Online Game Addiction Among University Students

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Abstract

This thesis is about the effects of online game addiction on both Swedish and Chinese undergraduate students at University of Gävle, Sweden. It aims at investigating the impact that online games have on undergraduate students at University of Gävle, Sweden. As most of the previous researchers in this area conducted a quantitative research, we decided to do a qualitative research which can help us to get a deeper and better understanding of online game addiction. We chose systems and ecological perspectives as our theory and analyzed our data using the hermeneutic approach. The methodology we used is interview; which entailed four interviews with both Swedish and Chinese undergraduate students. On the basis of the research the results we got are that; most of the students we interviewed are having problems with health and studies because of online gaming; and some of them are having bad relationships with friends and families, however, some of them have a good relationship with their parents.

Keywords: addiction, online games, undergraduate students, University of Gävle, qualitative research.
Foreword

A special thanks to;

Our four interviewees – For participating and sharing your thoughts and experiences.

Anders Hydén – Thank you for your comments and all the help you’ve given us on this report.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Nowadays, more and more people are starting to use the Internet. At the same time, online games have become extremely popular among the young generation thus leading to the proliferation of online game addiction on a global platform (Iowa State University, 2011). According to recent researches, online gaming has become one of the most addictive Internet activities to date (Wan & Chiou, 2006). Based on established researches, the thesis is interested in discovering the reasons behind why young people start to play online games as well as how playing such games affects the daily lives and activities of them.

Based on information gathered from the Sweden’s Official Gaming Website (2009) the market for computer and video games has grown and continues to grow at an accelerating pace within the Scandinavian regions, including Sweden. Gaming has become a massive industry. Over the past three years, this growth has been seen to reach and surpass 3 billion SEK (which roughly approximate 375 million USD). Even in light of the recent recession the gaming industry has held on strong with an increasing volume of game sales in 2009.

Computer games have become a very popular leisure activity among children and adolescents in recent years. In fact, based on popularity alone online gaming garners a larger share of ‘favorite’ votes among young people than physical team sports such as ice hockey and football combined. There are many benefits of the Internet as it not only acts as an entertainment tool, but also an important professional resource for work, communication as well as education. However, despite all of its inherent advantages, the Internet also has its drawbacks.

Although the Internet could be very productive, it can have a drastically opposing effect. For some people who play online games, the Internet acts as an enabler. It is
used to feed an addiction, which by its very definition interferes with daily life, work and personal relationships. According to a report of Syracuse University on the Science Daily website (2007), online games may have significantly negative consequences, especially in the lives of students, through causing distraction and interfering with important reaction of out-game life actions, such as academic performance, health and social life. For purposes of clarity, in the rest of this thesis online games will also be referred to as "Massive Multiplayer Online Games" or "MMOG".

1.2 Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to formulate a theory as to what causes video game addiction among students in university. The overall goal is to determine what causes students to become addicted to computer games, while trying to understand more about the social norms and daily habits of computer game addicts.

1.3 The Research Questions

A. How did these undergraduate students become addicted to online games?

B. How did online games affect undergraduate students in University of Gävle?

1.4 Disposition

In chapter 2 we will present the earlier researches in this field as we have used in our study. In chapter 3 we are going to present theoretical perspective, system and ecological perspectives. In chapter 4 we will explain the process of investigating as a qualitative research, and evaluate ethical considerations, reliability and validity of the research. The result of our qualitative research will be present in chapter 5 and divided in several sorts of themes according to research questions. In chapter 6 we will discuss the results we obtained, relating to the aims, earlier researches, theories and future study. Appendix will enclose the qualitative interview guide.
1.5 Central Concepts and Definitions

Online Games

In order to adequately define the terms, “online game” has first to be broken down into its basic components: online and game. At its very basic situation the term online can be referred to any activity that is taking place via use of the Internet. Game on the other hand according to the Oxford dictionaries (2012) is defined as an activity or pastime that generates amusement. As an amusement, online game generates activity that is played over some form of connection or computer network.

Massive Multiplayer Online Games

Massive Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG) are multiple player online games. The games are differences from regular online games as they have the technological capacity to host hundreds of thousands of players on the same game in one persistent world (Chan and Vorderer, 2006, p.90).

Game Addiction

In the research of Ahn and Randall (2008) on computer game addiction, they define game addiction on the basis of the definition used by the Center for Addiction and Mental Health based in the US. The center defines addiction as “a psychological or a physical dependence on something”. Individual with game addiction can thus be said to have a psychological dependence on Massive Multiplayer Online Games or to exhibit excessive or compulsive use of computer and video games.

Many cases have been reported in which users play online games compulsively, isolating themselves from social contact and focusing almost entirely on in-game achievements rather than out-game life events such as academia, socializing with family and friends, or sports. Out-game life should spent times on academia, communicate with family members and sport etc. But game players see the in-game life as more important than out-game life. This means they spent almost all the time to
play online game. Ahn and Randall (2008) discovered that MMOGs affected both social and academic lifestyles of students involved. Of the surveyed data, approximately 50% of MMOG addicted students were reported as actively engaged in a physical altercation. Furthermore the addiction interferes with their relationships, in which most of the addicts are reported to be involved in arguments with both friends and teachers. Academically most addicts registered more F grades as compared to non-addicted students. This statistics corresponds with the amount of playing time of addicted students on the MMOGs.

**Chapter 2: Earlier Research**

In order to adequately accomplish the research purpose we decided to investigate the number and nature of the impacts in that online games might have an influence on the undergraduate students at University of Gävle. To do this we searched for scientific journals, reports and doctorate papers related to the topic of our study. Related information that we gathered from the research conducted the findings is presented below.

**Online Gaming: What Causes Addiction among Adolescents?**

The aim of the study by Wan and Chiou (2006) on why adolescents are addicted to online gaming was to investigate the psychological problems of addicts among adolescents in Taiwan and to discover the motivation, both conscious and unconscious, of online game addicts.

During the research process they discovered that most of the adolescents they interviewed stated that online gaming had become the main focus on their lives, and that life would become dark and bleak without these games. From this point of view we can channel our investigation to focus on why young people become addicted to online games (Ibid).
Further literature reviews in this area revealed an emotional point of view that aimed at explaining the reason. According to Diao (2003), everyone needs to express their feelings and thoughts. As such, when a person cannot express himself or herself adequately he (or she) may get depressed. Therefore, one way to release this depression or pressure would be through playing online games, which enables gamers to chat and play with other friends and players on the internet. Another explanation of why young people become addicted to the internet was proposed in that they were trying to avoid societal pressure. According to Diao, some young people are naturally too shy to talk to strangers face to face in reality, but when surfing the Internet or playing online games, they can be whoever they want to be. As such, they can chat with the people they met online without feeling any of the regular social pressures that come with physical meetings. (Ibid)

**Internet Addiction: Symptoms and Evaluation**

Internet addiction is a relatively new phenomenon in which social workers and psychologists are unaware of and are thus unprepared to treat at present. Mu (2006) points out that some of the main symptoms of Internet and online game addictions, including the decrease in social friend network and face-to-face interactions with others, become infrequent while the member of friends in the virtual world exponentially increases. Ultimately, the psychokinesis becomes weaker and weaker over time. This means that after a long time of playing online games, the players begin to realize the dangers of online gaming. At this point players generally try to play less as they try to orient themselves back to the demands of society. However this is mostly unsuccessful as it almost always ends up failing.

Zhang (2007) and Zhuo (2007), who also researched on the same topic, reported different results on the online game addiction and the finding supported the same symptoms. With regards to undergraduate students who were addicted to the Internet or online games, Zhang indicated that most of these students had bad grades in their universities. Moreover, Zhuo stated that the physical symptoms of Internet and online
game addiction were cervical spondylosis, neurasthenia and insomnia. Cervical spondylosis, a fairly common symptom of many MMOG players, is essentially a spinal injury which results from keeping the same sitting position for hours while playing games. This situation is more often than not leads to injuries to the cervical vertebra on the spinal cord. Neurasthenia on the other hand is a neurological disorder that results from when players engage in hours and hours of game playing with no virtually sleep intervals in between. Even though players may end up playing games for a long time before going to sleep, their brains still keep running and experiencing phantom excitement from playing games even when they are asleep. This causes sleep sensitivity and disorders which induce addicted players to wake up several times during the night and as such this leads them suffering from insomnia which can cause mental anxiety and eventually result in nervous breakdowns and general tiredness.

Once the nature of physical and mental symptoms that manifest in MMOG addicts had been determined, we perused in various literatures on this topic to discover the ways through these addiction could be evaluated. One of the useful information sources was obtained from Young (1999), who conducted a study aimed at enabling social workers to better understand, detect and treat Internet addiction. The research by Young focused on the complications that precede an Internet addiction diagnosis. With regards to this research it is relevant in determining the criterion through which to evaluate our interviewees. It would help us to determine whether the individuals were addicted to online games or not.

To create a more holistic point of view this thesis also aims to identify the negative consequences associated with using the Internet and the ways to assess and identify the reasons causing the onset of pathological Internet use. To facilitate this, we reviewed existing research findings from Hall and Parsons (2001), whose work offers a framework for working with individuals who have presented some common symptoms associated with Internet Behavior Dependence (IBD). In their article, these two authors introduced a working definition for IBD, an overview of IBD prevalence
rates as well as demographic profiles. They also presented reviews of IBD assessment criteria and treatment considerations. Furthermore, we drew some additional inspiration from a different diagnostic method based on DSM-IV criteria associated with pathological gaming. Unlike the latter this definition narrows down the criteria for identification of online game addicts by requiring that individuals should meet five of eight criteria for Internet addiction in order to be confirmed as an addict.

**Distinguishing Addiction and High Engagement in the Context of Online Game Playing**

Charlton and Danforth (2007) considered the distinctions between core and external standards for behavioral addictions as they applied in the specific area of Massive Multiplayer Online Game playing. According to Brian and Wiemer-Hastings (2005) through DSM-IV, online gaming addiction has been identified by an actual diagnosis, in which most researchers rely on their definition for addiction as the guidance of this document. On the other hand, Kimberly and Young (2007) identified and referred to Internet addiction as a new and often unrecognized clinical disorder that impacts the ability of a user to control Internet use to the extent in that it can cause relational, occupational, health and social problems. Syracuse University (2007) reported that being addicted to games may lead to a decreased sleep, interference with the demands of society life including socializing and academic work. In addition, Bowman (2004) claimed that Internet addiction should not be mixed with other definitions of addiction that involve neurological or biological explanations for what addiction is. He also said that Internet addiction should be viewed as “a process addiction, which is conceptually different than a substance addiction and should focus more on mediating and moderating processes between media use and corresponding effects like addiction” (Bowman, 2004, p. 114).

Despite the fact that it has yet to be officially recognized as a disorder according to Young (2007), many universities and hospital clinics have set up outpatient clinics, programs and campus support groups to help those who are addicted to the Internet.
Moreover, one interesting thing in this thesis is that these facts tell us that playing a lot is not the same as being a pathological gamer -- the gaming must be causing problems for the individual to be considered as a pathological condition, which can help us to diagnose whether the interviewees are addicted to online games or not. Iowa State University (2011) has found further evidence in which video game addiction exists globally, and is identified as what the risk factors were for becoming pathological gamers. In addition, it provided the percentage of pathological gamers among the youth in many countries.

**Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspective**

**3.1 Systems Theory:**

Systems theory has two branches, general systems theory and ecological systems theory. Systems theory is about how the different parts put up a whole and within the whole they interact with each other. It emphasizes on connections between individuals, environment and effective functioning (Payne, 2005, p.142-143). Differences and values between systems theory and other theories are that systems theory focuses and deals with ‘whole’ and while other theories only analyze parts of the whole (Hanson cited in Payne 2005, p.142-143). However, the parts of the systems interact in many different ways, which explains that systems have both equifinality and multifinality. Equifinality is about how different methods can lead to the same results i.e., there are many factors that can lead a person to become addict to online games. For instance the friends or relatives of a person may play online games a lot, which can influence the person to start playing games and later to get addicted to it. The other example may concern the competition and challenge among these students who are full of ambition to play online games. They are eager for more success and higher score than others and therefore have to pay more time on playing games. Research carried out by the center for Internet Addiction Recovery (Young, 2010, p.357) revealed that some of the younger hardcore gamers suffered from emotional disorders that prevent them
from properly socializing with others and they thus turned to MMOGs as an outlet to experiment with various aspects of their personality, or it can simply be influenced by the environment that gamer is in. One of the commonly stated factors in that psychologists blame for online game addiction is the rapid development of technology. Yong (2010) states that the evolution of the video game from a single player game to an interactive multi-player world induces the players to has the ability to control and alter the universe where they are in and via their character they transform these games into “self-contained, three dimensional societies” (Yong, 2010, p. 357). Over time as the player continues to transform this new world of their online, player’s character begins to seep into their out-game life and the brain begins to identify this character as being the true reality. On the contrary, multifinality concerns that the same situation can have different outcomes, e.g., two people have the same group of friends who play online games a lot, one of them may start playing with their friends, and another may go finding some other interesting things instead of playing games (Payne, 2005, p.145). Systems and ecological perspectives focus on the effects of one individual on another and the interrelated and interacted connections between each other. It presumes that every part in the system is necessary and interrelated in order to maintain the system itself (Payne, 2005 pp.157-158).

Our research focuses on the relationship between gamers and their families, the health of the persons as well as the individuals’ achievements in school. The process, connecting with how relationships and interactions occur, what they consist of and how they turn out, is an important view of system theories. It’s also interesting to understand how these systems interact each other and effect together. There are three major systems around an individual from these perspectives, in which the individual and its closest connections on micro-level, authorities and institutions are regarded on macro-level, and the community and local environment are being seen on the meso-level (Healy 2005, ch.7).
3.2 Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory and related concepts

Bronfenbrenner described an individual environment as a hierarchy of systems with four levels of circles surrounding the individual (see figure 1), including Microsystem, Meso-system, Exosystem and Macrosystem. The Microsystem shows a pattern of activities and personal face-to-face relations within the immediate settings (such as family); the Meso-system is referred as the interactions between micro-systems, for instance, it could involves experiences at school related to experiences at church; the Exosystem includes the connections and activities that occur between these settings, and at least one of them normally includes the (developing) person (such as social services); and lastly the Macrosystem comes in place, which consists of the patterns of the (developing) person’s culture, things such as media come into play here (Bronfenbrenner as presented in Greene, 2008, p.217-218).

**Figure 1: An Ecological Model of Human Development**
There are three important and significant concepts that are typical for Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory. We believe that these are the most important concepts for our study as most of our interviewees are focusing their time on computer games due to their environment changing drastically. All of these three significant concepts focus on the individual’s linkage to his/her current environment.

3.2.1 Relatedness

Relatedness functions as a bridge that connects an individual with other people and/or creates a human relationship. It occurs not only in an individual’s closest network such as the family, but also in less personal acquaintances such as people in a civic group. Having people whom you have good relationships with is very important to an individual’s human development (Greene, 2008 p.210).
3.2.2 Niche and Habitat

Bronfenbrenner (1989) describes ecological niches as “regions in the environment that are especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics” (quoted in Greene, 2008). Different regions and/or areas can affect an individual in many different ways. Habitat is an individual’s natural surroundings within a cultural context (Ibid, p.212), for instance, an individual’s home. An individual’s habitat may affect an individual favorably or unfavorably depending on the individual’s personal niche with the area.

3.2.3 Adaptiveness

As we mentioned previously, different places may affect an individual in different ways. Adaptiveness is a term used concerning an individual’s active change of environment to alter the individual’s development to the better. Goodness-of-fit occurs when an individual and his/her environment matches perfectly, thus helping an individuals’ development (Ibid, p.213).

Chapter 4: Method

4.1 Philosophy of Science

Our position of philosophy of science is hermeneutic. We are aware of that Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) mentioned that there are many different kinds of philosophies of science, but hermeneutic became first priority. Interpretation of meaning is the central theme from a hermeneutic viewpoint and emphasis is put on the interpreter’s foreknowledge of a text’s subject matter. Since it aims to gain a valid and common understanding of the meaning of a text (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, P50-51), we believe it will help this research to interpret the interview conversations, make themes, analyze data and at last find an appropriate results due to its focus on understanding the meaning or the themes, and also the connections between each theme.
4.2 Design and Data-gathering

We chose to conduct a qualitative research with the method of interviews. In the research, snowball-sampling was used to find appropriate interviewees, which means that the researchers identified a few people with the characteristics the researchers required; asked them if they know of anyone with the same or similar characteristics that the researchers are searching for; and through them, the researchers could connect with more people that are having the same or similar characteristics. Snowball-sampling is useful when it’s difficult to identifying potential subjects (Robson, 2002, p. 265-266), in which it is easier and more convenient for us to find and identify the interview persons we require. The person we chose to interview first is a common acquaintance of ours who has well-known problems. After we finished our first interview we asked if he/she had any friends who are in a similar condition. We continued down the line using this method to find our four interviewees.

We made four personal interviews with undergraduates whom we came in contact with through common acquaintances, both Swedish and Chinese students. These students are thought to be addicted to the online games in the University of Gävle. In order to ensure that the undergraduate students are addicted to the online games, we utilized Young (2007) and Hall & Parsons (2001) to prepare a test that can identify whether they are addicted before we started the interview (see appendix I , p.46). The test itself is based on Young’s Internet Addiction Test which uses DSM-IV pathological gambling criteria to analyze whether a person is addicted or not. To get the best result out of our interviews we chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because we want to understand the interview persons’ experiences and life from their own perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.27). We focus on the interviews and the main themes had been thought about well in advance, therefore, we were able to create an interview guide with the questions we wanted to ask (see Appendix II , p.47). (Robson, 2007, p.74) This would help us to understand what caused them to become
addicted to online games. We also studied earlier cases about people who are addicted to online games and examined earlier studies within our research limits.

After the interview persons were contacted, we informed them about the purpose of this study and their names would remain as confidential information. We asked them which date and where we would meet up to do the interview, some interview persons chose to have interview at home and some at school. The interviews took 30-40 minutes each, We followed the interview guide and asked them whether they would be okay with us recording them, and whereas none of the interview persons rejected a recording. We chose to record them with 2 things (telephone and recording-pen) simultaneously just in case either of them would fail.

After gathering the data, we chose a hermeneutical approach to analyze data. We set up 4 themes which we found from using the approach during the interviews. The themes include health, relationship with friends, relationship with family, and school.

4.3 Data-analysis

After collecting data from transcribing all the four interviews verbatim, hermeneutics circle will be used as our data-analysis approach. We reached the consensus that hermeneutics could be applied to appropriately here, because it attempts to explain the interpretation of written texts. To explain it in details, we would mainly employ the circle of objective hermeneutic which is between part and whole circle of alethic hermeneutics which between pre-understanding and understanding, as illustrated by the figure below (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p, 91). Instead of opposing to each other, we consider that these two approaches could be complementary in our analyzing process (Ibid, p.97). In order to fulfill our research aims, we need to find an answer to our research question from scattered data some times. For instance, we could draw a conclusion that how students become addicted to online games from their accounts of their experience which might not be a direct and clear answer. It requires us to interpret the underlying meaning of their narratives. In
other word, objective hermeneutic approach will help us find out the underlying meaning and connect different parts of data into a whole explanation. During this process, an alethic hermeneutic approach will be also used in comparing our pre-understanding of online-game addiction and new understanding which will be got from this research.

![Hermeneutic Circles: Basic Version](image)

Figure 2: The Hermeneutic Circles: Basic Version

Source - Alvesson, M. & Skoldberg, K. 2009:104

Figure 2, this entire process of emerging patterns of interpretation, textual analysis, dialogue and sub-interpretations should be permeated by the two basic hermeneutic circles those between whole and part, and the one between pre-understanding and understanding. There are characteristics of the two main hermeneutic currents, but they are different rather than contradictory, so that they may be joined in the same research process. The interpretation of the whole text is successively developed by the interpretations of its parts, and conversely the views of the parts are illuminated by the view of the whole. A similar alternation between pre-understanding and understanding is also taking place during the interpretation process (Ibid, p.104).

After coming to University of Gävle as undergraduates, we found that many students around us were excited about online games and previously set up online game
competitions at the campus. We were attracted by this phenomenon, so we came up with the idea of investigating their online game habits. We found some early research related to our thoughts on the subject, such as online games may lead to decreased sleep (Syracuse University, 2007). Based on the hermeneutic circle, we followed the circle as we analyzed our interviewed data. We then created the first theme which is health from the data we analyzed, which is a part of the whole.

Snowball-sampling was used to find four students to interview. Two of them are Chinese, two are Swedish, and all four of them meet our criteria for game addicted to the online games. According to the hermeneutic principle we created themes and analyzed them by quoting important information from our interviewees.

We tried to relate our data with the data from earlier research and found that several parts matched and related them to the whole.

Our results were then divided into our four themes. They are: health, family relations, friend relations, and school performance. We came up with these themes by looking at our transcription, and found that our interviewees all had problems with sleep (health theme), and with their diet, as well as having problems with most of their social relationships such as friends and family thus we made it into two themes (relationship with family & friends themes) and lastly we understand that any addiction can have impacts on current studies or work assignments, therefore school became our last and fourth theme. We will analyze each theme in Chapter 5.

4.4 Reliability and Validity

In order to be more reliable, we decided to ask certain questions at two different points of the interview (at the beginning and in the end), and to see whether the interviewees would change their answers or give a different reply to the interviewers on a similar question during the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.245). This method can help us to identify whether the interviewees are telling the truth.
We used analyst triangulation in the validation that is, having two or more people independently analyze the same qualitative data and compare their findings (Patton, 2004, p 562). For instance, when we were doing the transcription, both of us did a transcription of the same interview. After doing the transcriptions, both of us analyzed it individually.

4.5 Ethical Consideration

Before we started our investigations, we had to be well-prepared on our subject. We were very careful when we contacted the undergraduate students as we did not want to emotionally hurt them or label them beforehand. We informed all the participants in the research about the purpose and consent of our project before interviewing. In addition, before recording the participants’ replies we have to ensure that they would be of a confidential nature and anonymity used to protect the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.70-72). Moreover, we tried to avoid words which are negatively changed during the interviews.

We thought about the consequences of our study, therefore we tried to reduce the risk of harm to the participants when we were contacting and interviewing them (Ibid, p.73-74).

4.6 Limitations of the study

During the investigation, we only interviewed undergraduate students at the University of Gävle due to the limitations of study area and time. We did not have chance to meet and interview undergraduate students from other universities or from other counties in Gävle. Furthermore, it is difficult for us to identify how many undergraduate students in Gävle are addicted. In addition, there are present language problems. For example, we are Chinese who study in the international program in English in the University of Gävle and cannot understand Swedish well. When we interviewed the two Swedish students, the communicating language was English.
Even though Swedish students speak English very well, for some words they could not clearly describe by using English and while our native language is Chinese. Therefore, we cannot understand quite well each other for every interview when starting the interviews. On the other hand, when we interviewed with Chinese students we do understand each other very well in Chinese. However, when we transcribed the interviews from Chinese to English, we met certain difficulty and cannot write every interview exactly in English. Of course, we had tried our best to solve these problems and decrease the misunderstanding down to the lowest level. The other limitation is that currently there is no officially recognized testing method or even criterion that is used to classify internet gaming addiction. Most researchers are based on their prognosis on DSM-IV criteria for pathological gaming addiction, which in itself is hard to give correct diagnose due to the presence of comorbidity (Block, 2008).

**Chapter 5: Results**

In this chapter we are going to present the results of the interviews and our analysis. It is divided into two themes; the first theme deals with the causes of online game addictions based on the qualitative data that was gathered during the interview process and the second deals with the implications of MMOG game addiction. Therefore we divided the second theme into 4 sub-themes: health, relationship with friends, with family, and school. To make the analysis clear, the interview people have been named i.p.A- i.p.D.

Interview person A (i.p.A): a Chinese female, who is the third year undergraduate student studying at the University of Gävle.

Interview person B (i.p.B): a Chinese male, who is the third year undergraduate student studying at the University of Gävle.
Interview person C (i.p.C): a Swedish male, who is the second year undergraduate student studying at the University of Gävle.

Interview person D (i.p.D): a Swedish male, who is the third year undergraduate student studying at the University of Gävle.

5.1 Reasons of Addiction

The first theme we went through with them is the reason, i.e., how the students become addicted to the online games. According to the answers we got from the four interviewees, we conclude and infer several possible reasons of online-game addiction.

Firstly, all of our interviewees spent more time to mention the feelings and pleasure in which the game provided for them. As similar as i.p.C said that, “I have never felt such satisfied and happy before in doing other things. So gradually I have no interest in other activities or school work”, pursuing this kind of euphoria, teenagers cannot control themselves but keep playing the games. All the interviewees admitted the euphoria computer games bring exciting and interest to them. In addition, “When I pay all the attention to the games, I will forget the failure of examination, and forget a lot for pressure and problems,” i.p.B said. In the same way, the interviewees in the study said that they felled more interesting and more hobby in virtual world and tried to avoid and escape problems in out-game life when playing games, and the certain degree of addiction for them mainly relayed on games, an invisible and a happy world. However, after immersing the playing games for some time, they would meet more and more problems that were coming up due to the addiction of online games, which may lead them to have a stringer willing to avoid these problems.

For the second reason, we believe it owes to the online games themselves. “Facebook-games are boring, you just sit there and click you know; but CS can be more exciting and you sit there playing with your friends”, i.p.A mentioned. It is no
doubt that the games are designed to be attractive and addictive. The purpose of designing the games is to make the game players never want to stop playing. Thus, they are looking for ways to make their games more attractive and interesting, so the players will spend lot of time and money in the games. From what he said, we can see that not only her own willingness to win, but also the game itself is designed addictive, which means they attract people keep playing without stop by providing gorgeous scenes, challenging stages, upgrading systems, role playing, rewarding strategy and so on.

Thirdly, the reason of being addictive to the players with computer games could be their friend networks. All the four interviewees said that many of their closest friends are actively playing games and quite active. In this case, we believe that influence by their friends is also an important reason for online games addiction. “The first time I played computer online game is because one of my best friends strongly suggest me playing it”, i.p.C Said. Curiosity is the human instincts for everyone. If the friends around them play the games and extensively talk about it, it is easily to make people become curious about in the game and hope to try it. Interesting, one of the interviewees said that he would love to play the games only because his friends like to play it. As i.p. D said that he loves to play it with his friend because “It may be the feeling of playing it in a team makes me happy or we have common language. If they are not online, I will feel boring to play by myself.” Even though he wants to go out for some other activities, when his friends ask him to play, he give up other activities and play with them since he does not want to say no to his friends. Following with the thinking way, we believe if the online games are more vapidity to make more friends of the players, who does not like to play online games, the situation may be changed.

Fourthly, the interviewers who immerse the online games had poor or inadequate social communications and limited number of friends. “I don’t go out much anymore. I used to go out to play with my friends when I was younger. I want to start going out
with friends again, but it’s hard because most of them have new friends. It’s hard to find new friends as I’m not a very social person.” said by i.p.B. In the investigation, these interviewers mentioned that they sometime preferred to meet friends who would not like to play online games. However, their friends were hardly to play with them because they often have their own close friends. Poor or inadequate social communications could be the main reasons without more closed friends for the interviewees. Further, the online games are easily to become the friends of the interviewees since they have the similar interesting and purpose. Otherwise the game players may fell alone and boring.

Last but not least, we infer from the interviews that another possible reason could be their living environment. Among the Chinese students studying at Gävle, online game addiction is a natural effect of them since living in a foreign country, far away from environment and people that they are familiar with. Especially, at the beginning of their study in a new university of Sweden, most of Chinese students have the language barrier (major problem is communication) to meet new Swedish friends. Instead they turn to play online games to find people like them to be friends or to spend their spare time. As a result, most of their friends are rooted on the online community, which contributes to other game addicts. This situation induces them to create a sort of hostile to the environment surrounding them and they prefer to be addicted in the online games since they would have no one in reality to confide.

With regard to the Swedish students, one of the main motivations towards them getting involved in the Massive Multiplayer Online Game playing was the new found sense of freedom that they attained after leaving home, where they had to follow their parents' rules. Once they moved out most of them took advantage of their freedom to do whatever they are pleased, whenever they are pleased and this led to the development of the unfortunate habit of playing Massive Multiplayer Online Game playing.
5.2 Impact on Daily Lives of Computer Game Addicts

5.2.1 Health

The results showed the congruence on the basis of impact on the health of the game players, and the first aspect is eating habits for both Swedish and Chinese students. They noted a downturn in their health habits with both sides and admitted an increase in the intake of unhealthy junk food as well as eliminated meal times from their schedule in order to spend more time gaming as a direct result of their gaming addition. It should be noted from the nature of the answers the participants gave that both student categories formerly enjoyed healthy eating habits that were however deteriorated by the start of their gaming addiction. “I tend to eat a lot more junk food when I play games, and I can’t spend an hour cooking food, therefore I’ve gained over-weight,” i.p. A said. From the response we can deduce that prior to becoming a gaming addict, these students used to engage in active cooking which is always a healthier alternative than eating junk food. As the student started devoting more of their time to play online games, this habit dwindled in exchange for an easier alternation that would permit i.p. A to commit more time to gaming. As a result, i.p. A gained over-weight and eating habit was changed so thus the health is becoming worse. “I only eat once a day, as compared to eating 3 times a day as I did before when I started playing. I’ve lost about 10 kg because of my new habits, and I usually just cook fast food ”, i.p. C said. Rather than substitute good food for junk food, i.p. C completely eliminated meal times from his schedule in order to spend more time gaming. Whenever he eats, it is fast food, thus leading to the same health situation as i.p. A, i.p. C only eats once a day, which lead i.p. C to lose about 10 kg. These two different types of people (the one who are eating too much junk food and those who don’t eat enough) are very common in the online-game community. By these two answers that were gathered from a Chinese student and a Swedish student, not giving yourself time to cook a proper dinner is hazardous to a person’s diet. It is clear to see
that online games change the eating habits of students for the worse, thus the health is becoming poor.

Apart from eating habit, one of the other important health factors we got from interviewees was decreased sleep. The results of question 2 in the questionnaire, ‘Do you tend to stay up late due to online games?’, revealed that our interviewees actively sacrificed sleep to stay up playing online games. “When I used to play World of Warcraft I went to sleep at about 00.00 or 01.00, but now I play CS, we all tend to sit up until like 03.30 to 04.00 playing matches. So, yes. I tend to stay up late when playing games”, as i.p. A said. The case revealed a decreased sleep problem, and this is a major problem among our interviewees. Sleep play a large role in ensuring the overall health of the body system and a lack of sleep can lead to neurasthenia. (Zhuo, 2007). We fully understand that the gamers can get carried away when playing games and forget about the time, but it’s rather dangerous. If one stays up late constantly, a lack of sleep can lead to the health becoming worse.

Through our interviews, we compared Syracuse University (2007) with our interview findings and found that players not only have decreased sleep but some of them also have shoulder pain, a higher wright than normal, even impaired vision because of playing online games. Some of these health problems have major effects on their daily lives. Such as decreased sleep you’ll feel tired and unfocused if you go to class after a whole night of gaming, severely harming your ability to study well. A lack of sleep can also lead to neurasthenia, for instance, the players pay too much attention on games, when they are sleeping their brain become sensitive on any sound or light, which causes them to suffer from insomnia that eventually can lead to nervous breakdowns (Zhuo, 2007). And eating fast food is O.K. once in a while, but when players eat it on a daily basis it really takes a good toll on their body, the high amount of carbohydrates gives them too much energy, and it will lead to them gain a higher weight than normal thus it will eventually lead to obesity (Bowman, et al,
2004), and increase risk of some health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes (IASO, 2012).

5.2.2 Relationship with Friends

The second theme we have carried our study into is the relationship with friends. Though our interviewees, we found their social network have changed as a result of being addicted, and their networks of friends become small. As i.p. A and i.p. B said: “Some friends who don’t play game have complained about I play game quite often” (i.p. A); “All my closest friends today are playing games, I have friends who don’t play games; I honestly don’t see them very often” (i.p. B). We found losing out-game friends who don’t play game is a common consequence of spending too much time alone in front of the computer. When the friends of them who play game more than the friends who don’t play game, they tend to cherish their in-game friends more than their out-game friends. Thus they start losing contact with their out-game friends. It should be noted that one of the respondent i.p. D said, “My girlfriend broke up with me because I spent lots of time playing games, so that no time to communicate with her.” This complaint about lack of self-control is a common result with the respondents, the time and effort in which it takes to maintain a relationship and has become far less important than the time they spent playing MMOGs. The report from Iowa State University (2011) stated that if people become addicted to games it may have the unfortunate effect of increasing social phobias (such as seeing and talking to people), and thus directly interfere with out-game life socializing. Their computer game addiction may also lead to problems in their relationship with lovers, relationships with friends whom are not playing games and major flaws in their social network (Young, 1999).

5.2.3 Relationship with Family

The third theme of our research regarding the social impact of online game addiction deals with its effects on the relationship with family members. One of the
common themes that were evident in these results was secrecy. The interviewees’ parents either did not know that their children were addicts or that they even played these online games at all. In the case of the Swedish respondents, since they don’t live with their parents any more now, it’s hard for parents to know the true extent of their children’s addiction. It was revealed that though the parents are aware of their children’s gaming habit, they trust their children to make the right decision and can be in charge of themselves. And now they don’t live with their parents, but their relationship with their parents are the same. As i.p. C said, “Now, I don’t live with them anymore I can play much, but our relationship remains same”. The fact is that the relationships of the Swedish interviewees with their parents don’t change anymore due to playing online game.

The common results for Chinese students revealed that they play online game at least 14 hours every day and hided their game addiction from their parents. As a result of game addiction, they angry frequently with their parents as compared with they did before and had communication problems with their parents. Thus their relationships with family have suffered from negative consequences. “I spent 16 hours a day playing online games, but my parents don’t know I play game so much”, i.p. A said. Her parents don’t know she was addicted and played so much. This is one of common conditions in that the respondents of Chinese students admitted that they tried to actively keep their addictions from their parents. “When I can’t go to next game scene, I couldn’t control myself and always get angry. I can’t communicate with my parents, I would angry with them for no reason,” as i.p. B said. From what i.p.B said we can infer that he already has a communication problem with his parents because of his game addiction. Most of Chinese who are studying in the University of Gävle are being sponsored by their parents who support for all their expenses while they are here. Thus they don’t want their children to spend up to 14 hours per day to play games instead of studying. So it’s fully understandable that our Chinese interviewees don’t want their parents know they spend most their time on games. On the other hand,
Chinese parents want their children to listen to them because they feel they know the best for their children. Even though their children leave home, they hope to contact frequently with them. Actually, the parents do not know that their children have kept addiction habit as a result of playing games with more time of spending. Our interviewee i.p.A and i.p.B in fact have increased anxiety and communication problems with their parents. Young (1999) referred that fifty-three percent of serious relationship problems happened between addicted students and their parents were caused by Internet addicts. We found that people who are addicted to games will likely have increased anxiety, which may lead to that their relationships with different people will becomes worse and worse. So we can understand why the interviewees i.p. A and i.p. B who are both Chinese mentioned that their relationship with their families is affected by their gaming addiction.

The manners of parents between Chinese and Swedish to consider the playing game addiction of their children are quite different. Especially, most of Chinese family has only one child due to the family control policy. Therefore they pay more attention to their children who live and study in aboard, which brings more problems for their relationship due to the addiction of game. In the point of view of Swedish family, the students with the playing game habit have a little problem with their parents because the parents think that their children should be responsible for their own actions. It’s their matter to decide whether the children want to pay more time to play online games. So even though the parents in Swedish family are aware of their children with gaming habit, they trust their children to make the right decision.

5.2.4 Study Habits

The fourth theme we have created is study habits. The results revealed that all of the respondents have faced negative consequences in their study habits as a direct result of their online game playing. “After I was addicted to online game, the time I have spent on study became more less,” as (i.p. A) said. One of the common results showed that our interviewees spent less and less time for studying as their gaming
hours increased and it also showed that the degree of deterioration extended further with more time playing than less time. Another common result we got as i.p.C said, “My school performance has gone down quite a bit because of games.” They got worse school grade than before. “I am tired cause I play lot, and sleep less. I can’t follow teacher, always distracted in the classroom,” as i.p. B said. The gaming addiction has a difficult for himself to stay in class. Unfortunately, some of the respondent’s reactions to this negative trends show that they do not care so much about the influence as long as they could keep playing their games. Wan and Chiou (2006) mentioned that gamers are likely to have bad grades in school, as they tend to give games greater priority, thus reducing the time spent on his/her studies. Young (1996) also stressed that fifty-eight percent of his subjects reported that owing to being addicted to Internet, they have had noted a decline in their study habits and a significant drop in grades and an increasing amount of missed classes.

Chapter 6. Holistic Analysis

6.1 Undergraduate Students’ Own Reasons and Impacts:

The Chinese interviewees like many other young Chinese children had started playing these games while back home in China. China ranks top of the world’s biggest video game developers who not only make it easy play, but also exciting with its content. As version of the game became older they would upgrade and make it the online games. While the practice was understandable and even tolerated by their parents, things could escalate once they came to Sweden to attend the University of Gävle. Their environment did not just remarkably alter, but also they no longer had familiar support systems nor a familiar language and thus they did not feel comfortable as they were out of their comfort zone (Greene, 2008 p. 212). Because of this change of environment neither of them had their close friends or family here, so they did not have much to do other than games to resort to during their spare time in-between studying. For many native Chinese students, who may have a language
barrier it is often difficult to make friends and thus this spare time activity was used to compensate for the copious amount of free time. It’s quite hard for them to form good relationships with their classmates because they lack of tools for communication and also have huge cultural gap with the locals in Sweden. Those disadvantages would ultimately affect their studies here. As for the Chinese students, it’s even harder for them to adapt to this new environment they met once they got here (Ibid, p. 213), because most of them haven’t been abroad before. When all these factors are taken into account, it is easy to understand how and why it's so easy for Chinese students to get addicted to these online games.

Thus Sweden is their first time leaving the safety of their own home on their own. one of the main points that our Swedish interviewees both brought up with regards to the reasons for them developing an online game addiction was the fact that they moved away from home. They would use the sudden freedom to do as they pleased and whenever they pleased. Without supervision they felt that they suddenly had the power to do whatever they want, and then play more and more games, which later on got them completely hooked. Although the students from Sweden encounter little challenges in the aspect of language and cultural change contrasting to their Chinese counterparts when come to college, they will be no exceptionally facing a new environment. They would have to not only get acquaintance of new friends by different age and culture background, but also to spend time to get used to the facility and curriculum of the college, and daily life in the campus as well.

It’s definitely true that not all students who left home for college became game addicts, only some of them. As the freshmen, there surely are quite a lot of changes in the environment of living and studying. So students will have no choice but to be families with it accordingly. For the Chinese students, however, it could be becoming a barrier on their social life due to the differences in both language and culture. Of course the Swedish students will also need to get used to the new campus life, but for those whose personality are open and attractive it won’t be difficult to have new
friends and soon enjoy the life. Sadly almost all our interviewees were not good at social activity; this could turn out to be a hurdle for them to make friends. On the other hand, there would be an opportunity for them to have acquaintance/friend while playing the same game online; the more game to play the more friends would be popped up. At this point online game was not only part of their daily life, but a tool for them to explore the new environment and make friends. Through the interview, we also found the interviewees could not control themselves in the situation of online game playing. Game designers did an awful job at cartoon figures and sound effect with the game, and that had significantly increased the addictive to the online game, which then would be even more deleterious for those in indulging. We know many college students also play internet game, but the fact of matters is majority of them can put it under control. They use it for the purpose of reliving stress only. Unfortunately, our interviewees could not control themselves whenever on the online game. They often forgot cooking, skip eating and even abandon academic studies for the reason of being able to make time to play. They are apparently online game addicts.

What we have understood from our interviewees is that, if gamers are addicted to online games their behavior or personality will be changed by playing these games which leads to their normal life being changed drastically. According to the Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory, we treated the interviewees as individuals. When they left home for University of Gävle, there are unavoidably many changes, such as new academic environment and acquaintances as well as others unfamiliar things happening daily in their surroundings. Microsystem as first level of circles surrounding them will be adoptively changed therefore and physical health would be involved. When addicted to online games, they tend to behave like decreased sleep, develop bad way of eating; consume more junk food than they normally do. Oftentimes they would eat just one meal per day. Time for eating and even sleep will
be sacrificed just for online games. All those unhealthy doing and bad habit would definitely be detrimental to their physically well-being condition.

6.2 External Factors and Impacts

The Social network is a significant part of people’s life (Greene, 2008, p. 218), and man just can’t live a normal life without friends. As the theory suggested that network of friends belongs to the micro-system surrounding our interviewees, they have very closely face-to-face relations with friends. And they are mutually affecting each other. Before addicting to online game, our interviewees spent much less time on internet and online game had not been main portion of their daily life. The same was true that they communicated with and met friends through internet infrequently; however, when becoming addicted gamer they were changed by it, and the change in return exerted effects on the network of friends. They had spent huge amount of time playing game with friends, and online games became their common interests and topic. Therefore relatedness between the friends had hardly ever been the same, and internet roaming and online gaming had taken the place as the primary way of activity among the friends. The online game addicted would gradually changed their daily routines for creating more time for online games, the non-online game playing friends tends to be left on the sidelines, and their position were replaced by these games. And then they are quietly replaced in the gamer’s friend circle by other individuals who also play online games. They’ll eventually only hang out with other friends who play games together with them, whom they ‘see’ on a daily basis online. According to Greene this can be understood through looking at the terms for relatedness. Its indirectly states that such a phenomenon as this is bad for a person’s social-life, as one needs to see many kinds of people in order to stimulate the brain in as many ways as possible (Greene, 2008, p. 210).

On the other hand, through the results we’ve noticed there are some differences in family relations between the Chinese and the Swedish. Both of the two Chinese
undergraduate students concealed the information of their gaming habits and its effects from their parents. Chinese parents are stricter with their children (Mu, 2006), so kids usually try to keep the truth of their online games from their parents. And once the children are away from parents, they would start to indulge themselves. This can be attributed to studying abroad, the environment changed and given that the environment is very important to a person’s development (Greene, 2008, p. 219).

Once addicted to online game, the interviewees became a person with different attitude and personality, in spite of caring and expecting from the parents would be the same. They would be angry when failed on the game and even have parents to be blamed for the game failure. Communication to their patents would also turn up to be a problem.

As compared to the Chinese students’ parents, the Swedish parents seem more supportive. We assume this is because they believe that their children are old enough to make their own decisions and thus let them live their lives the way they see fit.

In the micro-system, the individual is affected by their participation in MMOGs which eventually leads to an addiction that alters the way they live their lives. Not only resulted in social habits change but also caused good essential practices impossible such as staying healthy and maintaining a good academic record. Furthermore we discovered that the Micro-system is affected by individual (Payne, 2005, p. 157), which is evidenced by students spending less time communicating with their parents and friends. Thereby proving that, the Micro-system and the individuals are interrelated and interact with each other.

“Social work's concern is with people's social connections and relationships, and social objectives such as social justice and social change as interpersonal work” (Payne, 2005 p. 142).

In spite of geographic barriers, the world is getting more and more connected via the internet. People can now use social sites to connect with others across the globe
whether or not they are friends or family or even new acquaintances. One of the reasons why so many people are getting sucked into games is that the games are widely available across the internet, not to mention the fact that there’s games for all kinds of people and as games become more socially accepted, which will increase the possibility of even more people getting addicted in the future.

Chapter 7. Discussion

7.1 Summary of the results in connection to the research questions

The main method chosen to investigate the problem was through interviewing students of Chinese and Swedish origin at the University of Gävle. Before delving into the study, qualitative research on similar research was conducted and from this basis two research questions were developed. Both of our questions have essentially been proved pertinent by the results. For instance in the case of the causes of online game addiction among university students it is clearly evident from the research that the main proponent that leading many students into this addiction is losing self-control and social isolation.

On the basis of our results there are two levels at which students can be categorized who get addicted to MMOGs. For resident of Sweden the main attraction is that most of their friends are playing the same games as such based on Greene’s theory of relatedness they want to join a common human network. On the side of foreign students, the main motivator is to find a place to be belonging with. In addition, attributed it to the inventive and wisely designing the games itself are surely attractive. Though these three reasons are the most obvious culprits, we cannot be assumed that all Swedes and all Chinese students will automatically become online gamers once they join the university. One of the key factors which apply to both groups is personality. Only people with a problem of socializing or participating in
social gatherings and lacking self-control would be most susceptible to becoming an MMOG addict.

The second research question entailed the effects that online games had on students at the University of Gävle. Based on our findings, online gaming affects students in three main ways physically: (1) Gaming addiction could drastically increase body weight abnormally due to poor eating habits, which can be dangerous; (2) Socially it hindered the development of their social skills and can also ruin the relationship with family, friends and peers academically; (3) All gaming addicts admitted that their academic careers had been suffered significantly since they started playing.

**7.2 Connection to the Earlier Research**

By comparison with the earlier research, some similarities as well as differences were found and are presented below separately.

**Similarities:**

As we compared the earlier research carried out by Diao (2003) with our first research question what causes addiction among undergraduates, we found one of the similar reasons, that is everyone needs to express their feelings and thoughts. One way to release the depression or pressure would be through playing online games, which enable the gamers to chat and play with other friends and players. This was exactly true with our findings and it can be explicitly said that the students get addicted to MMOGs. All of our interviewees need to join social network to express their feelings and thoughts, so they choose online games for joining the social network when they come to a new environment. Another similar point is young people are naturally too shy to talk to new people face to face in reality, which is in part owing to that they have poor or inadequate social skills. On the other hand, they can be whoever they want to be when they play online games. As we compared the
earlier research from Zhang (2007) to our own findings, we found the similar negative consequences of online games addiction, which are caused receiving bad academic grades in school, and increased anxiety is also very common consequence.

**Differences:**

Compared to the earlier research data, the reason of addiction was not only because of poor social skills, but also lacking of self-control on personality side. And once again, reason of the addiction can be traced back to the online game itself, the game has been designed amazingly both attractive and addictive to online game players.

As Zhuo (2007) stated that the cervical spondylosis, neurasthenia and insomnia are fairly common symptom of many MMOG players. These negative consequences will lead online game players to mental anxiety and eventually result in nervous breakdowns and general tiredness. Comparing with our findings, there were some differences existed: interviewees’ relationships with lover, or friends and family are getting worse as the game player spent more and more time on it. Sleeping less, eating habits changing, such as eat lots of more junk food than before, which would eventually lead to physical over-weight than normal. For these people, game playing is their top priority, even though many of them don’t want things turn up to be that way, but this is what really happened down the road.

**7.3 Methodological Discussion**

We have chosen to do a qualitative research and the method we use is to interview. Most previous researches in this field were quantitative one, the reason why we chose a qualitative research instead of the quantitative is because we want to know our interviewees and get a proper insight in their lives through the qualitative research, which would be impossible otherwise if we do a quantitative research, and we believe our result would’ve been come up to be the same with a quantitative research. The report would have benefited from the input of a professional therapist; however,
though we planned such an interview but unsuccessful due to no response on their end, which resulted in lack of relevant information for this report.

At first we were tentatively thinking about having both interviews and observations as our method of choice, but as we are focusing on online game addiction we’d have to go to their homes to do the observations. Because we really don’t want to interrupt their daily lives while perform our observation on them, so finally we decided to do interviews only and would use snowball sampling to find our interviewees. It would of course be better if we could make the observations, but it seemed relatively impossible to keep the observations going without interrupting them too much.

7.4 Connection to Social Work

The main tasks of the international social worker are to promote change in society through empowerment and liberation of individuals through helping solve problems in human relationships. The international social worker intervenes at the point of interaction between people and the environment (IFSW, 2011).

The online gaming addiction is a recent discovery as far as addictions go. Given that nearly everyone has computers and we use them to conduct almost every part of our lives this phenomenon should be given more attention. Given the growing numbers of young people; especially those in academic institutions, that are falling prey to this addiction it is imperative that action be taken to eliminate or at the very least manage this phenomenon. From a social work perspective online games have contributed towards the deterioration of society through a breakdown in the manner in which individuals interact. The phenomenon has caused a disconnect between the addicts and what is considered ‘out-game’ in the society. Online game addicts are not only anti-social but also display impulsive behaviors as a result of the inability to delay gratification. Furthermore from the research it is evident that online game
addiction interferes with the ability of the individual to function properly in a societal setting.

With regard to using social work to alleviate the problem it would be prudent to come up with initiatives aimed at involving young people in group activities that do not involve the use of a computer or the internet. It would help improve their social skills and also help them grow a network of non-online friends. Universities should also offer support in the form of welcome service or induction seminars for foreign students where they get acquainted with the country they are visiting as well as get to know students on the ground so that they don’t feel so lonely.

7.5 Suggestions for Future research

We have come to the conclusion that this is something that is worth researching about, as this has been a very common phenomena and it will be even more common in the future. Here are a few suggestions; In the process of investigation, particularly on the step of group selection, it would be appropriate to distinguish the people who are just fond of computer game from those the online game addicts. Although both groups are sharing a common character like favorite of computer game, not everyone would doom to be addicted to online game. So a practical evaluation measures are necessary for assessment of who would be prone to the addiction. The research data/information would not be of meaningful and valuable unless group of people who are prone to addiction being accurately selected. In addition, once the group selection has been accomplished and then investigation begins. During the process of investigation, one would be aware of that some people would usually decline the fact that they are addicted to online game. With regarding to that, we would suggest such words as “addicts or addicted” should be avoided when asking a question or describing something related to the interviewees. In the meantime, it is absolutely necessary to distillate the contents of the answers, so as to make the data somewhat useful and reliable. Further, an investigation with group of youngsters who are
growing up from different culture background would be worthwhile, because it is highly possible that a different answer could be expected from exactly the same question, which would make the research project more informative and fruitful.

References:


Sweden’s Official Gaming Website (2009):


**Appendix 1**

An eight-item questionnaire to identity whether the interviewees are addicted to online game before we started the interview. This questionnaire comes from Dr. Kimberly S. Yong (2006)’s resources.

1. Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (think about previous on-line activity or anticipate next on-line session)?

2. Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?

3. Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?

4. Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?

5. Do you stay on-line longer than originally intended?

6. Have you jeopardized or risked the loss of significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?

7. Have you lied to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?

8. Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, and depression)?

**Appendix 2**

Interview Guide:
General questions of clients:

1. Could you please tell us about your online gaming?

2. How many hours do you play everyday?

3. How’s your feeling when you play games?

4. Could you tell us how do you start playing online games?

Impact on family:

1. How’s the relationship between you and your parents?

2. Do you think the relationship between you and your parents has changed since you started spending so many hours playing games?

3. What does your parents think when you spend so much time online playing games?

Impact on friends:

1. How was your social network with friends before you started playing online games?

2. Do you think the social network with your friends has changed since you spent so many hours playing games?

3. What does your friends think when you spend so much time online playing games?

Impact on studies:

1. How do you manage your studies?

2. Do you think the time you spend on studies has changed since you spent so many hours playing games?

3. Do you feel that your grades are suffering due to the online games?

4. How do you prioritize your time when you feel that you need to study, and play games?

Impact on health:

1. Do you feel your diet habit has changed after you play games?

2. Do you tend to stay up late due to the online games?

3. Do you have any problems with sleep since you started playing games?