

Video gaming a new face of inducement tourism: Main attractors for juvenile gamers

M. Jawad Sajid¹; Qingren Cao¹; Li xinchun¹; Manzoor Ali Brohi¹ & M. Fahad Sajid²

¹School of Management, China University of Mining and Technology, Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, 221116, China

²Department of management sciences, COMSATS institute of information technology, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Abstract:

Video games are a growing reality of electronic entrainment. In modern era of 21st century most if not all juveniles are indulged in to video gaming. Much focus has been paid on different dimensions of movie, TV induced tourism, relatively new but important game-induced tourism has mostly been ignored. This study is based on three different focus group responses comprised of China's High school students to understand the main factors which may act as attractors for potential game-induced tourism. As per focus groups emotional attachment; Historic experience; Scenic views; landscapes and beautiful locations; Adventures; A walk in the shoes of their gaming character; Feel like a hero were the main attractors for potential tourism. The results of the study can be used to conduct future research on various dimensions of game-induced tourism.

Keywords Video games; Tourism; Juvenile; Focus group; Gender

1. Introduction

Any interactive game played using various electronic sources like TV, Computer, handheld devices is called a video game [1]. Video games are a growing reality of modern age. Round about 97% teen in USA play video games and gaming industry has a revenue of \$12 billion per year [2]. They impact various aspect of a juvenile both in a positive or negative manner [3]. Having mind shaping power over juvenile gamers [4].

Over the years various aspects of electronic media on users have been discussed [5]; [6]; [7]. When specifically talking movie induced tourism. [8] analyzed the impact of an historic film 'Brave Hearted Ned Kelly' with respect to heritage tourism. [9] Studied the factors motivating new tourism models in context of car and films. [10] Presented film induced travel motivators for film shooting

locations. [11] Studied the relationship between TV drama and film Tourism. [12] Studied various aspects of film induced tourism. [13] Researched the economic impact of film induced tourism. [14] Presented a compact current progress report about film induced tourism. [15]; [16]; [17] also studied various dimensions of movie induced tourism.

Along with movie induced tourism TV & drama induced tourism has also been widely studied. [18] Studied the impact of historical Greek dramas on tourism in Greece. [19] Researched Korean TV dramas with reference to flow of Japanese tourism. [20] Investigated product placement effect of TV induced tourism. [21] Studied different aspects of reality TV on tourism. [22] Considered TV tourism ads for the case of New Zealand. [23] Researched the impact of a kid TV program on tourism in Scotland. [24] Reported survey results on toddler tourism.

It's a universal fact that popularity of video gaming is growing driven by advanced 3D graphics and virtual reality, providing gamers with life like experiences. Advanced 3D graphics have enabled game programmers to portray different real life locations, cities and even countries in to the games, introducing more and more open world games. GTA; Assassin's Creed; Call of duty etc. are some of the series with real life locations. Despite all this not much focus has been paid on game-induced tourism. In a recent paper based on online comments about a famous game series [25] suggested that games also induce film like effects on tourists and should be researched in connection with game induced tourism.

In this paper we have reported qualitative exploratory research findings to point out the main attractors for juveniles Gaming-induced tourism. Focus groups are utilized for the purpose of qualitative research. The remainder of the paper is apportioned in the following style: section 2 is method; section 3 contains results and in section 4 we have concluded our work and gave recommendations for future research.

2. Method

2.1. Group demographics:

Based on expert advice we separated our groups based upon gender. The research was conducted by a total of three groups of 10 members each. All of whom were pretty much fond if not addicted of playing games. And have played famous international plus locally developed games particularly open world games. Group one consisted of all male members. Group two was all female while group three consisted of half male and half female members. As the topic suggests all members were teen agers between 15-19 years. All were high school students. Most of them were of Asian ethnicity while some were foreign students from Russia and Ukraine studying in China While their parents were working in China as expat.

2.2. Working:

Group discussions were held for 60 minutes over a period of three days. As mentioned above all the members were carefully selected seasoned gamers so introducing games was not relevant for the moderator. Also is the case all of them have played one or more game labels involving real world locations. So moderator put forward the main question: what factors you think if any might attract you to visit real world location of your favorite game or games?

After putting out the main question the moderator pretty much take a back seat and noted the responses of the group members. Unless or until there is a specific question pointed out at the moderator he would not intervene. And the end of the discussion session moderator asked the members is there anything more they want to add? And after their final responses the sessions were concluded.

3. Results

Our focus groups pointed out the following main factors as attractors for potential game-induced tourism.

3.1. Emotional attachment

One of the most important factors that may lead gamers towards game induced tourism was emotional attachment with the respective game. It employs an attachment with overall environment of the game. Including:

- Attachment with the main and supporting characters
- Attachment with the story line
- Attachment with specific scenes: Romance, love, hate, war, fight etc.

As per focus group members they are more likely to be attached with video games than movies or dramas where they have no control over the character. While in gaming environment they have more control, not only over outcomes of specific missions that are usually assigned during the course of the game but with the introduction of open world game they have 100% control over their character which adds to the attachment with the specific games. Some group members even quoted it really hurts when your character dies or loses. Figure 1. Contains a relevant emotional scene form the game named 'Life is strange'.

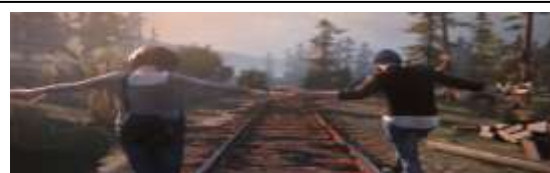


Figure 1. An emotional scene from game: 'Life is strange'.

3.2. Historic experience

Group members also pointed out that historic experiences can also attract gamers towards potential game induced tourism. In many games historic events like War; freedom struggle associated with specific locations are often portrayed. Games like Medal of Honor, Call of duty; Assassin's Creed etc. not only have historic impact but may also act as a tool of game induced historically motivated tourism.

Gamers can be attracted to tour these historic locations where famous historic events were unfolded. As per a group member 'for example if I fought as a soldier in Call of duty WW2, I would be more than inclined to visit Germany or Japan where I had fought so many battles'. As per focus groups second most important factor was historic experience. Figure 2. Contains a historic event of



Figure 2. Normandy beach landing from: 'Call of duty WW2'.

Normandy beach landing by allied forces from 'Call of duty WW2'.

3.3. Scenic views; landscapes and beautiful locations

With introduction of open world games, gamers can explore scenic views, landscapes and even cities. As per focus groups this feature also act as an attraction for potential game-induced tourism. As

with most of the open world games involving real life locations maps are provided to explore the cities. As with GTA gamers can also choose different means of transportation like bikes, cars, helicopters and airplanes etc. to wander about a city or in some cases cities.

Unlike movies and dramas its interactive meaning gamers can choose when and where to go not only this gamers are free to choose their mode of travel. Thus adding to the attraction of game-induced tourism. Figure 3. Contains scenic view of ancient Egypt from the famous game titled 'Assassins Creed Origin'.



Figure 3. A scenic view of Ancient Egypt from: 'Assassins Creed Origin'.

3.4. Adventures

Gamers can relive the adventures they have witnessed while playing the game by visiting actual location of theses adventures. As per group members adventure is one of the main reasons for playing a game. This adventure can come to life by game-induced tourism.

Various kind of different adventures opportunities are being portrayed in modern open world games ranging from biking, hiking, hunting, paragliding etc. Figure 4. Contains an adventurous scene of



Figure 4. A paragliding scene from: 'GTA V'.

paragliding from 'GTA V' whose story mainly revolves around Los Santos.

3.5. A walk in the shoes of their gaming character

Video games allow players temporally become stronger, appealing and exciting [26]. Gamers are more than ever attached with their gaming characters. As per focus group members if they had

an opportunity to tour the locations they will be able to feel like their specific gaming character in real life.

As per a male group member if he gets an opportunity to visit San Andreas he will feel like walking in the shoes of 'Carl Johnson' a character from 'GTA San Andreas'. Due to real life like graphics of modern 3D games players are getting more and closer to their gaming characters. Figure 5. Contains a snapshot of CJ (Carl Johnson) in the streets of San Andreas.



Figure 5. Famous CJ in San Andreas from: 'GTA San Andreas'.

3.6. Feel like a hero

Last main point regarding attraction for game-induced tourism was feel like a hero. Gamers often play different kind of heroic characters in different games. Some are related to real life while other are fictional. But nevertheless these game let ordinary kids feel like hero's in virtual life.

As per focus group members this hero like feeling also attracts them to visit those locations where they acted as a hero by saving lives, catching bad guys or saving nation virtually. By touring those places they might feel to some extent a real life hero. Figure 6. Contains a Hero's snap shot from the game 'World War Heroes'.



Figure 6. A hero from: 'World War Heroes'.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to find out the factors which may act as attractors towards potential game-induced tourism for juveniles. The research was exploratory in nature so focus group discussions was considered the best option to obtain the desired results. Three focus group of ten members each were constructed based on gender with group one comprising all male members, group two with all

female and group three with half male and half female members.

As per the teen age members of the focus groups the following factors may act as main attractors including: Emotional attachment with different aspects of a specific game or group of games; Historic experience; Scenic views; landscapes and beautiful locations; Adventures; A walk in the shoes of their gaming character and lastly Feel like a hero.

Game-induced tourism is a field which has been not much studied. In the face of growing popularity of modern gaming different aspects of game-induced behavior can be researched in future. Including game induced-tourism, game-induced buying etc.

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