

TYPES OF GAMERS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF MOBILE VIDEO GAME COMMERCIALS

¹Su-Hie Ting, ²Muhd Azrulizzat Jossbi

¹Faculty of Education, Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

¹shting@unimas.my, ²azrulizzat2000@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author: Su-Hie Ting (shting@unimas.my)

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Abstract

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This study investigated the types of gamers and their perceptions of mobile video game commercials. The objectives of the study are to: (1) determine frequency of video game playing among the participants, (2) identify types of gamers, and (3) examine perceptions of selected video game commercials. In the descriptive study, questionnaire data were obtained from 102 participants who were gamers. A questionnaire was employed to elicit responses of gamers to commercials of three mobile video games: Rise of Kingdom: Lost Crusade (2018), Raid: Shadow Legends (2018), and Goddess of Victory: Nikke (2022). The results showed that participants in this study are divided into three main groups in terms of number of days spent on playing video games: 1-2 days per week (43.1%), 3-4 days per week (23.5%), and every day (29.4%), with only 3.9% playing 5-6 days per week. A majority (65.7%) are casual gamers, followed by competitive gamers (19.6%), but fewer identified as hardcore, social and educational gamers. The participants have marginally positive evaluation of the eight aspects of the three commercials (means of 3.3 to 3.7 out of 5). Language is the most appealing feature of the commercials and visual attractiveness is the least appealing feature. Comprehensive presentation, detailed product descriptions, perceived realism, and general likability were more important to the participants than visual attractiveness. Their willingness to purchase is low (mean of 3.3). The findings suggest that there are more personal factors affecting purchase intention than the characteristics of the mobile video game commercials, and these need to be uncovered through future studies.



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1. Introduction

Producers of mobile video games invest in making commercials that entice gamers to purchase them. Pelclová (2010) identifies several persuasive strategies in advertising discourse that contribute to effectiveness. One key strategy is the use of persuasive lexical choices, where evaluative and positive

emotional words are used to construct a positive image. Another strategy is the use of pronouns (“you”) to create a sense of personal relevance and draws the viewer into the message. The use of “you” as a device to personalise messages was found to influence gamers’ attitudes towards mobile game ads (Christino et al., 2024). Pelclová (2010) also highlights the role of presupposition, where certain meanings or benefits are embedded as taken-for-granted assumptions rather than explicitly stated claims. This makes the audience less likely to question the promotional messages, thereby increasing their persuasive force.

In recent years, the appealing characteristics of video game commercials have been researched and the primary attraction is offering incentives. For example, Hussain et al. (2022) studied the effectiveness of pop-up ads in videogames in persuading 321 online gamers to install the advertised game. Their findings showed that gamers are drawn to ads that offer incentives such as bonus points (e.g., in-game life-points, progression to the next game level), or free in-game gear, tools or equipment. Christino et al.’s (2024) study of 260 gamers in Brazil reached the same conclusion on the appeal of incentives in mobile game ads. However, studies show that gamers are not easily tricked by mobile video game commercials. In Chacaltana and Benavides’ (2024) study, the focus was on three mobile game advertisements and their respective gameplays: *Evony: The King’s Return*, *Mafia City* and *Hero Wars*. The 17 law students in Peru who were interviewed said that they found the advertisements misleading as the final product was vastly different.

Researchers found that visual pop-up ads may irritate some players. Hussain et al. (2022) reported that audio effects have positive effects on gamers’ behaviour compared to visual effects which disturb the gamers’ game flow. Pop-up ads are more likely to be clicked by gamers who already feel positive towards advertising in mobile games and are not irritated by them (Christino et al., 2024).

Some characteristics of mobile game ads may may work. Informative commercials are not effective. Hussain et al. (2022) found that informativeness does not influence intention to install the advertised game in pop-up ads while Christino et al. (2024) found that mobile game ads do not generate positive attitudes, if gamers have negative attitudes towards advertisements in the first place. In fact, Christino et al. (2024) also reported that credibility does not significantly influence attitudes and purchase intentions but an entertaining advertisement might. AI-generated dialogues also do not work, according to Akoury et al.’s (2023) findings based on 28 players recruited from the *r/DiscoyElysium* subreddit. Their reactions were obtained through open-ended responses and preference judgments. Akoury et al. (2023) found a preference for game designers’ prose to Large Language Model outputs because the former has better logical flow and is more relevant to the game state.

Thus far, most of the findings in Malaysia are on the high frequency of playing mobile games among some youths (Mariot et al., 2025; Roslan et al., 2024). Hashim et al.’s (2008) study of 129 students showed that 60% prefer to play games on their mobile phones than on their computer. An extensive study by Khidir et al. (2025) among 41.2% of 3,081 students at Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu’adzam Shah played mobile games for more than three hours a day. The studies on gamers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of mobile game advertisements are based on studies in other parts of the world. There are few studies on the Malaysian gaming community in this respect apart from Hakim and Ismail (2022) who analysed questionnaire data from 383 Malaysians, and concluded gamers are attracted to mobile games that entertain and offer rewards but does not significant affect purchase intentions. There is a gap of knowledge on Malaysians’ responses to mobile video game commercials, and this needs a timely investigation to find out what persuades Malaysian gamers.

This study investigated the types of gamers and their perceptions of mobile video game commercials. The objectives of the study are to: (1) determine frequency of video game playing among the participants, (2) identify types of gamers, and (3) examine perceptions of selected video game commercials.

2. Method of Study

The descriptive study examined types of gamers and their perceptions of mobile video game commercials. Descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the research aim is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories.

The study involved 102 participants in Malaysia (Table 1). There were slightly more female participants (54.9%), and a majority of participants were in their twenties (85.3%). There were more Malays (51.0%) and Sarawak indigenous (25.5%) among the participants than Chinese (8.8%) and Sabah indigenous (6.9%). Half of the participants were diploma (25.5%) and degree holders (13.7%), and 73.5% reported earning RM2000 per month or less (including students with no income). The selection criteria were: (1) gamers above 18 years of age as they can give consent to participate in the study on their own, and (2) ability to understand both English and Malay because the selected video commercials may have both languages. Gamers is defined as individuals who play any kind of video games such as mobile video games, PC video games, and PlayStation video games. A snowball sampling method was used whereby the second researcher first forwarded the online questionnaire link to students whom he knew were gamers. Then these gamers were asked to forward the link to other gamers they knew.

Table 1. Demographic background of participants (N=102)

Demographic information	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	56	54.9
	Male	46	45.1
Age	18-19	10	9.8
	20-29	87	85.3
	30-39	2	2.0
	40 and above	3	2.9
Ethnic group	Malay	52	51.0
	Sarawak indigenous	26	25.5
	Chinese	9	8.8
	Sabah indigenous	7	6.9
	Others	6	5.9
	Indian	2	2.0
Education level	Form 5/SPM/MCE/Certificate	2	2.0
	Form 6	12	11.8
	Diploma	26	25.5
	Degree	14	13.7
Monthly income	Below RM2000	75	73.5
	RM2000-RM3999	20	19.6
	RM4000-RM5999	3	2.9
	RM6000 and above	3	2.9

A questionnaire was employed to elicit responses of gamers to commercials of three mobile video games. In this study, video commercials refer to three selected short video clips on mobile video game commercials that the participants were required to watch before filling in the questionnaire. The three commercials selected were Rise of Kingdom: Lost Crusade (2018), Raid: Shadow Legends (2018), and Goddess of Victory: Nikke (2022). The mobile video game commercials were live streamed in social media, and therefore were publicly accessible. Thus, there were no ethical issues to use them in the study.

The three games differ in their gameplay orientation and level of player interaction. *Raid: Shadow Legends* and *Goddess of Victory: Nikke* are primarily single-player role playing game, whereas *Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade* is a multiplayer strategy game. *Rise of Kingdoms* (2018) is a strategy mobile game in which players build civilizations, manage resources, form alliances, and engage in large-scale battles. Next, *Raid: Shadow Legends* (2018) is a fantasy role-playing game where players collect heroes, develop character abilities, and participate in turn-based combat across various game modes. Finally, *Goddess of Victory: Nikke* (2022) is a third-person shooter role-playing game in which players recruit female android soldiers, assemble combat squads, and complete story-driven missions against mechanical enemies.

The questionnaire was adopted from Zhang et al. (2014) except for the rewording of the five-point Likert scale as follows: 1 Not at all, 2 Not much, 3 Neutral, 4 Quite a bit, and 5 Very much. Zhang et al.'s (2014) study was on the informational and emotional appeals in food commercials to Japanese consumers. The first part of the questionnaire contained information about the objectives of the study and voluntary participation. Participants were required to give consent before proceeding to the next part of the questionnaire on demographic information (gender, ethnic group).

A Google forms link to the online questionnaire was sent to undergraduates in a Malaysian university. The second researcher shared the link with his social contacts, who were requested to forward the link to other gamers. In addition, the study was also announced on various social media platforms to increase the reach of the study.

The questionnaire responses in the Microsoft Excel file were downloaded. The initial data comprising 119 responses were cleaned and filtered, and 17 non-gamers were excluded, leaving 102 for the analysis. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed.

3. Results

The results are reported for frequency of video game playing among the participants, types of gamers, and perceptions of three video game commercials. Almost all the participants played video games on their mobile phones (94.2%), and 25.5% of them played games on their personal computers. The participants hardly played games on consoles (2.0%). Some of them reported using two to three devices to play video games.

3.1 Frequency of video game playing

Table 2 shows the participants' frequency of playing video games. A total of 29.4% play video games every day, showing how engrossed they are in this activity. A small percentage (3.9%) of participants playing video games 5-6 days per week. However, 43.1% of participants who play games only 1-2 days in a week, showing that they have video game playing well under control. Another quarter of the participants (23.5%) play video games 3-4 days per week, perhaps on alternative days. Based on the results, only 29.4% are possibly addicted to mobile video games as they play everyday.

Table 2. Frequency of playing video game among participants (N=102)

Frequency of playing	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 days	44	43.1
3-4 days	24	23.5
5-6 days	4	3.9
Every day	30	29.4
Total	102	100

3.2 Types of gamers

The gamer types are categorised into casual gamers, hardcore gamers, competitive gamers, social gamers, and those who view gaming as an educational pursuit. Table 2 shows the type of gamers among participants. A majority of participants considered themselves casual gamers (65.7%). Casual gamers play games as a form of entertainment. This is in contrast to the 19.6% who are competitive gamers. There were fewer hardcore gamers (5.9%), social gamers (5.9%) and educational gamers (2.9%). Social gamers may play games because they like the connection with other gamers. Educational gamers may play games because it is an activity encouraged by their teachers for them to acquire knowledge and skills. Among the participants, two-thirds are casual gamers, one-fifth are competitive gamers, and there were fewer hardcore, social and educational gamers.

Table 3. Types of gamers (N=102)

Types of Gamers	Frequency	Percentage
Casual	67	65.7
Competitive	20	19.6
Hardcore	6	5.9
Social	6	5.9
Educational	3	2.9
Total	100	100

3.3 Perceptions of three gaming product commercials

Three selected video game commercials shown to participants for their response. Table 4 shows that, overall, they preferred Raid: Shadow Legends (M=3.8). The other two video game commercials were less preferred: Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade (M=3.5), and Goddess of Victory: Nikke (M=3.4). In the rest of this section, the three commercials are evaluated one by one.

Table 4. Perceptions of three gaming product commercials (N=102)

Aspect	Raid: Shadow Legends	Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade	Goddess of Victory: Nikke	Average
1. Comprehensive Presentation	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.6
2. Detailed Product Descriptions	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.6
3. Language Used in Commercial	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.7
4. Perceived Realism	3.8	3.4	3.5	3.6
5. Interest Level	4.0	3.4	3.5	3.6
6. Visual Attractiveness	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.5
7. General Likability	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.6
8. Willingness to Purchase	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.3
Average	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.6

First, the participants' perceptions on Raid: Shadow Legends commercial shows that this video clip is appealing in the language used and interest (M=4.0 for both). General likability (M=3.9), comprehensive presentation (M=3.8), perceived realism (M=3.8) and visual attractiveness (M=3.8) are rated highly too. One participant wrote in the open-ended section that the visual attractiveness is "lovely". Comparatively, Raid: Shadow Legends commercial's production description is not as attractive (M=3.7). Participants may like watching the commercial but are not willing to make a purchase (M=3.4).

Second, Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade commercial is the most attractive in its comprehensive presentation and detailed product descriptions (both $M=3.6$). The participants appreciate detailed information on the attributes of the game. The linguistic elements in the commercial, general likability are also important (both $M=3.5$), but the means are lower than those for informativeness. Among the eight criteria, Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade scored the lowest for perceived realism and visual attractiveness of the commercial but the mean scores of 3.4 are still above the neutral point. Participants may like watching the commercial but their willingness to buy the game is marginally positive ($M=3.3$).

Finally, Goddess of Victory: Nikke video commercial is not as appealing to the participants compared to the other two video game commercials, in particularly low willingness to purchase ($M=3.1$) and visual attractiveness ($M=3.2$). The commercial's strongest point is the language used ($M=3.7$). The perceived realism, interest level and general likability ($M=3.5$ each) have moderate appeal to the participants. Comprehensive presentation and detailed product descriptions (both $M=3.4$) are not particularly strong points for the Goddess of Victory: Nikke video commercial.

A comparison of the three video game commercials show that language used in commercial is the most attractive feature of the commercials, particularly for Raid: Shadow Legends and Goddess of Victory: Nikke. The language in Raid: Shadow Legends is persuasive because it focuses on exclusive rewards and player achievement. The commercial repeatedly uses promotional expressions such as "download now", "free champions", and "limited-time rewards", creating a sense of urgency. The commercial also emphasises character development, the collection of legendary champions, and success in difficult battles. These features allow viewers to imagine themselves progressing quickly and achieving success in the game. This combination of direct calls to action and reward-oriented language makes the commercial engaging. On the other hand, the language in Goddess of Victory: Nikke is distinctive as it takes the style of a cinematic war narrative. Expressions such as "Humanity has lost the surface", "Humanity's last hope", and "Take back the surface" frame the game as a desperate struggle for survival rather than merely promoting gameplay features. This storytelling approach evokes suspense and emotional engagement, making the commercial resemble a movie trailer more than a mobile game advertisement.

What the participants like about Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade is its comprehensive presentation and detailed product description. Rise of Kingdoms introduces the mechanics of the game. The commercial explains that players can choose one of several civilizations, construct and upgrade cities, gather resources, train troops, form alliances with other players, and participate in large-scale real-time battles. Gameplay footage accompanies these explanations, helping viewers understand not only what the game offers but also how it is played. This detailed presentation reduces uncertainty and enables potential players to evaluate whether the game matches their interests.

The aspect that video game commercials need to improve is visual attractiveness. Raid: Shadow Legends commercial uses dark fantasy cinematics, close-ups of heroes, and battle animations. For example, armoured warriors, magical creatures, glowing weapons, and special effects. This is a common type of imagery used by many fantasy mobile role-playing game advertisements, and therefore may be so familiar that they are not attention grabbing. Next, Goddess of Victory: Nikke commercial has scenes that move too fast. For example, rapid combat scenes, explosions, futuristic environments, and frequent character transitions. There is too little time for viewers to appreciate individual scenes or understand the gameplay.

4. Discussion

The study on types of gamers and their perceptions of mobile video game commercials (Raid: Shadow Legends; Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade; Goddess of Victory: Nikke) produced two key findings that

will be discussed next.

First, nearly one-third of the participants in this study are addicted to mobile video games as they reported playing video games everyday games but only 5.9% admitted they are hardcore gamers. The majority identified themselves as casual gamers, and one-fifth of the participants identified as competitive gamers. Mariot et al. (2025) found that teenagers who play games six to seven days per week are more likely to be addicted to gaming, measured using the Gaming Addiction Scale. This scale was found to be applicable for Malaysian adolescents by Roslan et al. (2024). Besides using the scale, Mariot et al. (2025) also studied the gaming frequency (1-5 days versus 6-7 days per week) and gaming duration (more or less than three hours per day). Their findings showed that 8.7% of the 288 youths aged 13-17 from homes with a monthly income of less than RM9,150 are addicted to mobile gaming, particularly males aged 16-17, lax parental supervision, and more than six friends. Peer pressure fuels mobile gaming addiction (Chatterjee et al., 2025). Friends and YouTube gamers drive the mobile game addiction of 54.3% of 1,125 university students in Bangladesh (Sayeed et al., 2021).

In the present study, almost all the participants play video games on their mobile, much more than on personal computers and hardly on consoles. Similarly, over 60% of the students in Hashim et al.'s (2008) study play games on their mobile phones. Addiction to mobile video games is a concern because it may lead to smartphone addiction (Pitikoe-Chiloane & Dondolo, 2023; Liu et al., 2016; Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2018; Pan et al., 2019). The excessive playing of mobile games has adverse impacts on students' academic performance, physical health, and mental health (Feng, 2022). An earlier study in Malaysia (Khidir et al., 2025) found that 41.2% of polytechnic students play mobile games for more than three hours a day, and 39.5% of 3,081 students started playing games after 11 p.m. This causes students to sleep in the wee hours of the morning, leaving them with insufficient rest before attending lectures and potentially contributing to poor concentration and absenteeism. Thus, the sizable proportion of participants in the present study who play mobile video games every day warrants attention, even though most identified themselves as casual rather than hardcore gamers.

Second, language used in mobile video game commercials is the most attractive feature of the commercials and visual attractiveness is the least attractive feature to the participants. For the participants, language is a strong point for *Raid: Shadow Legends* and *Goddess of Victory: Nikke*. The characters in the *Raid: Shadow Legends* commercial speak with a human voice and not with an AI-generated voice while *Goddess of Victory: Nikke* uses more singing rather than speech. With reference to a past finding by Akoury et al. (2023), gamers like dialogues written by game designers and not be AI. The three mobile video game commercials selected for the present study used human-recorded voice acting, which may explain why the gamers were attracted to the language. Sayapina's (2018) study in Russia indicated that mobile game users respond to different marketing channels, and consumer analyses are needed to understand what appeals the target audience. Based on the present study among Malaysian mobile video gamers, it seems that the marketing campaigns should work on the language appeal. For example, using positive emotional words (Pelclová, 2010) and pronouns to engage gamers (Christino et al., 2024).

Despite language and other aspects being somewhat appealing to the gamers, they are hardly convinced to purchase the game advertised. Advertisers use incentives to push gamers towards a purchase (Christino et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2022). The three selected commercials were not lacking in incentives. The commercial for *Raid: Shadow Legends* offers new players the "Free legendary champion" for new accounts, free in-game currency, and limited-time starter rewards to encourage them to sign-up. The *Rise of Kingdoms* commercial has "Begin your empire" or "start for free" messaging but are less obvious in offering beginner rewards. The *Goddess of Victory: Nikke* commercial focuses more on story and emotional narrative, but still include incentives such as free character recruitment and limited-time login rewards for new players. Despite these incentives in the commercials, the present study shows that gamers are not persuaded to purchase the game. These are new findings because

previous studies focused on factors that make the games themselves attractive, such as audiovisual appeal and low prices (e.g., Penttinen et al., 2010).

5. Conclusion

This study examined types of gamers and their perceptions of mobile video game commercials featuring *Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade* (2018), *Raid: Shadow Legends* (2018), and *Goddess of Victory: Nikke* (2022). The findings showed that most participants were casual gamers, while competitive gamers formed the second-largest group (19.6%). Fewer participants identified as hardcore, social, or educational gamers, and gaming is generally an occasional activity, unlike the 29.1% who play mobile video games on a daily basis.

Among the commercial features examined, language was the most appealing, indicating its importance in attracting viewers. Comprehensive presentation, detailed product descriptions, perceived realism, and general likability were moderately appealing, whereas visual attractiveness was the least important feature. Despite these generally positive perceptions of several commercial features, participants reported low willingness to purchase the games. The findings suggest that there are more factors affecting purchase intention than the characteristics of the mobile video game commercials, and these need to be uncovered through future studies.

The study has three limitations. Firstly, the study relied on questionnaire responses. Without interviewing gamers on reasons why they are not convinced to purchase the advertised game, it is difficult to speculate on possible faults with the commercials. Gamers' perspective obtained through interviews is the way forward to understand their decisions, and such findings are useful to marketing agencies for mobile video games.

The second limitation in the present study is the omission of a questionnaire item on the number of hours of playing mobile video games per day. This would facilitate comparison of findings of other studies which generally use number of hours per day (e.g., Khidir et al., 2025; Mariot et al., 2025). In the present study, participants are considered to have mobile game addiction if they reported playing games every day. Less than half of the participants play games one to two days per week, and about one-quarter play games three to four days per week. No information was obtained on the number of hours spent playing mobile games per day.

The third limitation of the study is the use of a one-minute clip which means that the commercial is incomplete. The short video clips may not do justice to the commercial and for the commercial to have the full persuasive effect. However, the one-minute duration was set to ensure that the participants do not get bored and stop answering the questionnaire half way through. In future, researchers can explore variables like short advertisements, long-form storytelling, and product demonstrations to gain valuable insights into effective video commercial design. Understanding how various lengths and formats influence consumer responses is crucial for advertisers aiming to optimise engagement. Future research in this area can contribute to the refinement of strategies for creating compelling gaming advertisements.

Co-Author Contribution

Author 1 conducted literature review, improved the instrument and method of the study, conducted statistical analysis and interpretation of the results, and revised the paper. Author 2 conceptualised the study, drafted the instrument, conducted data collection and wrote the first draft of the report.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the manuscript and its Supporting Information files.