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Extended Essay

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Research question: While talking about America's behaviour of its culture and society, what role is playing Fortnite Battle Royale, for them?



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CHAPTER 1: The bright side of the picture

The good effects that fortnite can bring to a culture or society as a game.

- Did fortnite changed our social interactions and behaviour?
- What things has 'playing fortnite' brought to us?
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CHAPTER 2: The dark side of the moon

How Fortnite can affect the behaviour of this culture and society.

- Money and time consuming
- What is Fortnite doing to us when we dedicate our lives to it?
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Introduction

Gamer is a person who plays or participate in any virtual video games, this topic is considered nowadays as a social issue due to the perception and meaning that videogames are taking over time and especially today. With the first video game called pong, released in 1972, this virtual world has evolved into online games which are the base of technology and youth in the present time, especially in the American culture, thanks to these being considered as new opportunities for some targeted group of people and exceeding the expectations of several leagues such as golf or the NBA. (Esports, 2019)

Fortnite is a free, multi platform, online, video-game created by Epic Games with a new gamemode called battle royale released in 2017. This gaming style it's about 90 to 100 online players on the same server and map and they have to battle for their survival, the last one standing wins the match, you have 1 life and few choices of survival such as fighting or building (Inc, 2017). This company mentions that this new “battle royale” experiment intends to let people play a new kind of game style that was not formally known before for the people who actually played video games in the past few years, also, with fortnite having online features, they have the hope to join gamers around the world to have a good time and team work while experiencing the unique virtual world of Fortnite Battle Royale.

This game caused a really big impact for people and gaming industry in America, with currently 250 millions players actively playing since it came out in September 26 of 2017 and also with 62.7% of their players being between 18-24 years old, 22.5% being 25-34 years old and the rest being 35 and older; According to BussinessofApps recollected data and stats of fortnite, meaning that not only young gamers, but also old school/grown up gamers, are also attracted to the battle royale style of Fortnite (Iqbal, 2019).

Throughout the appearance of the game in America, it seems like it affected the behaviour of the people playing; this changes had an immense influence in America's society, with this, having both beneficial and harmful characteristics. These changes include alterations such as increased social skills, sharper perception skills, better social interaction, new jobs, more opportunities, higher rate of social acceptance and so other topics related to a person's behaviour; These facts, can help us get an idea of how a video game can impact someone's life and that its use is not as bad as how everyone thinks a war-related videogame can actually be.

On the other hand, it's also important to expose all the information and necessary data of this video game, and this includes, to show the bad side and the detriment that this gamemode can bring to us. A research based on collected data and surveys about this game made by Scholastic.com and TheGuardian.com, explains that this game is consuming the time and money of their gamers, while buying esthetic supplies in the game with real money and with their kids

playing around 6-10 of the 24 hours in a day, consuming most of their free time and leisure (Zhou, 2017); Also with researches like the one found in Psychcentral.com, stating that once a gamer starts to being addicted to the game, its behaviour with himself and others around him, change drastically and that is hard to stay the game away from them because the gamer will do anything possible to go playing fortnite as soon as possible (Kane, 2019)(May, 2018).

It's important to highlight and research more thoroughly about the characteristics of Fortnite battle royale, not only because it can be interesting, but also because it's fundamental to know, what is the world, especially the American culture, facing today and to have full knowledge of what we have in front of us.

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE PICTURE

First, it's important to know how this video-game, indeed, have positive effects that can lead to motivate, progress or change their players in a favorable way. When you think about a video game like fortnite, based on guns, war, or being the number 1 out of 100 of gamers playing in the same map as you, it can lead people to be under the impression that, by playing it, it can only make you more aggressive or violent but, contrary to what people might think, video games in general, or in this case, fortnite, can actually cause a positive influence in the way children or teens interacts, not only for themselves, but with other groups of people too; As this is a video game that requires more than just using your fingers, it asks for your whole skill-set of perception and mind, and also, there is an investigation and research of the Radboud University of Nijmegen have found that this video-game can, in fact, improve our social interaction, behaviour and skills in some certain ways, meaning that by playing this game, we can actually strengthen some real life habilites or even create opportunities in life. (Inc, 2017) (granic, lobel & engels, 2016)

According to kidspot research website article, they had numerous experts researching and testing on how Fortnite really affects people in America who play it, with the researchers stating that violence in this video game is not what engages and impacts the player since there is not, specifically and literally, graphic content shown along all the gameplay of the battle royale, but the interactive scenario presented in the surroundings of the game is what captivates people to

still playing it; this characteristic is a beneficial factor to this kind of video games, exposing that this enables, a broad range of players, especially the young ones, to develop social and interactive skills, not just in the game, but with real life purposes as well (Haiek, 2018). But, what does the game actually have that can improve this features of the youth? Stated by Cracked and Odyssey websites with articles dedicated to Fortnite, the game presents an outlook that force the player to enhance their survival, interactive and social skills, since you need to be the last standing of 100 players in the map to win and you just have 1 life per match to do it (Veritas, 2018); When you play the “solo” feature, you’re all by yourself in the map and need to look and use your surroundings to survive and get the victory, while doing this, you have to be heedful of what you’re doing, thinking your next step and decision so you don’t waste your only life, every decision counts, where to land, what guns to use, and so on, and that is what makes kids who play the game interactively better; but in the “duos” or “squad” features, you’re group up by the game itself to partners for the whole match, this partners have a very huge variety of races, languages and ages, so the focus of that features is to use your social skills to win, while working in group and thinking every next step with people you barely know, improves your social skills and how fast can the player adapt to a new group of people, which is a skill that not everyone have it strengthened nowadays. (Inc, 2017)

Another topic to mention is the opportunities that fortnite has given to society in terms of new jobs opportunities and revenue for the pro players who dedicate their lives to fortnite. Even though this is considered a game, it’s normal for average people and even for average gamers that it should be taken as one, its purpose is to have fun and enjoy the gameplay and experience

of it, but there is a specific group of players who take fortnite as a job, as a way to gain money and for them, it's more than just a game.

One example of this Fortnite-as-a-job thing is the pro tournaments that are created with the purpose to expose the best and the most skilled fortnite players, who became pro players as they played along and were recognized in social media by fans or live streaming apps, as the fans and gamers of the game, entertain themselves, watching the event. This pro tournaments recollects a big amount of money, and not only for the organizers of the game championship, but also for the players that could make it and classify to the top 3 of the tourneys;

BussinessOfApps.com, who made analytics of app in markets with real time percentages, exhibit that one exemplary of a pro player is Turner Tenney, better known as Tfnue, who, in pro tournaments, wins around \$465,000 and up prizes, just for winning professional games of Fortnite, and also shows us how Richard Tyler Blevins, better known as Ninja, even though he is not considered a pro gamer, he wins \$500,000 (not to mention tournaments prizes and sponsors) just through streaming games of him winning in fortnite (Iqbal, 2019). These two players, caused a significant effect on the gamers of this battle royale, and unconsciously, inspire their viewers to follow their steps and also, live-stream Fortnite games so they can have a source of revenue.

Fortnite also allows the fans, the opportunity to win money every week and year with daily famous events called The Skirmish Series and Fortnite World Cup, were regular games can just classify and join the event and have a chance to win prizes of \$1M, \$5M, \$8M and up; even though society doesn't accept this and are not used to have this ideology of "jobs", it can be told that Fortnite has opened the doors for all of their players to have a new source of income, which

can be jobs or just prizes won in a day, and that is, indeed, helping people lives and giving them new opportunities, and all of that, through gaming (Epic Games, 2019) .

One last factor to highlight about Fortnite battle royale impacts, it's the inspiration that it caused in game developers and companies devoted to game designing. Once that the battle royale mode of fortnite was released (along PUBG, another battle royale game, usually viewed as the rival or competition of fortnite), it's gameplay, the idea of buying cosmetics for the digital player, the idea of playing with squads, or with other players and friends and many other ideas, triggered the inspiration of other game developers and games such as H1Z1, Apex Legends, Free Fire, Realm Royale, were born, and it even make big games of big companies, add the same battle royale mode, like Call Of Duty: Black Ops 4, Battlefield V and Dying Light (Inc, 2017)(Meeker, 2018). Even though the influence of Fortnite was significant among other games, and this games used Fortnite's essence to themselves, BussinessesOfApps.com, shows how the statistics of usage within leisure time and download are higher among all of these other games mentioned before, meaning that they don't have the same impact in the american culture and behaviour, because this games were temporal hits and were viral for a small period of time, but Fortnite, since 2017, its released, its relevant in such many factors until now. (Iqbal, 2019)

Therefore, when Fortnite is brought as a topic for conversation or when people talk about this video-game all day with friends and family members, people and gamers can not look at it as an addiction or as something bad because it's already known that Fortnite Battle Royale can have positive aspects and influence in the kids, teens and adults who play it. This arguments and facts

are proven by many websites with recollected data, researches, analytics and percentages stating that this game, when played in recommended and safely doses, shows responses that evidence the benefits of it and how its gamers got an increase with social, motor and perception skills, since it's a game that forces you to use those specific actions and skills; also with people taking advantage of the game to gain profits and earnings, being a professional fortnite player or live streaming gameplays of it, can already be considered as a job or if the word "job" sounds tough or significant, it can be also said that fortnite is a source of revenue or profits. With this said, the myth that video games are completely bad is now verified and it indicates and display that it can lead to enhance the behaviour, improve our skills and heighten some of our aspects in life.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

While discussing and investigating the beneficial panorama of this game, it's also important to make clear about the other side of it, and see what are the factors that can affect the lives and behaviour of the people playing Fortnite; And even though it's proven that the battle royale mode can improve the behavior and enhance some skills of its players, taking more of the daily doses can, indeed, counter or nullify the benefits that were brought to us. Most of these risks, that are about to be mentioned and proven, consists of dangerous addictions, aggravate and

deteriorate a healthy lifestyle, worsen the leisure time of its players, consume money and time, and so on. So, it's important to dig deeper and connote this life-harmful factors.

Playing games can be fun and beneficial when played in a specific and healthy range of time, but once you break these limits, trouble starts to kick in. According to BussinessOfApps.com, 72% of Fortnite users spent 6 to 20 hours a day, while 7.7% spent 21 hours or more playing non-stop with minimum rest or breaks in between them (Iqbal, 2019); according to ScienceDaily and GameSkinny (pages dedicated to study and deeply research about the game market and public), the most beneficial game time in a week is 1 to 10 hours of gameplay, meaning that playing around 1.30 to 2 hours is the most optimal time and could enhance skills and good behaviour in the growth of a child (Pujol et al., 2016). Once the kid break its time limit, a new addiction starts to grow deep inside in the child; symptoms like loneliness, deprave sleep and social or physical activities starts, aggressiveness or innifical mood changes, higher level of senseless stress, missing school or work, harms the behavior or lifestyle of the gamer, these factors are too grievous and severe that scientists dedicated to cyberpsychology and behaviour and World Health Organization experts, are stating that this gaming addiction is not even a social problem but a disease and disorder called "gaming disorder" and it's stated to be an impaired control over gaming (Reynolds, 2015)(WHO, 2018).

"Fortnite can be as addictive as heroin" states Chris McCarthy, medical professional and counselor in kids and teenagers who provides information on how Fortnite indirectly gets the dopamine systems of its players involved and releases addictive chemicals, very similar to a drug

addiction, causing anxiety and yearning, it appears that they can't live without it, they just get obsessed with the game (McCarthy, 2018). Being addicted to the game or having gaming disorder is not exactly when you play a lot, but it's when the time spent on gaming, starts to affect you, not only physically, but also mentally or even economically as it's already proven that 52% of Fortnite battle royale revenue, is by players who spent money in its virtual currency, buying cosmetics or buying the battle pass and/or tiers that the game offers for the players (Iqbal, 2019). Furthermore in the investigation, playing this starts to affect you physically when you reach the addiction stage of when you spent so much time playing the game that your desire to go and do any physical activity starts to turn off and performance starts to decrease, not only that but once the physical health begins to take damage, the mental health also starts to be harmed and therefore, the other life aspects of the players such as eating habits, leisure time or social interactions are jeopardized (MHF, 2012). In accordance with the Mental Health Foundation research on mental health, as it was said before, with a poor physical health, comes poor mental health, and thus, poor general health, and then, illnesses starts to affect the person, people with meager mental health, have higher risks of having depression, anxiety, developing any kind of a mental illness, extreme mood changes, withdrawal from friends and activities, significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping (MHF, 2012). The meaning to all of this, is that the addiction of Fortnite and the characteristics of its abusive gametime and gameplay can be as dangerous as any other addiction and it's proven that it's also in the same stage as a gaming disorder due to all of the factors mentioned that can dangerously degenerate the life quality of the gamers involved in the disorder (News & WHO, 2019).

There are also other, wicked and hard-to-believe, cases in which Fortnite battle royale was also included and involved in issues where legal demands were needed. One of the examples is the case of nine individuals (one of them being a 14 year old, two of them being Americans and the rest, working overseas) which created a software so the players can use it and cheat in Fortnite; Epic Games (developers of the game) sue them for up to \$150,000 per incident and per case; years later, Epic Games, again, sued another group of hackers (Philip Josefsson, Artem Yakovenko, James Mendes, Konstantin Vladimirovich Rak and Oleksey Olekseevich Stegailo) who found a way to plan, create and develop a software to cheat in the game; Epic Games stated that “they take cheating very seriously or any copyright infringement, they want to make Fortnite as fun as possible for everyone” so it’s obligatory for them to pursue anyone that decides to do the contrary; after that, in the long run, Fortnite has since sued and issued four more cases with legal and civil lawsuits for situations in which people did the same thing, try and hack the game to enjoy themselves and steal the joy of the other gamers (Hall, 2017). Considering this last two cases, it implies that Fortnite is already starting to affect and take impact not just on other people's behaviour or skill, but also on its actions and lifestyle to a point where this game is involved in legal cases on in situations where it puts a person’s health and life-changing opportunities or decisions in danger.

So, as discussed in the previous section, Fortnite is not all family friendly, not because of the graphics and war-theme that it brings, but because of all of the other cases and studies about it. These cases and studies are solely based on the battle royale mode and how its excessive consume can endanger someone's life by first, draining the time of your days by playing it too

much, once you start to get addicted to the game, the turn back will be tough; then, by killing your daily life opportunities, Fortnite's gamers are so "illuminated" for being a pro player that they sacrifice their other life goals just to follow their dreams, being part of a sports team, getting a real life job, and all other ideas or goals are saturated because of being a pro gamer of this battle royale, and last, by having not just personal issues, but legal issues too because of this exact game, groups and individuals are now seeking for ways to get "better" at the game without playing it too much or practicing their weaknesses, and how? By hacking, using technological programming so they can violate the algorithms and rules of the game and company so they're invincible, and thus, win every time they play by shattering the joy and fun gameplay that the company wants to show, so, because of this, the directives and legal representative of this game takes actions against these hackers by suing them and putting them in legal problems. For this reason, when a player find a game that "completes and fulfills" its expectations as a gamer -in this case it's Fortnite-, actions should be taken for the good of its health and life, limits should exist so there can be a balance between having a good amount of gameplay and be profitable for the gamer at the same time.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this arguments based on investigations and real time percentages and data, a conclusion about the role and impact of Fortnite Battle Royale in the america culture can be made. This game can have both positive and negative sides and characteristics that can lead to two different paths each. When talking about positive and negative effects, you want to take

reference to health and life aspects in which your mental and physical health is involved and how this game impact, not only that, but every aspect of your life such as social management and life circumstances and opportunities.

Along with the positive side, when you play Fortnite in a good range on time, observing and understanding the meaning that the games wants to reflect, the gamer can have an improvement in their motor and social skills because of how dynamic and different the gameplay is, it coerce the player to use their full range of visual range to spot the best spot for their next strategy and, when in battle, the new construction characteristic -that no other shooting game brings- also force the player to use most of their creative and motor skills to know what to build and how to win the battle, allowing the gamer to improve both of their creative, strategy and motor skills; while in the social side, the duos and squad modes links and groups the player to people around the globe who is also playing the game, and force you to interact with them and create strategies and share ideas so your team can win the game, improving social skills and management of the gamer. Also, some gamers were able to become pro and get paid because of their gaming, allowing them to gain money as a new source of income and getting new kinds of life opportunities. These reasons explain why fortnite is a game that can positively impact american culture and its gamers.

On the other side, the negative effects are also important to look at, reviewing at it, the excessive gaming of Fortnite can be “as addictive as heroin” and can lead people to play the game for 21 hours or more in a single sitting, conveying the gamers to reducing their time to eat,

doing homework or work, doing physical activities and thus, shortening and endangering their health and real life circumstances and opportunities. Also, as mentioned before, some group of players are now hacking the game so they prestige of gamers and their own gameplay can improve, without being good at it, meaning that they're violating the rules and rights of other players and the game itself; with Epic Games taking action, this hackers are facing legal issues, putting their family and lives in danger. Fortnite gamers become so addicted and so focus to become professional players that they risk their life to play the game and get carried away by the gameplay, saturating their health, life circumstances and also the positive meaning that this battle royale really wants to emit.

Over the years, Fortnite battle royale will mark an important spot in the history of gaming and the hearts of the gamers itselfs as a game that can influence life aspects, health and skills of a person in so many different ways. And, while talking about the behaviour of America's culture and society, this is how Fortnite can incise and influence them.

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