Chapter 52
Entertainment and Physical Activities: New Connections Through the Use of Pokémon GO

Mateus David Finco
Federal University of Paraíba, Brazil

ABSTRACT

It is possible to observe that gameplays are a big success in many different places. From arcade games to the most recent games, users have been trying different games to entertain and lately exergames are supporting users to enhance physical activities level in their daily basis. This chapter analyzes how players of Pokémon GO are producing new connections for social benefits and an active lifestyle meanwhile or after using the game. This study involved 176 players in the cities of Pelotas and João Pessoa (Brazil). As a result, it was evident that users had changed many habits, specially regarding physical activity gains, such as running, walking, or cycling more frequently, and many of players were getting into an active lifestyle, practicing exercises with friends and family. Authors conclude that Pokémon GO is a successful mobile-based gameplays that can be used to promote a healthier lifestyle with a new way of interaction, changing lifestyles with a big potential to be used to motivate people to be more active and healthy.

INTRODUCTION

Gameplays have become very popular among children, adolescents and even adults in many places in the world. Video games and computer games have always been a success regarding screen time spent everywhere among people from different ages. The search for fun and entertainment is one of the main aspects that motivate users to interact with different types of games. Recently, mobiles have been used mostly for communication throughout social medias and apps, and games on mobiles haven't been that successful during the past years, due to a small screen size design and lack of attractiveness for entertainment, making people more attracted to gameplays designed for computers and video games.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7707-3.ch052

In the history of digital games, rarely was it possible to associate them to positive contributions for practices of sports and physical activities. Mainly, the digital games were considered as sedentary games for the low interaction of full body movements, where the mediation is mainly operated by the use of hands.

Some studies show that electronic games could be potentially important to attract players and contribute for sports and other physical activities based on movements (Baranowski et al. 2008). An idea poorly developed for the massive use of mobiles, but recently very well adopted for video games, like the exergames or active video games. Exergames potentially use full body movements (upper and lower limbs) like kicks, jumps, turns and strokes that allow people play with a moderate to high intensity level of physical activity, depending on the game selected.

Finco and Maass (2014) define exergames as a type of video games that include any type of physical exercise in the game routines. On these games, it is possible to include also physical activities involving a capture system of movements of activities such as dance and sports. Exergaming ou exergames practices are the act of use of this type of video games to work out and move the full body to burn out calories. The term exergame has been used in academia as well as in the industry in slightly different ways (Oh & Yang, 2010), but usually it is agreed that these are active video games that combine body movement with gaming skills (Fries, 2011). Intensity measure in the practice will vary, depending on the game, as well as the caloric expenditure during the interaction, due to the time and quantity of movements done during the session. Some of the most popular exergames are Wii Fit, Dance Dance Revolution and EA Sports Active. According to Boulos and Yang (2013) exergames are rapidly gaining user acceptance, and may have the potential to increase physical activity levels among young people, especially regarding that a large numbers of children and adolescents in Canada, UK and USA are not getting their recommended daily dose of moderate to vigorous physical activity, and are thus more prone to obesity and its ill health effects. Benzing and Schmidt (2018) definied that exergames have become an emerging trend in fitness, education and health sectors. Exergames are digital games that require bodily movements to play, stimulating an active gaming experience to function as a form of physical activity. The authors explain that as exergaming is becoming more popular, claims have been made on the usefulness of exergaming, especially when the American College of Sports Medicine has been entitled as being "the future of fitness", promoting physical activities and health in children and adolescents.

Mainly, games offered for mobiles were designed for fun and short periods of time, not involving many tasks and skills as the exergames that involve balance, jumps, kicks or punches. Mobile games have been considered "sedentary games" for not allowing people to move and interact that much with other people. Since July 2016, a location-based augmented reality game named *Pokémon GO* came with a different proposal: making people walk, run or cycle through different urban places, encouraging users to be more active and interactive with other users. In the game, players use a mobile device to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creatures that appear on the screen as if they were in the same real-world location as the player.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) states that the idea of attractiveness in a game depends on how the player's skill is combined with the challenges and the narrative of the game and also supported by the flow theory, also called the psychology of optimal experience. During the flow experience, our level of focus maximizes our performance and sense of pleasure.

In the last few years researchers started to investigate how such games could contribute to the practice of physical activities and exercises, to the training of users to participate in a vast range of sports and other movement-based activities (Hayes and Silberman, 2007).