people's lives? This paper aims to explore the connection between games and the daily lives of Japanese people through the following three research questions:

(1) How did games spread in Japan?

(2) What do Japanese people want from games?

(3) What kind of presence will games have for the Japanese in the future?

A plethora of papers and materials concerning games in Japan exist. We will systematically organize this information, drawing upon prior research and various survey outcomes, in order to address these research questions.

2. THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE GAMES

First, let's delve into the initial research question, "How did games spread in Japan?" How and when did the diffusion of games occur in Japan? What chronological and influential factors contributed to shaping the contemporary use of games? We aim to discern pivotal elements by surveying the historical progression of games in Japan. In Kobayashi's study (2017), the history of the game industry is categorized into three overarching periods: the 1970s, the 1980s to early 1990s, and the late 1990s and beyond.

2.1. ARCADE GAMES IN THE 1970s

The initial epoch, the 1970s, is characterized as the "dawn of arcade games" by Kobayashi (2017), marking the era when games began gaining widespread recognition in Japan (p. 22). A landmark was Taito's launch of the seminal arcade game "Space Invaders" in 1978, which triggered an immense nationwide frenzy. This game is a shooter where players control a beam cannon to shoot down enemy characters descending from the top of the screen. Several anecdotes underscore the game's popularity. According to Computer Entertainment Supplier's Association (2013), "Space Invaders" sold 2.6 billion yen in just one day in 1979. In THE SANKEI SHIMBUN (2018), Ishii, who was in charge of "Space Invaders" sales at the time, humorously describes the popularity of the game at the time, saying that a coin case that was supposed to hold about 1,000 coins was overflowing with 100 yen coins, and that the weight of the car carrying the coins once caused the coins sold to tip backward. Nakamichi (2008) identifies two significant factors propelling the growth of Japanese video games during this invader boom. Firstly, it motivated other companies to enter arcade game development, laying the foundation of the some of the future giants of the industry. Following "Space Invaders,"

other studios such as SNK, Irem, and Sammy Industries, initiated their own arcade game production, enriching the diversity of software available. Secondly, it led to a surge in the number of game arcades. Up to that point, most arcade games were priced at 100 yen for two plays. However, "Space Invaders" established a single play costing 100 yen, boosting profits and contributing to the rise of game centers solely dedicated to arcade games.

The immense popularity of "Space Invaders" in 1978 brought games to public attention, ushering other companies into game development and leading to a proliferation of game centers.

2.2. HOME VIDEO GAME PROLIFERATION IN THE 1980s AND EARLY 1990s

The second phase, spanning the 1980s to the early 1990s, is termed the "home video game diffusion era" by Kobayashi (2017, p. 22). A pivotal event during this period was Nintendo's introduction of the "Family Computer" home video game console in 1983. THE SANKEI SHIMBUN (2023) reported that the Family Computer sold a total of 61.91 million units, including overseas versions, laying the foundation for a blossoming video game culture. In 1985, Nintendo launched "Super Mario Bros." To gauge the era's focus on games, Mouri's research (2021) is illustrative. Mouri (2021) examines publications for elementary school students like Shogakukan's "Shogaku Ichinensei" and "Shogaku Rokunensei," noting a significant shift in the number of pages dedicated to game articles around 1984 (p. 27). For instance, "Shogaku Ichinensei" had zero game articles until 1984, but by 1986, around 200-page game articles per year were featured. In "Shogaku Rokunensei," the number of articles on games in 1984 was about 50 pages per year, but by 1986, the number exceeded 250 pages per year. Nakamichi (2008) contrasts home video game consoles during this period with arcade games, citing limitations in color range, sprites displayed, and memory capacity. Thus, despite the NES' popularity, players would still frequent arcades for more visually impressive games. Nakamichi (2008) also highlights the emergence of PC games too, capable of accommodating longer gameplay types like adventure games, simulation games, and RPGs. PCs, though costlier, attracted a relatively older consumer base seeking gaming experiences beyond the arcade.

The release of the Family Computer in the mid-1980s marked a significant shift, enabling people to play games from their homes. Yet, the platform restrictions favored arcade games for expressive gameplay. Concurrently, PC games catered to longer, more intricate

gaming experiences. Throughout this period, home video games, arcade games, and PC games evolved separately to meet diverse consumer demands.

Later, in 1993, 3D graphics-based arcade games like "Ridge Racer" and "Virtua Fighter" emerged. In 1994, SCE (now SIE) unveiled the PlayStation home video game console. This era saw a rise in games emphasizing realistic graphics and 3D graphics utilization.

2.3. HIGH-PERFORMANCE HOME VIDEO GAME CONSOLES AND THE EMERGENCE OF MOBILE PHONE GAMES IN THE LATE 1990s AND BEYOND

The third period, the late 1990s, is denoted by Kobayashi (2017) as the era of "high-performance game consoles and mobile phone games" (p. 23). The foremost significant event during this phase was the introduction of the PlayStation 2 (hereafter referred to as "PS2") home video game console by SCE in 2000. The PS2 not only offered even more realistic graphic rendering but also facilitated internet connectivity by 2002. It was during this time that "online games," enabling multiplayer participation via the internet, solidified their place as a game genre in Japan. A notable example is the release of "Resident Evil: Outbreak" in 2003, designed to capitalize on online features. In this game, players select one of eight citizen characters and cooperate to complete missions. Each character possesses distinct attributes, promoting cooperative gameplay where players strategically combine these characteristics for efficient mission completion. While games incorporating online elements were already present before 2000, the number of online games originating in Japan increased significantly due to the PS2's integration of internet capabilities. In 2002, "Final Fantasy 11" was introduced. As the first MMORPG in the series, it enabled multiple players to engage simultaneously in online adventures.

Concurrently, the rapid proliferation of cell phones occurred. According to a report by EXLINK CO.,LTD. (2014), the penetration rate in 2002 was 55.7%. Ever since then, cell phones have continued to grow in popularity, and in 2013 the cell phone penetration rate exceeded 100%. The emergence of "social games" around 2007 instigated a transformation in the mobile phone game market. Many of these social games operated on a model wherein basic play was free, while additional fees were charged for game features enhancements. A noteworthy boost came from the introduction of the "Gacha" system, allowing users to pay for priority access to items advancing gameplay. Previously, in "buy-one-get-one-free" game apps, the opportunity to collect fees was limited to one per player at the time of app purchase.

However, the "Gacha" and other fee-based systems provided apps with multiple chances to collect fees from a single player.

According to Logitech (2022), smartphones began to gain recognition in Japan around 2008. They boasted greater functionality than conventional cell phones and offered more flexibility in software development. The release of the smartphone game "Puzzle & Dragons" by GungHo Online Entertainment in 2012 achieved remarkable success. IRBANK "GungHo Online Entertainment, Inc. corporate performance" (2024) reveals a sales increase from 25.8 billion yen in 2012 to 163 billion yen in 2013, marking a 531% surge from the previous year — an evident impact on the company's business. "Puzzle & Dragons" adopted the "free-to-play with in-app purchases" model, prompting other companies to subsequently launch smartphone game services.

In the realm of PC gaming, the most prominent service is "Steam," which originated in 2003. It serves as a platform for downloading and selling PC games, software, and streaming video. It supports multiplayer games, user interaction, and various other features. Users can install and use Steam to purchase a wide array of PC game software online. The platform includes numerous console ports, such as the "Persona" and "Dragon Quest" series, strengthening the PC's standing as a gaming platform. An article in "AUTOMATON" (2022), highlights that Japanese users were relatively scarce until a few years ago. However, Valve's monthly "Steam Hardware & Software Survey" (2024) confirms the language usage of Steam users, and the percentage of users with Japanese language settings has gradually increased from 0.56% in March 2022 to 2.34% in April 2022. 34% and 2.82% in June 2023." AUTOMATON" (2022) summarizes this trend as "PC gaming culture spreading in Japan."

2.4. IMPACT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

One factor that has accelerated the use of video games among the Japanese in recent years is the impact of the new coronavirus. According to an article on Nippon.com (2021), Japan's first emergency declaration regarding the new coronavirus was issued on April 7, 2020, when 87 new cases of the virus appeared in Tokyo. A second emergency declaration was issued on January 8, 2021, but the number of new cases had increased to 2,447 on January 7, the day before. During this period, various disruptions spread, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2020) notifying all schools in Japan to close temporarily on February 28, 2020.

How has this confusion affected the use of games by the Japanese public? The results of a "Surveys on Games" conducted by marketing research firm Cross Marketing (2021) offer a glimpse. The "Surveys on Games" was conducted in August 2021 via Internet research, targeting 2,195 men and women aged 15-69 throughout Japan. The survey also includes a "Smartphone Games" section and an "e-Sports" section, but this time we will focus on the "Consumer Games" section, which provides the most detailed description of the effects of the new coronavirus before and after. 688 respondents reported playing consumer games at least once during the year up to August 2021.

The "Surveys on Games" asked these 688 respondents whether there were any changes in "game playing time" and "spending on games" before and after the period of the coronavirus epidemic. As for "game playing time," 36% of the 688 respondents answered that their game playing time had increased since the coronavirus epidemic, while 5% answered that their game playing time was longer before the coronavirus epidemic. Regarding "spending on games," 29% of the 688 respondents indicated that their spending had increased since the coronavirus epidemic, while 6% of the respondents indicated that their spending had decreased since the coronavirus epidemic. Thus, the coronavirus outbreak can be viewed as having increased people's game playing time and stimulated consumer game purchasing behavior. In the "Surveys on Games," it was noted that these results may have been since the outbreak of the new coronavirus made it difficult for people to leave the house for extended periods of time, and they sought entertainment that could be used inside the house. In "1. Introduction" of this report, I mentioned that " Animal Crossing: New Horizons " sold more than 20 million copies in one year, and the release date of this title was March 20, 2020. The period coincided with a period of self-restraint from going out due to the new coronavirus outbreak, and this could be considered as an example of how people's attention was drawn to new games that could be played at home during the period of self-restraint. Thus, we may see that the unexpected and sudden event of infection has increased people's exposure to the game.

GameWith, Inc. (2021) conducted an online survey of 485 male and female gamers nationwide during the Corona Disaster period to find out how the act of playing games had affected them. The survey found that teenagers spent more time playing games, and that "stress relief" was the most commonly cited benefit of game playing. Of particular note in this survey is the question, "Have you ever felt that gameplay has helped relieve feelings of loneliness or isolation?" The question "Have you ever felt this? To this question, 69.7% of the respondents answered "Yes, I feel it or have felt it. It is easy to imagine that more and more people feel a

sense of loneliness at this time of year when they are forced to refrain from going out and cannot easily meet with others. The results suggest that games were useful as a countermeasure against such feelings of loneliness. What specific aspects of the game helped counteract loneliness was not clarified in this survey. However, when asked, "With whom did you start playing new games under the Corona Disaster situation?" 21.4% said "friends" and 17.5% said "social media or online buddies. When asked if they had developed new friendships through games, 51.5% of the respondents answered "yes. The inference may be drawn from this that game playing was used as a tool to activate communication with others and to build new relationships, thus helping to counteract feelings of loneliness.

2.5. SUMMARY

Addressing the research question "How did games spread in Japan?" and reviewing the journey from the 1978 invader boom to the contemporary surge in social games, we observe the emergence of diverse platforms, game software, and genres, accompanied by evolving ways of engaging with games. However, it's evident that alongside diversification, significant changes occurred across three pivotal parts at various milestones. These parts encompass (1) innovations in information technology, (2) the spatial context of game use, and (3) the methods of monetization. For instance, with the advent of "Space Invaders" in 1978, game machines were mainly found in specific locations like game arcades and coffee shops, accompanied by a standard 100 yen per play fee. When the family computer was introduced in 1983, players were able to enjoy games at home and pay for the console and game software. By 2002, with the PS2's introduction of internet connectivity and subsequent online home video gaming proliferation, players could access online games not only through software purchases but also by subscribing to a fixed monthly fee. This transition facilitated online gameplay, transforming the way games were experienced. As social games gained traction in the late 2000s to 2010s via mobile phones, gaming became possible virtually anywhere and anytime, even offering free basic play options. However, players had the choice to make in-game purchases for enhancements or advantageous elements, effectively monetizing the gaming experience. Moreover, the integration of communication elements enhanced the gameplay.

Each technological innovation heightened the allure of games, positioning them seamlessly into users' daily lives. Through these evolutionary stages, it's evident that games have transitioned into an accessible and integral aspect of the lives of Japanese individuals. We can also point to the effect of the sudden, but worldwide, outbreak of infectious diseases, which also reduced people's outings and made them turn their attention to gaming.

3. WHAT DO JAPANESE PEOPLE WANT FROM GAMES?

Next, we aim to delve into the second research question: "What do Japanese people want from games?" Following that, we will further investigate this second research question, delving into the intricate range of demands from the Japanese population and how games fulfill these diverse expectations.

3.1. TRENDS IN PREFERENCES OF MEN AND WOMEN

It is evident that individual preferences vary, but the primary objective of this section is to identify trends in users' gaming habits.

Nishikata (2011) conducted a survey involving 372 first-year college students at the university where he was employed. The aim was to explore differences in game preferences and developmental changes between genders. The survey received a response rate of 80.4%, with 104 male and 195 female participants. The survey encompassed two main inquiries: (1) favored game genres and (2) the frequency of game playing during different life stages—lower elementary school, upper elementary school, junior high school, high school, and college. For (1), various game genres were classified into nine categories, and respondents selected from four options: "love," "like," "neither like nor dislike," and "do not play." Nishikata (2011) summarized, "It appears that men lean toward games with battle elements, whereas women prefer games with relatively peaceful themes, like rhythm games or simulation games" (p. 212). Regarding (2), the survey spanned five time periods and assessed how frequently participants engaged in gaming. Respondents chose from four categories: "Almost every day," "Two to three times a week," "Occasionally," and "Not at all." The findings indicated that both male and female upper elementary school students were more likely to answer "played almost every day" or "played 2 to 3 times a week." The total for male was 80.8%, whereas for females, it was 51.8%. However, the percentage of both genders playing games decreased as they advanced through junior high school, high school, and college. For instance, during college years, 17.3% of males and 7.2% of females responded that they played "almost every day" or "2 to 3 times a week." Nishikata (2011) attributed this decline to changing living conditions, stating, "Due to evolving living environments and shifting interests, individuals allocate less time to video games, leading to a relative decline in interest" (p. 211).

Mynavi Corporation (2024) also surveyed college students between the ages of 18 and 23 about their favorite game genres, how long they play games, and how they gather information about games. The survey was conducted online, and 304 valid responses were

received. The survey revealed that about half of the respondents play games almost every day, with men spending "1 to 2 hours" and women "30 minutes to less than 1 hour" per day. The favorite game genres varied by gender, with "sports games," "action games," and "RPGs" ranking first, second, and third, respectively, for males, while "puzzle games," "music games," and "simulation games" ranked first, second, and third, respectively, for females. Social media was the number one means of gathering information about games for both men and women, and about half of both male and female users seemed to learn about new products through social media. Smartphones ranked first as the device used to play games at 80.3%, followed by Nintendo DS at 31.9% and PlayStation 4 at 12.5%. The first-place smartphone usage rate is overwhelming, far ahead of the second place.

To ascertain the preferences of users of all ages other than college students, the results of a survey conducted by Nippon Research Center Ltd. (2020) may be helpful. The survey was conducted online and collected 10,944 responses. The survey targets men and women aged 15 and older throughout Japan, with the survey results presented in the following age groups: "29 and under," "30s," "40s," "50s," and "60s and older. The questionnaire item was "Games I like and would like to play," and respondents were asked to choose from among 10 game genres, including RPGs, action games, and puzzle games. Action games ranked first among male respondents aged 29 and under. RPGs ranked first among males in their 30s, 40s, and 50s. Board games ranked first among males in their 60s and older. Although the genres preferred by males varied somewhat by age group, they generally preferred RPGs. For women, puzzle games were the top choice for all ages, showing a clear trend. For men, puzzle games were ranked second in the 40s and 50s, indicating that puzzle games are a relatively popular game genre, but they tend to be preferred by women in particular. The tendency for puzzle games to be preferred by women also overlaps with the results of the survey conducted by Mynavi Corporation (2024).

Specifically, these surveys do not tell us what aspects of RPG and puzzle games grab users' attention, or what specific works they like. We hope that this information can be recognized only as a rough indication of users' preference trends and gender differences. However, the results of the Mynavi Corporation (2024) survey indicate that gameplay via smartphones is becoming mainstream. The popularity of puzzle games could be attributed to the widespread use of smartphones as a device. To consider the relationship between smartphones and puzzle games, let's look at the results of a survey on game applications conducted by STS DIGITAL, Inc (2024). Aucfan Co., Ltd. was also involved in this study.

The survey was conducted online and was answered by 2,413 men and women between the ages of 20 and 60. The question asked, "Have you ever installed a game application on your smartphone?" 57.7% answered "Yes" and 42.3% answered "No," indicating that more than half of the respondents have downloaded game applications to their smartphones. When asked which game genres they had installed on their smartphones, 59.7% of respondents selected puzzle games, 27.9% selected nurturing games, and 25.1% selected RPGs. Furthermore, when asked what they consider most important when selecting a game application, the top answer was "game genre," at 36.6%. This survey indicates that puzzle games are likely to be adopted when users play games on their smartphones, and that there is some affinity between puzzle games and smartphones. The tendency that women tend to prefer puzzle games was confirmed earlier, but the factors are not limited to the game genre itself; it may be necessary to pay attention to the characteristics of the smartphone device as well.

3.2. DISPARITIES IN GAME IMMERSION BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS AND GENERAL ADULTS

Yamamoto, Soga, and Menant (2022) identified "immersion" as a motive for playing games. To gauge immersion, they introduced a Japanese version of the Game Engagement Questionnaire (GEQ), a multidimensional scale assessing immersion tendencies in games. This survey was conducted to university students and the general adult population, involving 289 university students (194 males and 95 females) and 559 general adults (276 males and 283 females). Participants were queried about the Japanese GEQ, their weekly game playing duration, and their top three favorite game titles. For the scope of this study, "games" encompassed all forms of media including video games, mobile games, smartphone applications, and PCs.

The average weekly game playing time for college students and general adults was 433.39 minutes and 379.87 minutes, respectively. The GEQ outcomes revealed that college students exhibited higher levels of "immersion," including aspects like "playing games for longer than intended" and "losing track of time during gameplay." Interestingly, college students' preferred game titles spanned home console games such as "Winning Eleven," "Pikmin," and "Super Smash Bros." Additionally, games with multiplayer or cooperative elements like "Mario Party," "Mario Kart," and "Bomberman" were frequently cited. Conversely, among the general adult population, games offering a rich narrative, such as "Harvest Moon" and "Touken Ranbu," resonated deeply with the high immersion group. Those

with low immersion gravitated towards titles with less intricate storylines, like "Candy Crush" and "Solitaire."

From this study, Yamamoto et al. (2022) made two notable observations. Firstly, compared to college students, general adults tend to exhibit lower immersion levels in games. This discrepancy may stem from the greater scheduling flexibility that college students, enabling them to regulate their gaming time more effectively compared to adults possess. Secondly, the favorite game titles of college students did not differ significantly between the high and low immersion groups, but the high immersion group of general adults tended to prefer games with a strong storyline, while the low immersion group preferred games with a weak storyline. It can be interpreted that the high immersion group prefers games with strong stories because they play games seriously, while the low immersion group prefers easy games because they play games only to pass the time.

3.3. FACTORS BEHIND DISENGAGEMENT FROM GAMEPLAY

Up to this point, we have reviewed prior studies to ascertain the game-playing time and preferred game genres and game titles of people from different walks of life. Conversely, what prompts individuals who once indulged in gaming to discontinue playing? Endo and Mikami (2020) undertook a study on "disengagement" from internet-based gaming. This study comprised two parts, with the initial segment garnering responses from a total of 1553 men and women. Participants were asked to outline the reasons for their departure, leading to the extraction of 64 factors. Subsequently, these 64 factors were classified into 14 overarching grounds for discontinuation. The second phase of the survey engaged 2417 men and women, prompting them to identify which of the 64 reasons applied to their situation. Endo and Mikami (2020) identified six primary factors that exhibited a high withdrawal rate overall (pp. 18-19). These factors encompassed: (1) external factors such as "I've transitioned to a new lifestyle that doesn't accommodate gaming," (2) issues concerning the difficulty level, such as "The difficulty setting is unsuitable," (3) aspects related to in-game purchases, (4) considerations about level design like "I feel burdened by unnecessary tasks," (5) factors pertaining to gameplay mechanics, such as "requires intricate button mashing," and (6) factors linked to interpersonal dynamics, including "dissatisfaction with the in-game community's quality." The most commonly cited reasons for game departure were: (1) disruptions in gaming routines and (2) life changes such as marriage and parenthood. Instances of users leaving games due to changes in personal circumstances, rather than game content itself, were prevalent.

3.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF GAMES

Hitherto, we have discerned individual playtime and preferences among distinct user groups such as gender and generation. While discernible trends emerged, substantial individual variations persisted. Additionally, upon examining the reasons behind game abandonment, it was evident that external factors, like shifts in personal circumstances, often played a role. Amidst this complex landscape, it's crucial to consider what game creators provide users through their offerings.

Kawasaki (2015) highlights that the introduction of gaming consoles in coffee shops circa 1980 aimed to provide a "novel form of entertainment for office workers, enhancing their brief respites and facilitating a smooth transition to the workday ahead" (p. 9). Nakamichi (2008) states that "from the mid-1980s, game centers began to function as places for players to exchange information and create a salon-like atmosphere, " indicating that game centers have matured as a type of community (p. 101).

Nojima (2008) surveyed MMO users to discern "contributing factors to revenue in MMOs" and categorized these into "communication," "growth," and "identity". "Communication" encompasses elements like "friendship," "belonging," and "guidance" (p. 50) "Growth" involves attributes such as "progress," "comparison," "advancement," and "achievement." Lastly, "identity" entails aspects like "expression," "ideal," "recognition by peers," and "personality." Nojima (2008) maintains that incorporating mechanisms stimulating these three factors could foster long-term user engagement and enhance revenues (pp. 53-54). Nojima (2012) further investigated user behavior in the context of the "free-to-play and paid services" revenue model commonly adopted by social games, focusing on the differences between paying and free users. Notably, this study concerned COGs (Casual Online Games), not MMOs. Noteworthy findings include the tendency of paid users to exhibit high community orientation in PC gaming and greater satisfaction among paying users compared to free users. As a result, although the conditions for paid use were not clear among mobile game users, among PC game users, the characteristics of paid users appeared to be highly community-oriented and frequent users. Nojima (2012) also includes the results of a corporate interview survey conducted by Nojima in 2010 (pp. 84-86). Participating in this interview were the general managers of business headquarters and new business development promotion offices of companies that were deploying COG on both PC and mobile devices at the time. First, the COG providers agreed with the survey results that paid users have a strong community orientation. Second, the level of satisfaction differs between free users and paying users, and it

was pointed out that it may not be possible to measure satisfaction on the same scale. The third point is that users are not divided into free users and paying users from the beginning, and that free users may grow into paying users as they continue to use the service. In other words, free users may be converted to paying users if we continue to provide attractive services to them, and we will reconsider free users as an entity with new possibilities. This shows that games provide not only "enjoyment" but also "community" as an important element of the game itself. In the 1980s, shortly after games first became popular in Japan, they were devices for enjoying leisure time, but in recent years, they are also functioning as devices that satisfy users' needs for growth and self-realization. As for "community," in the 1980s, specific physical places, such as game arcades, were the bases for community formation. However, with the development of communication technology, it became possible to easily form communities online, and communication in non-physical places became more active. This element of communication with other players is an imprtant factor for increasing revenue. Players who have achieved "growth" and "self-actualization" in the game will desire further "growth" and "self-actualization" by meeting and interacting with other players and will use paid services to gain some kind of advantage and become more recognized by other players. The reason is that it is easy to imagine the process of long-term use of online games.

In a survey conducted by ASMARQ Co., Ltd. (2021), it was found that "nearly 70% of paid service users interact with other players they do not know" in smartphone game applications. Therefore, the view that the promotion of player interaction leads to increased revenue is highly credible. In other words, games provide users with opportunities for enjoyment, self-actualization, and community building, and users pay more for games when they find them useful to them. Everyone's gaming preferences are different, and only broad trends can be noted. In addition, non-game factors, such as lifestyle changes, may also cause users to withdraw from games. Of course, some users also discontinue game use when the game content does not suit them. Thus, it is very difficult for a particular game to keep users' attention. However, when a game satisfies user demand and encourages communication among users, the game creator has a chance for a large increase in revenue.

Users may be seeking opportunities to grow and interact with unknown strangers through games. Looking at the changes from the 1980s to the present, we can see that the trend toward game production that satisfies users' deeper needs and the formation of closer and easier communities with other players will continue to accelerate. and the creation of closer and easier communities with other players are expected to accelerate in the future. The ability to play

games via communication means, such as smartphones, is also thought to have more closely integrated the elements of gameplay and interaction with others.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Finally, we would like to address the third research question: "What kind of presence will games have for the Japanese in the future?" we will discuss the third research question, exploring the potential role of games in the lives of Japanese people in the future. This section is primarily based on the preceding discussions and the data we have presented; however, please bear in mind that it might include some of my predictions.

4.1. CULTIVATING GAME LITERACY THROUGH EDUCATION

Numerous studies have explored the potential negative effects of games, such as their potential to foster dependency and aggression. Concerns arise due to the possibility that games could excessively stimulate reliance and hostility, leading users to remain engaged for extended periods. For example, Kansai TV News (2019) reported on a case of a man in his 20s who played games for 20 hours a day and had not left the house for two years. In addition, excessive spending on in-game purchases has become a problem, and Moneypost WEB (2021) reported on a case of a man who paid an exorbitant amount of money, such as 7 million yen, for various smartphone games.

Various studies have also been conducted on the relationship between game content and aggression. Suzuki, K. Sado, M. Horiuchi, Y. Hasegawa, M. and Sakamoto, A. (2009) conducted a thorough questionnaire survey on the relationship between viewing depictions of violence and aggression when using video games. Questions asked how much time they spend playing video games, whether they usually watch depictions of violence, whether they exhibit aggression in their daily lives, whether they behave cognitively, and whether they engage in socially confrontational behavior. There is. This survey was conducted twice, with 1,194 junior high school students participating in the first survey. In the second survey, 997 junior high school students participated. 790 junior high school students continued to participate in the first and second surveys. These 790 people are the subject of analysis. As a result of the study, Suzuki et al. (2009) stated, "Total amount of video game use is associated with lower aggression, but viewing depictions of violence in video games suggests that viewing increases physical aggression" (p. 36). Furthermore, boys in the "low" cognitive ability group did not show any decrease in aggression. Similarly, it has been reported that girls in the "low" cognitive ability group tend to become more aggressive if they use the device for a longer period. Based

on this result, Suzuki et al. (2009) concluded that "increasing the tendency to analytically view images and context during video games may lead to reducing the negative effects of video games on aggression" (p. 36)

Yamaoka, A. Kobayashi, S. Mouri, M. and Sakamoto, A. (2010) surveyed 33 female university students to determine whether games designed to provide rewards promote aggression. The participants were divided into three groups of 11 people each, and each group was required to play a high-reward game, and a low-reward game, and watch a neutral movie. The participants then completed a questionnaire survey. As a result of their research, Yamaoka et al. (2010) stated that "the use of video games promotes aggressive behavior, " and Yamaoka et al. (2010) further stated that "the rewarding nature of games promotes aggressive behavior among players " (p. 86)

Horiuchi, Y. Tajima, S. Suzuki, K. Shibuya, A. and Sakamoto, A. (2016) conducted a questionnaire targeting junior high school students to find out that video game use increases aggression and has some influence on normative consciousness. The survey was conducted twice, with 1,355 participants participating in the first survey and 1,306 participants in the second survey. 1,218 people participated in both surveys. The questions asked about experience using game software, aggression, normative awareness of violence, and social desirability. As a result of the survey, it was found that boys who played software with a rating of "C" (target age 15 and over) had a lower sense of norms.

So far, we have reviewed the results of a study on whether games promote human aggression. Let us change our perspective and now turn our attention to dependence. To examine the lifestyle characteristics of game addicts, Suda (2014) conducted a survey of Japanese high school students. The survey was conducted in May 2011 among 1,730 students attending a private high school in Tokyo. The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire, with a total of 1559 valid responses. The questionnaire is divided into four parts, from Part A to Part D. Part C contains 16 questions to examine the "Dependence Tendency Scale. Question items in Part C include "I am unable to stop playing games or reduce the amount of time I spend playing games" and "I cut back on sleep and food for games." Suda (2014) summarized and quantified the responses to these questions and judged respondents who scored 6 or more points as "game addicts. The number of students currently playing games at the time of the survey was 934, of which 79 students (70 boys and 9 girls) were determined to be addicts. Suda (2014) further compared the responses of addicts and non-addicts and stated that "addicts sleep 0.5 hours less than non-addicts" and "frequency and duration of game playing are almost

twice as high for addicts than for non-addicts. Interestingly, when asked who they play games with, addicts were more likely than non-addicts to cite "strangers on the Internet," indicating that addicts often try to access the relevant community on the Internet through games. Thus, it appears that game addicts do not necessarily confine themselves to the game world alone, but tend to try to communicate with other players via the Internet. The results of this study may provide insight into the trend that the diffusion of communication methods such as cell phones is making games more common as a means of communication and increasing the number of people who are more into games. Suda (2014), based on these results, points out that mobile games via cell phones and smartphones, which are closely related to communication activities, may promote the integration of gaming behavior and online communication behavior.

We have identified negative aspects associated with games, such as aggression and dependence.While the direct connection between game usage and problematic behavior remains to be definitively established, it is undeniable that some individuals struggle to maintain a healthy social life due to excessive game engagement. Yamaguchi (2020) discovered that playing mobile games for up to 1.5 hours a day increases happiness compared to not playing at all. However, users who play games for over 2 hours reported reduced happiness levels. Proper management of game-playing time seems crucial to preserving user happiness and ensuring games do not negatively impact their lives. Individuals who lack a sense of appropriate boundaries for game usage may find themselves ill-equipped to address life challenges, worsening their issues.

Addressing these concerns requires proactive measures. Wada (2010) implemented an educational practice involving university students selecting ethically problematic games, analyzing them, identifying areas for improvement, and presenting their findings. As a result, Wada (2010) states that the hypothesis that ``learning to analyze ethical games will increase the awareness of ethical issues in the games that they have experienced" has been verified (p. 60). Similarly, Komago (2019) engaged prospective teachers in developing teaching materials and lesson plans focused on games as part of an educational practice. The students used a variety of methods, including Karuta[2], Sugoroku[3], and picture-story shows, to come up with teaching methods to think about how to relate to games. Both Wada and Komago aimed to encourage students to think critically about game-related issues and devise strategies to manage them.

[2] Karuta：It is traditional Japanese playing cards. A game in which the player quickly selects the cards corresponding to the sentences read by the reader.
[3] Sugoroku：It is a Japanese board game. The object is to navigate a game piece from the start to the finish according to dice roll.

Notably, these practices underscore the value of fostering individual reflection on suitable game use and standards, rather than merely providing answers. Komago (2023) even devised a game-specific lesson plan for his "Media and Culture" university course, covering topics like game history, adverse effects theory, and game center culture in various iterations (p. 150). These initiatives demonstrate efforts to nurture a form of game literacy by prompting students to contemplate the significance of games and their responsible consumption.

4.2. LEVERAGING "SERIOUS GAMES" FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

Some educators are harnessing games to deliver educational content in engaging and effective ways. Serious games, which offer enjoyment while serving purposes beyond entertainment, have emerged as tools for pedagogical instruction. Aida, M. Hirakawa, S. Ihori, N. and Sakamoto, A. (2009) differentiate between games designed for educational intent from inception, labeled as "educational games," and analyzed their content using a customized checklist. Their evaluation identified positive attributes, such as engaging design, accessibility for children in terms of operation and content comprehension, and a diverse array of learning materials aligned with learners' familiarity. Nonetheless, the study also highlighted challenges, including limited avenues for information exchange via websites and online bulletin boards, necessitating future attention. This underscores the importance of cultivating communication among users to invigorate game engagement intentionally.

Another approach involves introducing games not initially designed for educational purposes into academic contexts to enhance educational outcomes. Machida (2008) incorporated popular video games such as "Dragon Quest IV" (1990) and "Banshee’s Last Cry" (1994) into junior high school classes. He introduced these classroom practices in his doctoral dissertation when he summarized his past classroom practices. These works were hugely popular at the time Machida was working as a junior high school teacher. These games facilitated creative exercises, like composing poems inspired by background music or crafting scenarios as dramatic plays. Similarly, "Banshee’s Last Cry" prompted students to generate unique narrative developments employing the game's choice-driven story system. In both cases, games were employed not just to capitalize on their popularity but also to encourage free thinking and stimulate creativity.

Kamakura, T. Tomiyasu, S. Baba, A. (2009) explored history education through the MMORPG "Uncharted Waters Online" for high school students. Various learning approaches were implemented, including standard textbook instruction, independent "Uncharted Waters

Online" gameplay without specific tasks, and gameplay accompanied by assignments directly tied to history lessons. The study evaluated the impact on content retention. Learner feedback suggested that sharing in-game experiences and outcomes within group tasks was more favorably received than unstructured gameplay.

In 2023, Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. Released "Momotetsu Educational Edition". This game is originally a party game where players increase their money while traveling throughout Japan. Due to the nature of each player's goal of becoming the number one player in terms of money, they may interfere with the other player in various ways, or events may occur that cause an unreasonable amount of money to be reduced. Therefore, if this software is used in schools, it is expected that interpersonal relationships may deteriorate. "Momotetsu Educational Edition" is equipped with various functions for educational settings, such as allowing teachers to control the game content so that they can immediately respond when a problem occurs, and printing out the map of Japan in the game so that it can be used for the study. This case also highlights the increasing use of remade commercial games for educational contexts.

4.3. EMERGENCE OF LIFESTYLE-ORIENTED APPLICATIONS

Beyond their educational aspects, games have also emerged that integrate elements of our daily lives into their mechanics, offering experiences aligned with our routines. A prominent example is "Pokémon GO," launched in 2016, which utilizes GPS technology to introduce Pokémon into augmented reality. This encourages users to venture to specific locations, engaging in activities such as capturing, trading, and battling Pokémon. The game is free to play and generates revenue through the sale of in-game items. "Pokémon GO" secured several Guinness World Records, including 130 million downloads within its first month. At CINRA (2018),Kawashima Masashi, one of the creators of "Pokémon GO", said that apps like "Pokémon GO" and "Ingress" "encourage users to explore outside the world they would not normally do, and It provides a fresh perspective on the subject. These prompt users to discover local history and encounter new experiences.

While "Pokémon GO" promotes physical activity, "Pokémon Sleep," introduced in 2023, aims to enhance sleep quality. This app gauges users' sleep patterns and introduces matching Pokémon, advancing the game accordingly. In an article in Engineer Type (2023), Pokémon Company President Takato Utsunomiya stated that this app was designed to change the perception of "sleep" from a negative to a positive one. This suggests that games intertwined

with daily life will continue to be developed, with the potential inclusion of commonplace activities like eating and studying as integral parts of the gaming experience.

4.4. UTILIZATION OF VIDEO SERVICES

Advancements in communication technology have led to the rise of games focused on competitive gameplay, such as shooting and fighting games. Online battles with minimal latency have become feasible, enabling players to engage in smooth multiplayer interactions. Additionally, some users have started live streaming their gameplay on platforms like YouTube, allowing hundreds or even thousands of viewers to observe their matches. This trend extends to non-competitive games. To safeguard core content, some games permit copyright holders to share gameplay footage, while others impose restrictions. Some companies, like Spike Chunsoft Co., Ltd. (2024), have published guidelines for streaming games. Therefore, the advantages and drawbacks of gameplay videos warrant careful consideration.

Against this backdrop, Yamaguchi (2014) investigated the correlation between gameplay videos and game software sales. The findings revealed that a 1% increase in views of gameplay videos correlated with a 0.26% increase in game software units sold. The study also suggested that more popular video creators had a greater impact on boosting game software sales. Based on this result, Yamaguchi (2014) states, "Game creators should consider creating games that encourage posting of gameplay videos" (p. 195). If this insight holds, game developers could monetize their games by fostering video streaming during gameplay and optimizing the visual appeal of their games for video audiences. SHIBUYA109lab (2023) conducted a survey targeting Generation Z (15-24 years old). It identified "Video distribution service" as the most common factor influencing game purchase or download decisions (39.6%). A similar trend was noted for the information referred to after acquiring games (33.2%). These results indicate that video distribution services are an effective means of attracting younger consumers and influencing their purchasing behavior. This suggests that user-generated video content will likely become the primary mode of advertising, surpassing traditional mediums such as magazines and TV commercials. In essence, each video creator will evolve into a substantial marketing platform. As viewership of specific video content grows, it's plausible that users will be inspired to make purchases, share their gaming experiences, and contribute to a vibrant community. And the mechanisms for monetizing the positive emotions of video viewers are poised to become increasingly sophisticated in the future.

4.5. TARGETING THE ELDERLY

According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2024), the population under the age of 15 as of January 2024 was 14.24 million, a decrease of 324,000 from the previous year. The population aged 15 to 64 was 73,972,000, a decrease of 291,000. The population aged 65 and over also decreased by 28,000 to 36,228,000. On the other hand, the number of people aged 75 and over was 19.97 million, an increase of 737,000 compared to the previous year. This places Japan's elderly population at nearly 29% of the total, and this figure continues to rise. Japan stands out with an unparalleled proportion of elderly individuals. Given this context, the gaming industry is anticipated to target not only the younger demographic but also the elderly population in the foreseeable future.

Of note is the fact that Sega Corporation's puzzle game "Puyo Puyo eSports" (hereafter "Puyo Puyo") is being played by senior citizens throughout Japan. For example, The Asahi Shinbun GLOBE+ (2021) reported that in Kumamoto Prefecture, people over the age of 70 are holding weekly gatherings to play "Puyo Puyo." What started as an interaction between elderly people has expanded to intergenerational play with elementary school students. These experiences fostered a sense of community and led to social gatherings where participants shared meals and participated in various activities. According to SAITAMA SHINBUN (2022), a similar event is being held in Saitama Prefecture. Furthermore, according to TUF (2023), this is also being done in Fukushima Prefecture. Furthermore, in an online article in PR TIMES (2022), SEGA Co., Ltd. is also providing opportunities for seniors to experience the game, such as holding free trial sessions for "Puyo Puyo" at mobile phone shops in Tokyo and Saitama prefectures. In other words, SEGA Co., Ltd., the production company of “Puyo Puyo," is actively working to provide opportunities for seniors to get involved in games in various regions of Japan. This effort yields potential benefits for SEGA Corporation, local municipalities, and the elderly alike. Japan's substantial elderly population presents an expansive customer base for SEGA Corporation's products, such as "Puyo Puyo." Concurrently, local communities stand to benefit from fostering positive engagement among the elderly through gaming. For the elderly, esports can serve to establish social connections and engage with others.

Amid the backdrop of rising cases of "lonely deaths," where individuals pass away in solitude, there's a segment of the elderly population grappling with physical decline, isolation, and communication challenges. Gaming, particularly titles like "Puyo Puyo," can offer a means to forge connections and satisfy their desire for interaction. Importantly, "Puyo Puyo" accommodates both solo and multiplayer modes, minimizing the need for rapid reactions or

complex maneuvers found in competitive games. Moreover, its multiplayer nature facilitates interaction among players, even those from different age groups. In regions like Kumamoto Prefecture, opportunities for interaction extend to elementary school students, bridging generational divides. As online connectivity becomes more prevalent, it will furnish numerous opportunities for interactions across different age groups and social categories through online competitions. Given Japan's distinct demographics, the widespread adoption of games among all generations, including the elderly, seems likely, making games an integral part of daily life.

4.6. IMPACT OF INCREASE IN ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

In addition to the increase in the elderly population, another characteristic social phenomenon in Japan is the increase in the number of one-person households. In its "Future Projections of the Number of Households in Japan," the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2024) announced that one-person households will account for 44.3% of all households in 2050, an increase of 6.3 percentage points from 38% in 2020. It is also estimated that the average household size will continue to decline as households become increasingly single-person households, reaching 1.92 persons by 2050.

How will the increase in one-person households affect people's game use? In "2.4" of this paper, we mentioned the " Surveys on Games " of the consumer game sector conducted by Cross Marketing (2021), and we can draw certain indications from the rest of this report on the results of this survey. The survey not only looked at the aforementioned changes in playing time and amount spent before and after the Corona disaster, but also at the status of consumer game playing.

Specifically, 556 respondents who play consumer games at least once a month were asked with whom they play consumer games. The results revealed that the majority of respondents, 80%, answered that they "play alone. In addition, 76% of those belonging to Generation Z (15-25 years old) answered that they "play alone," while 85% of those belonging to Generation X (41-55 years old) and the baby boom generation (56-69 years old) answered that they "play alone. In other words, the percentage of "playing alone" tends to increase with age. Z In addition to playing alone, 27% of Gen Z respondents play while interacting with an online team/community, and 17% play while connected to real-life friends, acquaintances, and family via the Internet or phone. The survey also asked respondents about the occasions when they play consumer games. Overall, 66% of all respondents said they play consumer games

"when relaxing at home," and 49% of Generation Z said they play consumer games "when I have nothing to do.

From these results, one can imagine that in the future consumer games will be used by those who live alone at home, either to play alone to pass the time or to connect with real-life friends and acquaintances through the online environment. Approximately 25 years from the time of this writing, those of Generation Z will be adults around 40 to 50 years old. Even though they may physically live alone, each of them will likely adopt games as one of the tools they use to stay connected. In other words, the increase in one-person households may encourage a greater emphasis on the connections people form in the online environment through game play, rather than the connections people form within the physical space. Thus, we can see from the phenomenon of the "increase in one-person households" the budding value of forming human relationships centered on the online environment through games, even without the presence of a person living in the same residence with them. Naturally, game companies will be more conscious of creating games that provide players with online connections to others. As discussed in Paper 4.1, game addicts are likely to be oriented toward online interaction. The fact that players like them play the game longer and interact more actively online overlaps with the reality of "paying users" as pointed out by Nojima (2012) in this paper 3.4, in other words, it increases the possibility of monetization. It should be added, however, that the study by Nojima (2012) is specific to COGs, and whether it can be applied to other games remains to be examined.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on an array of previous studies and surveys, this paper delves into the daily utilization of games by Japanese individuals. The first question was: " How did games spread in Japan?" Technological advancements have heightened the allure of games, rendering them more accessible and popular across diverse demographics. Game developers devised systems to convert this popularity into profits, perpetuating the cycle of creating engaging games. This iterative historical process is believed to have firmly embedded games into the daily lives of countless Japanese individuals. Even the accident of an infectious disease epidemic played a role in accelerating the gameplay of the Japanese.

The second question addressed was: " What do Japanese people want from games?" It proves challenging to predict the nature of a hit game, given variations in preferences rooted in gender, age, and other social attributes. Nevertheless, an examination of historical successes

such as the Invader and social game booms highlights that games emphasizing communal engagement are more likely to garner recognition, sustain long-term popularity, and secure substantial revenue. In essence, Japanese individuals are drawn not solely to game content itself, but also to the opportunity for interaction through games.

The third question explored was: " What kind of presence will games have for the Japanese in the future?" This analysis suggested various scenarios, encompassing games becoming further intertwined with daily routines, the escalation of video services propelling gameplay and influencing purchasing behavior, games transcending generational divides, and the elderly population increasingly embracing gaming. The expansion of gaming, spanning multiple age groups, fosters intergenerational connections.

Undoubtedly, the topics covered encompassed a diverse range, with discussion points dispersed. Nonetheless, this approach was essential to convey a comprehensive overview of the diverse gaming landscape in Japan. One of the other limitations of this paper is that it dealt with "games" in a vague way, and thus did not distinguish between arcade games, home video games, PC games, social games, etc. It may be said that the discussion of the characteristics of each type of game was not organized and scrutinized, and that the arguments were therefore too cursory. However, the author feels that one accomplishment was to be able to mention "monetization" during the discussion. New game hardware and game genres will continue to emerge, and it will become increasingly difficult to define the types of games. As one indicator of this, why not look at "monetization methods"? If games are categorized by their revenue model, such as whether they charge a fee for each play, whether they are bought outright, or whether they are basically free..., it may be possible to categorize games in a somewhat simplified manner. In addition, the author believes that the effective game-making theories will change for each revenue model, and therefore, the perspective of "how to monetize" is also important when considering game-making methodologies. Although we assume that e-sports, video game players, and comments from streaming video viewers are also very important in terms of "how to boost the excitement of released games," one of our regrets is that we could not incorporate them well in this paper. Given the focus on Japanese daily life, our discourse was limited to Japan-related subjects. This, too, would have trivialized the discussion. One of the purposes of writing this paper was to let other countries know "what kind of discussions are being held about the existence of games in Japan," and author think we have achieved that purpose only a little. However, as highlighted in the "Fiscal 2013 Research Report on International Expansion and Prospects of Emerging ICT Fields" by the Research and Study

Department of the National Institute of Information and Communications Policy, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2014), the future expansion of the gaming market necessitates attention to global markets. Therefore, we need to look at discussions outside of Japan. Crafting products that resonate both domestically and overseas is desirable. As an idea, if online activities become more active and cooperation with other countries can be obtained, for example, a game in which non-Japanese speakers and Japanese speakers cooperate to clear a stage when they do not understand each other's language or a game in which they learn each other's language, could be realized. Designing games that facilitate communication amid language diversity might offer promise, aligning with the Japanese inclination for interaction through games.

If we can encourage interaction with unknown people, we can provide an unknown gaming experience for the Japanese. If Japanese people are looking for a community formed through games, it may be worth pursuing this type of game design. But many other themes remain to be addressed, such as how to shape the mechanisms for users to interact with each other. In this paper, we have proposed the theory that games may have become popular among the Japanese not only because of the enjoyment of the game experience itself, but also because of the expectation of "deep interaction with unknown people through the game experience. However, this paper alone does not provide a detailed discussion, and further study will be needed from a variety of perspectives. Although issues remain, we would like to conclude this paper with the above conclusions.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In Japan, the size of the domestic game market exceeded 2 trillion yen in both 2020 and 2021. The gaming population in Japan is said to be 55.35 million, or about half of the total population, and it can be pointed out that the use of games in Japan is becoming very active. To clarify the question of why games have become so actively used in Japan, the following three research questions were set and examined: (1) How did games spread in Japan? (2) What do Japanese people want from games? (3) What kind of presence will games have for the Japanese in the future? In research question 1), the discussion centered on a survey of the history of games in Japan. As a result, we pointed out that technological innovation has brought games into a more familiar space for users and made it easier for them to play games. As technology has evolved, the number of places where games can be played has gradually increased, including game arcades, homes, online spaces, and user-owned devices. This increase in game-playing opportunities is thought to have influenced the increase in game use among the Japanese. The recent voluntary curbs on going out due to COVID-19 are also thought to have contributed to the increase in game playing. The results of the questionnaire revealed that some respondents played games as a countermeasure to the loneliness they felt when they were restricted from going out. Research question (2) investigated game users' preferences and the causes of their disengagement from game playing. While individual preferences vary from person to person, previous research has shown that men tend to prefer action and RPGs, while women tend to prefer puzzle games, as a gender-differentiated trend. On the other hand, prior research has revealed that factors that cannot be solved by games alone, such as changes in the user's personal environment, have a significant impact on the factors that cause users to quit game playing. In addition, previous research on online games indicated that users who have played a certain game for a long time and have a high sense of community are more likely to engage in billing behaviour. In other words, it was suggested that the existence of a community related to the game is important for "paying users," who are directly related to the game's revenue. In research question (3), we combined games with various topics, such as educational use of games, lifestyle-related applications, use of online services, and the declining birthrate and aging population, and discussed how games should be used in the future. In particular, the themes of low birthrate, aging society, and increase in one-person households can be a major feature of this paper's discussion of "Japanese people," as it deals with social issues unique to Japan today. Against this social backdrop, we argue that games may have a "function of connecting individuals to individuals" in Japan, where loneliness is on the rise. The author

speculates that games will play a role in strengthening relationships among people by increasing the number of topics of conversation and creating communities through games. Games are not just a fun way to spend one's leisure time but have come to function as a tool to give people a common topic of conversation and build community. For today's Japanese, who tend to feel lonely, a tool with such a function was very appealing. Therefore, in the future, games will intervene in various aspects of daily life, such as education, sleeping, and walking. By responding to the various needs of the people, games have increased their revenues.