Cultural influences on information behavior in gaming

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Information Management

At

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

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September 2016
Abstract

**Background:** Currently, with the development of computer technology and high-efficiency penetration of Internet as well as extensive use of computers, game especially in online game playing has increased to become the second most popular activity for the Internet users. The high growth rate of online game is not only attracting investors, but also get attention from many researchers. People’s information behavior in gaming has been researched broadly.

**Aim:** The aim of this research is to explore culture influences in information behavior in gaming, specifically to compare the way Chinese students play computer games when they are in the UK, compared with the way they play when in China.

**Method:** The methodology that used in this research is semi-structured interview and qualitative method. The semi-structured interview and interview question were used for exploring Chinese students’ social behaviors in UK, Chinese students’ habits in playing computer game and their motivations, Chinese students’ information behavior in gaming and the reason why they like the way to get information, attitudes towards playing games or sharing game information with others, the changes between these Chinese students’ experiences of playing game in China and playing games in the UK and their attitude towards these changes. There are 18 participants were invited in the research and all of the interview records were stored and translated.

**Findings:** People’s information behavior in gaming is related to their cultural background and they were also influenced by new cultural environment after they came to a new country such as Chinese students were influenced by Chinese culture but they were also impacted via English gaming culture potentially after they came to the UK. Additionally, through the research, four new motivations were identified, which are “leisure activity”, “follow with friends”, “low cost” and “releasing pressure”.

**Conclusion:** The aim and objectives of the research have been achieved via investigation and literature review. It is clearly presented in the research that people’s information behavior is related to their cultural environment and it also will be changed when people move to a new country. However, due to the small size of the sample and limitation of the questions list, the research still has some limits. In the future, the research will be improved.
Acknowledgement

First of all, I have to thank my supervisor Sheila Webber. I cannot finish my dissertation without her help. She guided me to finish my dissertation step by step and she also gave me enough encouragement during the period of processing the research.

Secondly, I would like to thank all of the participants because they shown their patience during the interview and they also provided their valuable answers to my questions.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the people who gave me enough support.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, there are three sections will be introduced here, which include the whole structure of this dissertation; research background that presents the reason why I start this topic and research aims and research objectives of the research.

1.2 Structure of the dissertation

The primary purpose of this research focuses on cultural influences in information behavior in gaming. Through interviews, experiences of Chinese students who study in UK and can be considered as gamers were collected to help this research. The researcher investigated: Chinese students’ social behaviors in the UK; Chinese students’ habits in playing computer game and their motivations; Chinese students’ information behavior in gaming and the reason why they like to get information in these ways; attitudes towards playing games or sharing game information with others; the changes between these Chinese students’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK, and their attitude towards these changes. Chapter 1 introduces this research. Chapter 2 reviews relevant previous literature, including the motivation of playing games, benefits for playing games, different culture dimension in the various countries and cultural influences in people's behaviors, information behaviors in gaming and online games’ computer servers. The methodology is introduced in chapter 3, which includes the introduction of how this research is processed. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the primary data collected via interview. Then the following chapter (Chapter 5) will present further discussion of these data, relating them to the literature review. The last chapter is about the conclusion, and limitation of this research (dissertation).

1.3 Background of the dissertation
The primary purpose of this research as mentioned above is to explore the cultural influences in information behavior in gaming; it is helpful to understand the development of games before we start our research. Currently, with the development of computer technology and high-efficiency penetration of Internet as well as extensive use of computers, gaming especially in online game playing has increased to become the second most popular activity for the Internet users, which has been growing around the world (Christou et al. 2013).

During the 20 to 25 years growth, computer gaming has become one of favorite activities in the world and one might say even in 2003 it had become one part of “the new multimedia culture that is based on the digital computer technology” (Fromme, 2003). Games attract an enormous amount of gamers recently. These players come from each corner of the world where has appropriate Internet coverage and sufficient game support.

In 2012, 63 million games were sold in the UK, which helped UK become the third largest game market in the world (Houses of Parliament, 2012). Online games as a type of games have played a crucial role in the world game market due to its allowing multinational people play together via Internet server. In 2015, a report conducted by the UK government presented that 41% of those surveyed reported they played online games (UK government, 2016). In China, research claims that over 60 percent of Chinese young people play online games (Stang et al. 2007).

In order to fulfill the diversity of customer needs, many types of online games exist in the market. There are main two types of game in the game industry, which involves off-line games and on-line games. Off-line games allow players play alone or with friends via LAN. In contrast, the on-line games provide a platform for allowing gamers from all around the world to play together via the Internet.

Additionally, in Martin (2011)’s research, games also can be categorized into the single player games and the massively multiplayer games. Despite the variety of video games types, novelty and customer experience are becoming two key drivers of online games, meanwhile those requirements push online game industry to combine more and more new technologies into one game such as multimedia, 3D, artificial intelligence, broadband networks, sound effects, computer interactive and so on (Chen et al. 2013).

The investment on the exploitation of game also brings back high return. In 2015, a report conducted by the Entertainment Software Association stated that computer games’ annual sales in the US has reached to $22.41 billion, and there are 155
million people in America claim they play computer games (Entertainment Software Association, 2015). Additionally, an example of a famous game company—Blizzard Entertainment also can be used to support this statement. In 2013, there are over 14 million products that produced by Blizzard Entertainment are sold globally (Blizzard Entertainment, 2013).

The high growth rate of online game is not only attracting investors, but also get attention from many researchers (Pe-Than, Goh, and Lee, 2014). Along with the incredible market performance, games have also been identified as a helpful activity in people’s normal life. Shaffer (2008) stated that game could be considered as a simulator for allowing people to practice skills. Shahriarpour, N & Kafi, Z (2014) also indicated that people could learn English vocabularies via playing English games or reading English games storyline.

Despite the growth and benefit of games, gamer’s information behavior also should not be ignored especially in the new century – information generation. Players seek, use and share information when they play computer games. Many players exchange game information or knowledge via online communities or online discussion forums (Martin & Steinkuehler, 2010).

Through study previous data and literature, we can find substantial research has been conducted in the gaming area. For the past decade, online game not only as an entertainment to help people release their pressures but also become a new battle for customers to presents their intelligence and dream, which cannot come true in the real world: such as to get higher rank, to manage a group battle and so on. With the development of games, more and more information behaviors are related to gaming. However, previous research did not mention cultural influences in people’s information behavior in gaming, which provide enough gaps for me to prove the value of my research. This research mainly explores culture influences in information behavior in gaming.

1.4 Research aim

The aim of this research is to explore culture influences in information behavior in gaming, specifically to compare the way Chinese students play computer games when they are in the UK, compared with the way they play when in China. This will give insight into how gamers who come from all over the world exchange game experiences, and could be of interest to UK universities who wish to integrate Chinese students into the social community.
1.5 Research objectives and research question

The following research questions have been established for this research: how does culture influence people’s information behavior in gaming? Do Chinese students feel different when they play computer games in the UK compared to the way they play computer games in China? Does a Chinese student gain benefits to playing computer games in the new culture environment? If there anything is changed or not changed, what will be the main reason or motivation?

The research aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

Review previous literature to find relevant research.

Explore Chinese students’ experiences of playing computer games in China and playing computer games in the UK, via interview.

Identify what has changed for those Chinese students when they play computer games after they live in the UK, and what they did not change.

Collect data and analyze it, and specifically, investigate whether any change or lack of change in behavior is linked to cultural factors.
2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this part is to discuss some previous relevant research, which includes computer games and information behavior; cultural influences in people’s behavior. Previous literature will be reviewed via five sections: the motivation for people to play computer games; benefits of playing games; cultural influences in behavior; information behavior in gaming; and online game servers.

2.2 The motivation for people to play computer games

There is substantial previous research on this topic. As a good result has been mentioned by Malone (1981) is that “fantasy, challenge and curiosity” are three main factors to motivate people to be attracted by games. Amory et al, (1998) also stated that curiosity could be considered as a crucial point for people playing computer games. Before experiencing a thing that they have never done, curiosity also could be a motivation for people to explore it. In the real world, people would like to be led into a entirely new world when they have a good expectation on this thing before, which means people are easily attracted by something that has good advertisement. The similar results can also be found in Gumulak & Webber’s (2011) research. Through collected data via interview from 28 young people who came from the North of England, they found that challenge and entertainment are mainly two reasons for youth to play games. People like to get satisfaction via overcoming multiple challenges to achieve high achievement in the game and being encouraged by the variety of storyline. People also regard games as a simulator for doing something that they cannot do in the real world such as use guns and they like to make new friends via game platform.

Moreover, in Koo’s (2009) research, he stated that five motivations could be used for explaining why people like to play games, which are concentration, perceived enjoyment, escape, epistemic curiosity and social affiliation. Concentration means gamers kill time via playing games because games help them to focus on playing and forget the elapse of time. Perceived enjoyment refers to gamers like to play games because they can feel interesting and exciting from gaming. Escape means people who feel tired of the real world want to get new experiences and joviality via gaming. Epistemic curiosity stands for people want to pursue new things or new information
via gaming. The social affiliation means people want to socialize with others and make more topics with their friends though playing the same game.

Additionally, based on the different goals and different reasons for people do something, Ryan & Deci (2000) integrated multiple motivations into two basic types- intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means people do something due to the thing is inherently interesting and enjoyable; extrinsic motivation means people do something because of something outside themselves (e.g. to please someone else) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Further research can be seen in Banyte & Gadeikiene’s (2015) research. Though collecting data from 158 respondents and using 124 relevant questionnaires of it, Banyte & Gadeikiene (2015) found that people’s motivation for playing games could be considered at personal and not personal level. Personal level means the motivation just influenced by the person himself, whereas not personal level refer to the motivation impacted via the external environment. Banyte & Gadeikiene (2015) also stated that people’s motivations of playing games is multidimensional construct. The multidimensional construct in Banyte & Gadeikiene (2015) research means people’s motivation of playing games can be categorized into three types, which are intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and experiential motivation.

In summary, according to the previous research shows above, it is evidently stated that the motivations of playing computer games can be considered as people wanting to fulfill their different emotional needs such as challenge, killing time, socializing with friends and so on. In the early research, “fantasy, challenge and curiosity” to push people to accept novel things include computer games.

With the development of society, it is presented from Banyte & Gadeikiene’s (2015) research that motivations of people play games is a multidimensional construct. The gamer’s motivations are complex, and it is hard to cover all of them. This study will draw on the research about gamer motivation, and particular research by Gumulak & Webber (2011), Koo (2009) and Banyte & Gadeikiene (2015) for data collection and analysis.

2.3 The benefits of playing computer games

The topic of computer games was researched broadly among the world. Different people have different opinions on it. Games have distributed plenty of obvious
benefits to our normal life. Erikson (1977) stated that a good computer game could lead children to learn knowledge and to feel the changing and new invention of the world; computer games also enhance children’s social ability and their creativity. Through qualitative research on children’s play conversations, Gottman (1986) shows that good computer games could help children to solve emotional issues in the real world; children enhance their ability to address problems through practicing how to get along with others in a pretended situation in the game. Games may also bring emotional benefit to people. Feguson & Olson (2013) assert that game designer build a virtual world for pulling people of different ages into the game world, and these people get happiness and happy feeling through finishing their goal in the game. McGonigal (2011) stated that the most positive emotional experiences come from people playing computer games. For example, an Italian word fiero that means intense pride that people feel after they overcome difficulties, could be used broadly to players. Additionally, flow and transportation are concepts applied to the experience of gamers, occurring when the gamer has a high sense of control and engagement (Sherry, 2004). In psychology, flow experiences can be considered to link with positive outcomes for people (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

In games’ educational meaning, Shahriarpour & Kafi (2014) stated that games could be used to attract people’s attention on learning English vocabularies. During long-term observation, they found that digital games have significant influence in teenager’s behavior, and game-based learning has increased become an important role in people’s normal life so they decide to find new English teaching approach through exploration of the useful relationship between digital games with English vocabularies learning. In Shahriarpour & Kafi’s (2014) research, the digital game quickly attracts teenagers’ attention and gives them enough motivation to play it. When combining the digital game with learning, it can enhance the fun of learning. Digital game help the vocabularies learning to be more interesting and it also makes students participant in English learning actively (Shahriarpour & Kafi, 2014). Digital game helps students learn something under low-stress environment and enhance student’s meaningful learning.

Furthermore, Social benefits have been found as one of primary factors influences gamers’ decision of starting play or continuing play games (Cole & Griffiths, 2007; Ghuman & Griffiths, 2012; Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006; Yee, 2006). Entertainment Software Association (ESA) also reported that 62% gamers like to play games with others no matter in offline games or online platforms (ESA, 2012).
As presented above, playing video game also impacts on gamer’s social interaction. Connectivity of Internet has changed the way to playing video game via connecting gamers all over the world in the shared gaming space. In the virtual environment, gamers can connect socially with each other (Kowert & Julian A. Oldmeadow, 2015). As already mentioned in section 2.2, social interaction and friendship are also motivators for gaming.

In Trept & Reinecke & Juechems’s (2012) research, in order to identify online and offline social support in gaming, they created an online questionnaire for the total 811 participants who were recruited via an online website. After the analysis of data, Trept & Reinecke & Juechems (2012) found that involvement of game clan enhances gamer’s connection with each other, and it also gives them additional social support in the offline world. Highly participating in the clan-related task will result in a better chance for gamer to get in touch with each other and it also lead to higher trust between gamers. Consequently, these conditions will help gamers to build a supportive relationship between them (Trept & Reinecke & Juechems, 2012).

In summary, through the previous research shown above, it is clear that present influence of playing games in people’s normal life no matter in what kind of area. Games influence people’s emotion and body but they also provide motivation for people continue to do something and also combat boredom and stimulate learning. Additionally, gaming also improves people’s social ability and to help gamers to make more friends in the gaming world. Summarizing these benefits of playing games provides a basis on which to build this research study.

2.4 Cultural influence on people’s behavior

In order to explore the cultural influences in information behavior in gaming, this section identifies research concerned with different culture identification in multiple country clusters, and cultural impacts on people’s behavior.

Through collecting data from 50 countries and three regions via 116000 questionnaires and analyzing the characteristics of these countries or regions, Hofstede (1983) created the theory of four cultural dimensions. The four dimensions are power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualism versus collectivism; masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede, 1983). In Hofstede’s research, Britain has been categorized into the Anglo-Saxon cluster.
Countries in Anglo-Saxon cluster such as Britain can be identified with low concentration of authority and low structured of activities in its organization and the characteristics of British culture can be categorized into low uncertainty avoidance and low power distance (Hofstede, 1983). The performances of the country with low uncertainty avoidance and low power distance can be seen as following tables 1 and 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low PDI</th>
<th>High PDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in society should be minimized.</td>
<td>There should be an order of inequality in this world in which everybody has his rightful place; high and low are protected by this order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All should be interdependent.</td>
<td>A few should be independent; most should be dependent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy means an equality of roles, established for convenience.</td>
<td>Hierarchy means existential inequality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates are people like me.</td>
<td>Superiors consider subordinates as different from themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superiors are people like me.</td>
<td>Subordinates consider superiors as different from themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of power should be legitimate, and is subject to the judgment between good and evil. All should have equal rights.</td>
<td>Power is a basic fact of society and antedates good or evil. Its legitimacy is irrelevant. Power-holders are entitled to privileges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful people should try to look less powerful than they are.</td>
<td>Powerful people should try to look as powerful as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress on reward and legitimate and expert power. (1)</td>
<td>Stress on coercive and referent power. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The system is to blame for things that go wrong.</td>
<td>The underdog is to blame for things that go wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way to change a social system is by redistributing power.</td>
<td>The way to change a social system is by dethroning those in power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People at both high and low power levels feel less threatened and more prepared to trust people.</td>
<td>Other people are a potential threat to one's power and can rarely be trusted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is latent harmony between the powerful and the powerless.</td>
<td>There is latent conflict between the powerful and the powerless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation among the powerless can be based on solidarity.</td>
<td>Cooperation among the powerless is difficult to achieve because little faith in people is the norm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Connotations of power distance (PD) dimension (Hofstede, 1983)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low UAI</th>
<th>High UAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The uncertainty inherent in life is more easily accepted and each day is taken as it comes.</td>
<td>The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat that must be fought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease, lower stress</td>
<td>Higher anxiety and stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is free</td>
<td>Time is money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard work is not a virtue per se.</td>
<td>Inner urge to work hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaker superegos</td>
<td>Strong superegos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive behavior is frowned upon.</td>
<td>Aggressive behavior of self and others is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less showing of emotions</td>
<td>More showing of emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict and competition can be contained on the level of fair play and used constructively.</td>
<td>Conflict and competition can unleash aggression and should therefore be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More acceptance of dissent</td>
<td>Strong need for consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance not felt as threatening; greater tolerance</td>
<td>Deviant persons and ideas are dangerous; intolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less nationalism</td>
<td>Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More positive attitude toward younger people</td>
<td>Younger people are suspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less conservatism</td>
<td>Conservatism; law and order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More willingness to take risks in life</td>
<td>Concern with security in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement determined in terms of recognition</td>
<td>Achievement defined in terms of security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativism, empiricism</td>
<td>Search for ultimate, absolute truths and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be as few rules as possible.</td>
<td>Need for written rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If rules cannot be kept, we should change them.</td>
<td>If rules cannot be kept, we are sinners and should repent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in generalists and common sense</td>
<td>Belief in experts and their knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The authorities are there to serve the citizens.</td>
<td>Ordinary citizens are incompetent compared with the authorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Connotations of the uncertainty avoidance (UA) dimension (Hofstede, 1983)

Hofstede (1983) also stated that countries from the Anglo-Saxon cluster can be categorized into individualist culture, which means people from these countries have “I- consciousness” and they are self-reliant, achieving, independent. The specific performance of individualism-collectivism dimension can be seen in Table 3.
Table 3: Connotation of the individualism-collectivism (IC) dimension (Hofstede, 1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low IDV</th>
<th>High IDV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In society, people are born into extended families or clans that protect them in exchange for loyalty.</td>
<td>In society, everybody is supposed to take care of him/herself and his/her immediate family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We&quot; consciousness</td>
<td>&quot;I&quot; consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivity-orientation (1)</td>
<td>Self-orientation (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity is based in the social system.</td>
<td>Identity is based in the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional dependence of individual on organizations and institutions</td>
<td>Emotional independence of individual from organizations or institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on belonging to organization; membership ideal</td>
<td>Emphasis on individual initiative and achievement; leadership ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private life is invaded by organizations and clans to which one belongs; opinions are predetermined.</td>
<td>Everybody has a right to a private life and opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise, order, duty, security provided by organization or clan</td>
<td>Autonomy, variety, pleasure, individual financial security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships predetermined by stable social relationships, but need for prestige within these relationships</td>
<td>Need for specific friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in group decisions</td>
<td>Belief in individual decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value standards differ for in-groups and out-groups; particularism (1)</td>
<td>Value standards should apply to all; universalism (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Jen&quot; philosophy of man (2)</td>
<td>&quot;Personality&quot; philosophy of man (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemeinschaft (community-based)</td>
<td>Gesellschaft (society-based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social order (3)</td>
<td>social order (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of individuals with organizations primarily moral (4)</td>
<td>Involvement of individuals with organizations primary calculative (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Parsons and Shils (1951)  
2) Hsu (1971)  
3) Tönnies (1887)  
4) Etzioni (1975)

In contrast, through qualitative and quantitative research on Chinese local companies and based on Hofstede's culture dimensions, Singh & Zhao & Hu (2003) found that Chinese culture can be identified as collectivist, with high power distance, and high uncertainty avoidance. The performance of Chinese culture also can be checked in table 1, table 2 and table 3. In China, people prefer to follow group norms, group achievement, and strong group-tie; meanwhile, people sacrifice themselves for the
common goal (Yau, 1988; cited in Singh & Zhao & Hu, 2003). High power distance and high uncertainty avoidance in Chinese culture results in Chinese people highly relying on information guidance when they start to do something, and it also leads them to show respect to elderly people and to authorities easily (Ji & McNeal, 2001; cited in Singh & Zhao & Hu, 2003). Through collecting data from Taiwanese companies and Australian companies, Chow & Harrison & McKinnon & Wu (1999) found that comparing to people who grew up under individualist culture, people who were born in collectivist society tend to share their information more with others when meeting a situation that information shared by person is beneficial to group but disadvantageous to the individual, which means people who grow up under Chinese culture more care about group interests than people who were born in individualist society.

Moreover, with the development of Internet technology, the way people use media and people’s attitude to media have also been influenced by different cultures. To explore people’s media use and attitude from different country will help us to identify cultural influences in daily activities. The report by the UK government (2016) showed that the majority of the British people are using media no matter via what kind of device or platform to fulfill their leisure time. There are eight parts cover people’s use of media, which includes watching videos; listening to audio; communicating or participating; gaming; browsing, searching for content and accessing news; online transactions; accessing public or civic service and other activities (UK government, 2016). British people’s attitude to media can be introduced by seven sections, which involved media concern; media funding; media regulation; confidence in using the Internet; understanding search engine results; online privacy and online safety and security (UK government, 2016). Specifically, in the gaming section, as table 4 presented following that in 2015, 26% of UK adults use mobile phone to play games anywhere, 16% of people prefer gaming on a game console connected to a TV and there are two group of people who occupy same proportion (nearly 13%) like to play game via desktop computer/laptop/netbook or tablet (UK government, 2016).
Table 4: Devices used for gaming at home or elsewhere: 2010-2015 (UK government, 2016)

Table 5: Playing games online: 2013, 2014 and 2015 (UK government, 2016)

As Table 5 shows above, 39% people played games online in 2013, 42% people played games online in 2014, and 41% of these played online games in 2015 (UK government, 2016). The data also shows that people who play games weekly occupy the biggest proportion (UK government, 2016).

Additionally, the report (UK government, 2016) demonstrated that 16-24s by far the most likely age group to play games online at least weekly and the mobile phone
users are more apt to play games loaded on the phone than play it over the Internet using mobile phones.

There is not directly comparable research, but research (SJTUSIC, 2015), conducted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University Social Investigation Center and collected via questionnaire from 10000 students who come from 103 universities in China, shown that students use Internet almost every day and 90% of them likely to use the Internet more than 2 hours a day. The report (SJTUSIC, 2015) shown the majority of students have a positive attitude on media, which includes 36.5% of students think media helps them to kill time; the percentage of students who think media is benefit for them to communicate with others has reached to 28.4% and 24.8% of students think that media has improved their study.

In summary, through research these previous literature, it clear presented that different culture dimensions, the relationship between culture and people’s behavior and people from various cultural background have different habit or performance. This research will guide us to explore the Chinese cultural influences on Chinese student’s information behavior.

2.5 Information behavior in gaming

At the beginning of this part, the definition of information behavior will be explained at first. Information behavior means activities that people may use to fulfill their information needs (Wilson, 1999). In 2000, Wilson (2000) also mentioned that information behavior includes aspects such as active information seeking, coming across information passively, and using information.

In order to fulfill their information needs, computer gamers have to add information behavior into the strategic analysis when they play computer games, and during this processes, people will improve their information literacy ability (Clyde & Thomas, 2008). Information behavior that gamer used to help their gaming is related to different interactions that include player-game interaction and player-player interaction (Bostan, 2009).

These interactions can be considered as gamer communicates with games and communicates with other players. When people choose to interact with game, they usually find vital clue through search background and storyline to solve their difficulties. In contrast, player-player interaction is a way that gamer solve problems
via communicating or exchanging information with other players (Steinkuehler, 2007).

In summary, information behavior in gaming usually means information seeking and use behavior that gamers adopt whilst gaming. Additionally, information behavior is related with two types of interaction, player-game, and player-player interaction.

### 2.6 Game servers

Currently, massively multiplayer online games and massively multiplayer online role-playing games are two globally popular game types, which have used multiple server technologies to support achieving the goal of allowing users through the network to experience real-time, interactive gameplay with each other (Winn & Jensen & Teng, 2013).

The game server is a kind of server used by the game company to allow their clients to connect with the virtual game world. In order to provide high quality of games and enhancing gamer’s satisfaction, game server has been taken over and controlled by individuals to game publishers, console makers or third-party service providers (Feng & Feng, 2003). A challenge that impacts on providing good game is placing the game server near to the gamer clusters due to games’ extremely sensitive to latency. The location that gamers play games far away from the server will result in intolerable delay and reduce gamers’ enjoyment. In Feng & Feng’s (2003) research, it is clearly identified that the game server usually will be placed in the geographic location where a large number of game players reside, to prevent the game delay or other technical problem.

For example, a well-known game named League of Legends has had ten completely separate servers that are run by Riot Game, placed in the ten different geographic locations: North America, Europe West, Europe Nordic & East, Oceania, Russia, Turkey, Brazil, Latin America North, Latin America South and Japan (Riot game, 2016). The same game in different server covers different language, the particular group of people and it is influenced by the local culture and law, for example League of Legends in Japan server presents Japanese; the majority of gamers are Japanese and the skin of the characters in game is slightly different from other servers. Except these differences, the main functions of the game are same no matter what kind of servers (Riot Game, 2016). Once gamers created their account within the particular server, which means these gamers belong to this server, and their account cannot be
used for login other servers unless they pay required cost in the Riot Store to transfer their account to another server (Wikia, 2016). Gamers cannot move their account to another server that belongs to different providers (Wikia, 2016).

Although one game usually has different servers, people just prefer to log in the server that serve their country, people also can freely attend into any server they want. The obvious barrier that hinders people’s motivation to participate into other servers can be identified via Taylor’s research is that culture conflict and language. Through personal experience of playing World of Warcraft (WoW), Taylor (2006) found that language would results in unnecessary conflict such as an English-speaking user argue with a non-English speaking user about what language should be used in the public chat leading to official announcement that any language can be used, no language was banned. Taylor (2006) also indicated that gamers from some countries would be easily given a designation from others due to their state recognition in the world such as Chinese gamers are named as “Chinese gold farmer” due to their county’s status of the global economy.

In summary, this section presented several previous research on gamer server, including the reason result in different servers in one game, different service in different server and culture conflict when changing server. All of the parts mentioned above are related to my research and will help to identify cultural influences in playing games. Whilst there is research on use of regional servers, this research addresses a research gap in looking at gamers changing server.

2.7 Conclusion

Through literature review shown above, there are five different parts relating to my research: the reason why people play computer games; benefits of people play computer games; culture dimension and culture influence in people’s behavior; information behavior in gaming and influences in changing game server. The first two parts present value of research computer games and its value in people’s life. These two parts also show that the research topic of computer games has been researched for a long time and there are still valuable to continue it. However, these two parts just focus on the value of games, lack of information on the process that people play games. The third part is about cultural dimension and cultural influences in people’s behavior, which can lead us to explore how people’s information behavior in gaming influenced by Chinese culture. The fourth part is about information behavior in computer games, which starts to focus on the process that
people play computer games and how player solve problems via information exchange. Since our general area is about information behavior in gaming, the fourth part presented above is benefit for us to get a pre-understanding of this topic. The fifth part, as shown above is about game servers and it is related to identify the cultural influences in gaming. Those research help me to understand the relevant theory and it also provide a space for my research and present my research has its value to do.
3. Methodology

In this chapter, there are five sections are used for explaining the method of the research and what particular processes in collecting data. Section 3.1 introduces the specific research methodology and research approaches that utilized in this dissertation. The condition of selection of research samples and how much people participate this research will be explained in section 3.2. Moreover, section 3.3 presents the specific processes of the interview and the process of generating interview question and so on. The following section (section 3.4) shows how to collect data and store data, including the way to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. In section 3.5, the detail of how to record and analyze data will be presented. The last section is about ethics, which means some relevant issues should be mentioned during the interview to respect the interviewee.

3.1 Research methodology

Methodology concerns the theory that people used to conduct their research (Saunder et al., 2009). This part is about what kind of research approach was used to conduct this research, and what objectives were adopted in this research.

This dissertation is mainly about the exploration of cultural differences in information behavior in gaming. To conduct this research and compare the cultural differences, I compared information behavior that Chinese students used in China with the behaviors that they used in the UK. Qualitative methods focus on the life experience of participants and how they interpret the social world (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, qualitative research is the best choice for this research aim.

The semi-structured interview is used as a tool for researchers to have a rich and profound understanding of the interviewees (Teddle, 2003). In the process of semi-structured interview, to guide the interview and get relevant answers, some questions were prepared and administered to all interviewees. Additionally, during the interview, the answers participants gave to the question based on their actual experiences, and some follow-up questions will vary between participants.

In summary, to conduct this research, qualitative method, and semi-structured interview were used. Data was analyzed thematically and using any relevant models identified from the literature review, as is described further below.
3.2 Identification of research sample

In order to select appropriate sample, there are several requirements used to identify the participants. First of all, the target interviewees should be Chinese student who studied in the UK more than one year. Secondly, these interviewees have experiences of playing computer games no matter in the UK or China. Finally, these people should be easily conducted. Choosing Chinese student because the number of Chinese students is large, it is easy to find students who play computer games. Advice from the supervisor was that the people who live around me or the people who are my friends and like to play computer games would be an acceptable sample. In this research, there are 18 people invited to this interview by face-to-face communication or remote contact tools. All of the potential participants were asked a question like “Do you have any experiences in playing computer games?” before the interview to identify the target interviewee, meanwhile the information sheet approved by Departmental Ethics was given to them by face-to-face. The interview was processed after the researcher got permission from the potential interviewee.

3.3 Research setting

Before starting the formal interview, one question mentioned is interview questions. Through repeating discussion with my supervisor, the interview question draft was finished. In order to test if the interview questions can help get desirable results, one participant was invited to the pilot interview. After the pilot interview, the researcher found that interviewee is hard to give specific answer to some questions (like “why do you like to play computer games?”; “why do you like to play computer games with your friends?”) due to they never think about the answers for these kind of questions. In order to solve this problem and get precisely reply to help me continue the research, researcher added some hints and options to these questions to help to inspire interviewees. The pilot interview gave a lot of useful feedback for interview questions and helped to find the weakness of the question list. For example, researcher also added some questions like “Are there same friends you play with in UK?” “Is online game important to you in keeping touch with home friends or family?” into our question list for leading our participants to provide more information about themselves. Besides, in order to analyze data in effective ways, researcher categorized different questions into separate themes. The question list is shown as follows:

Participants’ social behavior in the UK:
Do you have any British friends?

How often do you contact your British friends?

Do you talk to your British friends about games?

Why do/ why do not you talk about games with your British friends?

Are there any differences in playing computer games between you and your British friends?

These five questions shown above were designed for identifying differences in playing computer games between Chinese and British. It also to see if people whom from different culture background influenced Chinese students’ gaming behavior via exploring Chinese students’ social behavior in the UK.

Participants’ habits in playing games and their motivations:

What type of content of game do you like? Why?

Where do you like to play games in China?

Have you taken part in any game clans or discussion communities? Which games? Was it gamers from the same country? Are they all Chinese? Why do/ why do not you stay at one clan for long time?

Participants’ information behavior in playing computer games and the reason why they like to get information in these ways:

Where do you get the game information?

What kinds of information do you share or discuss with your friends?

What information do you use when you get stuck in the game or in what way do you like to solve stuck? Why?

Attitudes towards play games or sharing game information with others:

Do you like to game with your friends or share game information with your friends? Why?

Are you willing to play games with strangers?
Do you think online game is the most important way to contact with home friends or family?

The differences between participants’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK and their attitude towards these changes:

Are there the same friends you play game with in China or new friends? Where do they come from?

Comparing to play games in China, do you feel anything changed in the UK? What reason do you think to result in these changes or none changes?

3.4 Data collection and data storage

Data collection was processed after we received the ethical approval letter. Interview was used for collecting data. Interviews were conducted in Chinese. During the process of interview, all audio content was recorded by electronics product such as smartphone as well as notebook.

The digital data relevant to my research was stored on my computer, which is password protected; I set up an independent folder on the computer to store these data. These interview data were also uploaded to the iSchool’s secure research server. Written information or copies were stored in the named file pocket, which was kept in a locked place.

When I started the dissertation, all of the data was collected and removed to my computer folder. In this period, all of the original data was kept until the end of the dissertation.

The personal information or identifiable information was not shown in the dissertation. After finishing the dissertation, the digital information and voice data will be deleted from my computer and smartphone. Additionally, all of the written information will be destroyed (e.g. shredded).

3.5 Analysis of data

All of the interviews were translated from Chinese to English since all participants are Chinese and using Chinese to make notes can get higher efficiency. The time for transcribing and translating these records took one week. In order to register the information easily, the capital letter P is used to present participants and different participants were shown by various Arabic number such as P1, P2 and so on.
Records were presented by following specific questions, and these questions were categorized into different themes as section 3.3 shown above. Due to 18 participants were invited to our interview, each of question had 18 answers. We identified the similarity and difference from the 18 answers, and then presented obvious answer as well as minority answers.

3.6 Ethical aspects

Before to process the interview, the ethical application form and information sheet were filled in for getting the research approval from Ethics Administration Department, and then the data collection started after receiving the approval letter. Based on the identification of the ethics administration department, this research was considered as low risk because this research involves human beings but it doses not involves potentially vulnerable participants, people who under the age of 18 and potentially highly sensitive topics. I asked participants a question like” Do you want to take part in our interview?” before the interview, and then if our participants say “Yes” to the question, the information sheet will be passed to them by face-to-face before the interview. I explained details of the procedures of the whole interview and what kind of data will be collected from the interview to the participants. Explaining the purpose of taking the interview, how to use their data, how to anonymous their data, where to store their data and when will the data be deleted to the participants. The interview was processed after the participants finished reading the information sheet and signed it. The ethics approval letter, ethics application form, and the information sheet are shown in the appendix part.
4. Results

In this chapter, the research questions listed in chapter 1 will be answered via the collected data. Data was collected via interview from eighteen Chinese participants who had lived in the UK more than one year and had long-term game experiences. Since all questions were grouped into different themes, the data and data analysis also will be presented via separate question themes. Five question themes that will be used for presenting results. The five sections are: participants’ social behavior in the UK; participants’ habits in playing games and their motivations; participants’ information behavior in gaming and the reason why they like to get information in these ways; attitudes towards playing games or sharing game information with others, and the differences between participants’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK and their attitude towards it.

4.1 Participants’ social behavior in the UK

People’s behavior is influenced by surrounding environment unconsciously, and other individuals who come from the different cultural background will also affect people’s behavior in daily contact. Our participants are Chinese students who study in the UK for several years, and they are influenced by British culture potentially. In order to explore the cultural influences on Chinese students’ information behavior in gaming, this section is designed to identify how deep is Chinese students’ contact with local people or local culture.

Based on our topic of games, four questions that comprise “Do you have any British friends?”; “How often do you contact your British friends?”; “Do you talk to your British friends about games? Why?” and “Are there any differences in playing computer games between you and your British friends?” were designed for this theme.

All participants answered these questions. According to the result, there are eight people (P3; P5; P6; P7; P9; P12; P13; P17) said they have British friends in UK and the rest of them (P1; P2; P4; P8; P10; P11; P14; P15; P16; P18) gave the negative answer. The frequency of these eight people meet their British people shown from once a week to once in two months and most of them stated that their meetings usually occurred by attending class or they meet each other on the street randomly. Just one person (P6) said they would meet each other when they have free time.
P3: “very few times to talk with my British friends except in class or we meet each other in other places.”

P9: “We meet each other once a week (Usually, we meet each other in class).”

P6: “we will meet each other when we have free time.”

In the third question, six of them (P3; P5; P6; P9; P12; P13) stated they never talk about games with their British friends due to their main topics are food, travel, and coursework or they do not think games is a good topic in conversation.

P5: “No, nobody mentioned about this topic and I do not think this is a good topic to continue the conversation.”

P13: “No. Main topics that we talk about are coursework and food.”

Two people (P7; P17) said they mentioned gaming with their British friends before but they did not discuss it more because their British friends do not spend much time on games.

In the last question, only P17 gave an answer. He stated his British friends like to play leisure games because they more consider games as a leisure activity to release them. In contrast, P17 more like to play timely strategy games due to he likes to compete with others and win the success in the games.

I also investigated the reason why these participants do not contact with British people or make friends with British people. Some of them (P1; P2; P4; P8; P10) stated that language and cultural differences are mainly two problems for them to communicate with local people. P10 also gave a more specific explanation to this phenomenon as follows:

P10: “I do not think we have common habits or topic. I do not have any chance to know about British people deeply because we usually go home separately after we finished our class and I think Chinese circle is quite closed. People usually like to contact with other people who come from the same culture.”
4.2 Participants’ habits in playing games and their motivation.

There are three questions are included in this section. These questions were designed for exploring Chinese students’ long-term habit in playing games and what reasons motivate them to start gaming.

4.2.1 Games those participants like to play and their reason for it.

According to the results, participants mentioned 13 different games, which are *World of Warcraft*, *Sangokushi*, *League of Legends*, *Over watch*, *Clash Royale*, *Call of Duty*, *Dota2*, *Clash of Clans*, *Naruto*, *One piece*, *Popkart*, *Assassin* and *Heroes of Might and Magic*. In these games, *Sangokushi*, *Call of Duty*, *Assassin* and *Heroes of Might and Magic* are off-line games and the others are online games.

![Game names](image)

Figure 1: How many times does the game mentioned by participants

The mentioned times of the specific game can be seen in Figure 1. *League of Legends* is by far the most popular game among these games, which cited by 10 participants (P2; P6; P7; P8; P10; P14; P15; P16; P17; P18). *World of Warcraft* and *Dota2* are the second best game that mentioned for four times separately (P1, P2, P4 and P10 mentioned *World of Warcraft*; P4, P5, P12 and P17 mentioned *Dota2*). *Clash Royale* was mentioned by P3, P9 and P12. Three of them (P9; P13; P16) mentioned *Clash of Clans*. P2 and P7 also choose *Overwatch* as their favorite game. P4 and P18 stated that they like to play *Call of Duty* too. P11 stated his favorite game is *Naruto* and *One piece*. P8 mentioned Assassin. P16 likes *Heroes of Might and Magic*. 
Based on the result, all participants have more than two reasons for playing games.
There are total ten motivations can be identified from the interview records, which are make new friends, feel interested, kill time, high achievement, socialize with friends, simulator, leisure activity, follow with friends, release pressure and involve low cost. The first six categories were ones presented to interviewees (and previously described in the literature review section 2.2). The remainder were new motivations given by the participants. All data shown in Figure 2 as follow:

**Figure 2**: The motivations for playing computer games.

“Follow with friends” means people start to play this game via friends’ recommendation.

“Social with friends” means people play this game for making more topics with friends or making their friendships closer via playing the same game.

“Simulator” means people regard games as a simulator that they can do anything in the game world, and the game also practice them skills in the reality.

“Feel interested” means people’s motivation of playing games is games’ storyline or internal setting.

In figure 2, the most popular reason for playing games is “feel interested”, mentioned by 9 people (P1; P8; P10; P11; P12; P13; P14; P15; P16).
P16: “I like this game because this series of game has good storyline and control setting.”

“Follow friends” and “social with friends” both are the second favorite motivation for them to play games, which also mentioned for 8 times separately. “Follow friends” was indicated by P2, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P13 and P18; “socialize with friends” was mentioned by P5, P6, P8, P9, P13, P16, P17 and P18.

P8: “I like to play on-line games because firstly, friends recommended this game to me and I think this is a good quality of game after I played it. Additionally, on-line games can provide a platform for me to play games with my friends and it also makes us closer.”

Moreover, there are six people (P1; P2; P5; P7; P14; P15) clarified “high achievement” as another reason to motivate their gaming and five participants (P4; P10; P12; P17; P18) also think they play games for killing time.

P2: “I can get satisfaction when I win the game.”

P10: “These games also help me to kill time.”

Besides, three people (P3; P4; P12) also stated that they regarded games as “simulator” for motivating them continue gaming and two (P7; P11) mentioned that “releasing pressure” is another motivation for playing computer games. “Make new friends” was mentioned by P4, P14 and P15. Furthermore, only P3 mentioned “low cost” and “leisure activity” as motivation for playing games.

Additionally, although it was not a motivation named by interviewees when asked explicitly about motivation, two of the participants (P2; P15) mentioned that they sought out non-Chinese gamers to play with to improve English language skills.

4.2.2 Locations that participants mentioned for playing computer games

Based on the results, 17 participants presented their answers except P6 and there are mainly three answers for this question, which comprise “Net café”, “Home” and “No specific location”. 9 people (P1; P2; P4; P7; P10; P14; P15; P16; P17) stated that they prefer to play computer games at Net café due to its big space and good quality of equipment.

P7: “Net café. Net café has the good quality of equipment for gaming and it also provide enough space for us to do group gaming.”
Due to its comfort, privacy and convenience, home becomes the second popular place for participants to play games, which was mentioned by five people (P5; P9; P11; P12; P18).

P18: “Home. I think home is a more comfortable and convenient place for playing game than Net café.”

According to the result mentioned above, we can find that P9 is the only one that chosen both home and Net café as his favorite place for playing games.

The rest of the participants (P3; P8; P13) selected “not specific place” as their answer to this question because they think playing games should be unconditional and free.

P13: “When I was in China, I like to play games at any free time. I think game is the best way to kill time, so you do not have to stay at specific location to do it.”

4.2.3 Experiences on staying at game clan/community/team and reasons of staying at one clan for long time or changing frequently.

According to the results, only six of the participants (P6; P7; P8; P10; P11; P18) have no experiences on taking part in clans. In the rest of the participants who have enough experiences on attending clans or communities, four of them (P3; P13; P14; P15) changed clans frequently because changing clan for seeking more game items (P3; P13) or making more new friends (P14; P15).

P3: “Yes, I took part in several game clans in Clash Royale. Due to I like to change my clan, the clan members I met come from different countries. The reason for I frequently change my clan is changing clan can help me to get more items to upgrade my game character in this game.”

P15: “Yes. I attended some game communities in League of Legends. I like to change my game communities and it depends on which country I stay, for example, if stay in China, I prefer some Chinese communities; If stay in the UK, I may like English-speaking communities because these communities can help me to improve my English. I like to change communities frequently because this way can help me to make more friends and improve my social ability.”

Other eight people (P1; P2; P4; P5; P9; P12; P16; P17) who had experiences on attending clans stated that they prefer to stay at one clan for long time because time
makes them have the stronger relationship with their clan members and they can talk to others freely.

P5 “Yes, when I played Dota2 I took part in a game team in this game. People in this team are all Chinese and they are all my friends. I would like to stay on one team for long time because people in this team are familiar with each other and we can talk freely.”

In these eight people, P1 and P12 also stated they have some old friends in their clans and they believe staying together for long time can make them closer.

P12: “Yes. In Clash Royale, I built a clan. Clan members are all Chinese and some of them are my friends. I prefer to stay at one clan for long time because I believe only time can make people closer and I like the high quality friendships rather than high quantity of friends.”

It is also can be clearly identified from the results that only five people (P3; P13; P14; P15; P16) had experiences on staying with people who come from multiple countries. Other participants who had experiences on staying at clan stated that their clan members are all come from China.

4.3 Participants’ information behavior in playing games and the reason why they like to get information in these ways.

In order to explore Chinese students’ information behavior in gaming, there are mainly three questions were designed in this section, which includes “Where do you get the game information?”, “What kind of information do you share with your friends?” and “What information do you use when you get stuck in the game or in what way do you like to solve problem? Why?”.

4.3.1 Where do you get the game information?

According to the results, the majority of our participants (P1; P2; P3; P4; P6; P7; P8; P9; P10; P12; P13; P14; P15; P16; P18) mentioned that they usually get relevant game information from the official website or game video website and they also stated that they exchange game information with their friends who play the same game with them.

P1: “Usually, I will check the game information such as walkthrough or skill teaching video via Internet like official web or game video but sometimes I will
discuss with my friends who play the same game with me about how to improve skill and gaming tricks either.”

As the result shown above, website and friends are mainly two important ways for participants to get game information. Most people will use both Internet and friends but some participants stated that they just get information in a single way.

P5 and P17 mentioned that they get information mainly from their friends. P11 likes to get game information via the official website.

4.3.2 What kind of information do you share with your friends?

Figure 3: Information that participants mentioned for sharing or discussing with their friends.

Based on the results, there are 17 participants answered this question except P11, which means the majority of participants like to share or discuss game information with their friends.

According to the results shown in the chart above, information that people willing to share with their friends are of seven types: information of professional game team, game skill teaching video, game tricks, game intelligence, new game, upgrade information and game screenshots. “Game tricks” which is the most popular
information type among the all seven information types was mentioned by 10 participants (P1; P3; P4; P7; P12; P13; P14; P15; P17; P18).

P13: “We will exchange our tricks in playing the game. For example, when I have hinder in playing Clash of Clans, I will ask my friend how to get a good formation in soldiers. My friends will give me some advices that based on their own game skills.”

Seven participants (P1; P2; P3; P4; P5; P10; P16) also considered “Game intelligence” as their shared information and meanwhile “Upgrade information” was also mentioned by our participants for seven times (P2; P6; P8; P12; P14; P17; P18).

P2: “We will share with each other the information about the latest game upgrade information; weaknesses and strengths of the game characters in League of Legends.”

In addition, three of them (P2; P10; P14) also mentioned they shared “Information of professional game team (people who hired by company to play games)” with their friends.

P2: “Information of the best professional team in League of Legends and which strategy they use to win the match.”

“Game skill teaching video” and “New game” were both mentioned twice. P1 and P9 mentioned that they shared “Game skill teaching video” with their friends. P6 and P16 also stated that they like to share “New game” to friends.

Only P9 mentioned that he also shared “Game screenshots” to his friends.

P9: “We also shared the best screenshots of the scene that we played to each other.”

4.3.3 What information do you use when you get stuck in the game or in what way do you like to solve problem? Why?
There are five ways for participants to solve their game problem, namely “asking friends for help”, “searching walkthroughs”, “Improving game skills”, “spending money on the game” and “restart the game”. Ten participants (P2; P3; P5; P6; P8; P9; P11; P14; P15; P16) gave only one approach to solving problem and the other participants mentioned they use multiple ways.

It is clearly shown from the chart “Asking friends for help” and “Improving game skills” both are by far the most popular way of solving the game problem, reaching to 9 times separately. “Asking friends for help” was mentioned by P2, P4, P5, P7, P10, P12, P13, P15 and P17. “Improving game skills” was mentioned by P1, P3, P4, P7, P12, P13, P14, P16 and P17. Four of our participants (P1; P4; P8; P18) also considered “Searching walkthroughs” as the main way to solve game problems and meanwhile four people (P9; P10; P11; P12) regard “Spending money on the game” as another way to continue the game. In addition, only two people (P6; P18) use “Restart the game” when they get stuck in the game.

All participants think that their way helps them to solve the game problem more efficiently. People (P2; P4; P5; P7; P10; P12; P13; P15; P17) use “Asking friends for help” when they are stuck because they think friends can help them directly and friends can give more specific answers for some game question. In addition, these people think also think good communication with friends can lead to the good teamwork and success in the games.
P2: “letting friends to play my game account for me because my friends have better gaming experiences and skills than me, asking them for help will truly solve my problem and easily get success.”

P5: “I think teamwork is the most important in playing on-line timely strategy games because in this type of game only good quality of teamwork can lead you to the final success. Teammates keep communicating with each other will help your team to get cohesion.”

People (P1; P3; P4; P7; P12; P13; P14; P16; P17) who like to solve game problem via improving game skills mainly think this way can help them to enhance their ability to solve problems and to get more fun from the game.

P16: “I think game is not only provides you happiness, it but also provides a platform for you to exercise your brain. If you solve the game problem on your own, you can train your problem-solving ability and get big satisfaction in success.”

Other people who use “Searching walkthroughs”, “Spending money on the game” or “Restart the game” mentioned that these ways could save time and get success easily.

4.4 Attitudes towards playing games or sharing game information with others

This part has four questions, which are further questions for identifying Chinese cultural influences in Chinese behavior or habits via exploring our participants’ attitudes towards playing games or sharing game information with others.

4.4.1 Do you like to game with your friends or share game information with your friends? Why?

It is evident from the results that almost all participants except P11 mentioned that they have the positive attitude for playing games with their friends. These people clarified that playing games with friends can help them to maintain the relationship with their friends and games give them more topics in conversation. They also mentioned that playing games with friends can make gaming more enjoyable.

P12: “Yes. Through playing games or sharing game information with friends can make gaming more interesting and I also can get more information that can be used for my problem solving.”

P8: “Yes, Playing game with friends because playing games can make more topics in our daily conversation. Game can maintain our relationship.”
Interestingly, some participants (P1; P3; P4; P6; P7; P10; P14; P16; P17) gave further reason for playing with friends. They stated that friends are people who they can trust always provide support when they gaming together. Due to familiarity with their friends and knowing every detail of their friends, teaming with friends helps them succeed easily in the game.

P4: “Due to we trust and are familiar with each other, playing games with friends can make us get success easily in the game.”

Only P11 stated that he enjoys playing games alone because this way can help him focus on gaming.

4.4.2 Are you willing to play games with strangers?

This question was designed for exploring participants’ attitude towards playing games with strangers and identify whether our participants are willing to make friends with strangers via gaming.

11 participants (P1; P2; P3; P4; P10; P12; P13; P14; P15; P16; P17) stated that they like playing games with strangers whereas the other seven participants (P5; P6; P7; P8; P9; P11; P18) have a negative attitude towards gaming with strangers.

In these 11 people who like playing games with strangers, some of them (P3; P12; P13; P14; P15; P17) have more than one reason or motivation for playing with strangers. All of these reasons can be mainly categorized into three types, which are “Making new friends”, “learning new game tricks” and “gaining different game information”.

Six of them (P2; P10; P12; P13; P15; P17) stated that “learning new game tricks” could be considered as a motivation for them to play games with strangers.

P10: “Yes. Playing game with strangers can broaden your view of control and learn new skills.”

In order to make new friends, six of them (P1; P3; P4; P14; P15; P17) also stated that they will play games with strangers and they believe games can make them become friends.

However, P1 also has his further opinion on playing with strangers as follow
P1: “yes, sure for example if I play a game in the UK, the different server makes it hard to play with my old friends. Playing games together can bring the stranger be my friend. But I still wish the stranger can be Chinese because I think language still a problem for communicate with people from other countries.”

Additionally, four of them (P3; P12; P13; P14) stated that they regard “gaining different game information” as their motivation. Only P16 stated that he play games with strangers to kill time.

P16: “Yes. If your friends busy on other things, playing games with strangers also can help you to kill time.”

In the other seven people who do not like to play games with strangers, the reason that they gave mainly focus on “they cannot trust strangers”; “strangers are hard to cooperate in the game” and “it is hard for them to communicate in the game”.

P9: “No. You cannot cooperate well with strangers in the game. Additionally, playing games with stranger may limit your action.”

P7: “No, I do not think play game with strangers can get fun because we may do not have communication.”

4.4.3 Do you think online game is the most important way to contact with home friends or family?

With the increasingly growth of games among the whole world, games support its different usage to gamers. This question was designed for exploring participants’ attitude towards using online games to contact with their long-distance friends or family members.

The unanimous result can be generated from our interview records is that all of our participants mentioned that online game cannot be used for contacting with their family members because their family members are not interested in games.

According to results, there are just two people (P12; P16) stated that they regard online game as the most important way to contact with their home friends and they usually spend some time on gaming with their home friends to maintain their friendships because online game expands more common topics between him and his friends and online game also provide a virtual space for them to play together.
P12: “Yes. Online games can be an interesting topic for us to communicate with each other and it also provides a virtual space for my friends and me play together so I think online games can enhance our relationship. However, I quite doubt that online games can help me to contact with my family because none of my family members like to play computer games.”

In the other 16 participants who have opposite opinion to this question, five of them (P5; P6; P7; P13; P14) also mentioned that online game could be considered as a useful way to maintain your friendship due to it provide a platform and space for you and your friends play together. However, these 16 participants did not consider online games as the primary way to contact with their home friends. Firstly, they do not think online game is useful for them to touch with all of their friends because not everyone likes to play online games. Secondly, they believed that online games is inconvenient, and it has so many limits such as people cannot play it at any time and anywhere and different server cannot make gamers who come from different country play together.

P9: “I do not think online game can help you to maintain the relationship between you and your home friends because in different country may result in different server and it is hard for you to play game with your home friends unless you stay in China too. So, we prefer to use Wechat to communicate with each other.”

P10: “We prefer to use social media tools to communicate with each other due to online game have so many limits such as you cannot play online game at anywhere.”

Additionally, in our participants, half of them (P1; P2; P4; P5; P8; P9; P13; P17; P18) mentioned that they prefer to consider social media as the most important approach to contact with their friends because social media is more convenient and it has higher penetration.

4.5 The differences between participants’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK and their attitude towards these changes.

This section was designed for exploring changes to playing games that Chinese students experienced in the UK and identifying whether Chinese students have changed by local culture when they lived in the UK through comparing their experiences in China with experiences in the UK.
This section has two questions, which are “Are there the same friends you play game with in China or new friends?” and “Comparing to play games in China, do you feel any changes in the UK? What reasons do you think to result in these changes or none change?”.

4.5.1 Are there the same friends you play game with in China or new friends? Where do they come from?

This question is a combined question, which was set for investigating whether our participants changed their partner in the UK and where do these game partners come from. Almost all of our participants provided their answers to these questions except P11 because P11 stated that he like to play games alone. The concurrent result can be identified from the data is that the game partners of these 17 participants are all Chinese. The common reason they mentioned is that same language, and same cultural background is easy for them to communicate.

P13: “They are all Chinese because I think only the same language can bring us together to play the same game.”

More than 60% of our participants (P1; P2; P3; P4; P6; P8; P10; P15; P16; P17; P18) provided the same answer to the question1 is that their game partners in the UK are their new (Chinese) friends who they met in the UK. Five of them (P1; P2; P3; P4; P6) have provided a reason for this change. Four of these five people (P1; P2; P3; P4) mentioned that difference in time zone and changing of the game server are the main two reasons. Only P6 clarified that she does not play games in China, so her game partners are all new friends that she met in the UK.

P2: “New friends, due to the difference in time zone and the different servers, I just have few time to play with my old friends in China.”

P6: “New friends. Like I said before I do not play games in China. So, my game partners are my friends who I met in UK. They are all Chinese.”

Three of our 17 participants (P5; P9; P14) mentioned that they still play games with their old friends. P14 stated that playing with the same group of people makes it easy to communicate, and their experiences of long-time communication give them tacit understanding.
Additionally, the last three of the 17 participants (P7; P12; P13) clarified that they play games with the same group of people but sometimes their gaming circle will absorb new people.

P13: “Basically, different game I will play with different friends. I like to make new friends so sometimes we have new people join our game group.”

4.5.2 Comparing to play games in China, do you feel anything changed in the UK? What reasons do you think result in these changes or none change?

According to our results, there are 13 people (P1; P2; P3; P4; P5; P6; P7; P8; P10; P14; P15; P17; P18) reported that they felt changes in playing games whereas five participants (P9; P11; P12; P13; P16) mentioned that there is nothing changed in gaming.

Specifically, in these 13 participants who mentioned they felt changes in gaming, 11 of them (P1; P2; P4; P5; P7; P8; P10; P14; P15; P17; P18) are people who clarified that they like to play online games such as League of Legends, World of Warcraft, Overwatch or Dota2 and their changes focus on changing of game server and language. These 11 people mentioned that they have to change their game server from Chinese server to European server due to the changing of country and the different server also result in changing of game language.

P7: “Additionally, I have changed my game server because different country has different game servers and due to European server, my game language has been changed from Chinese to English.”

9 of these 13 participants (P1; P2; P4; P7; P10; P14; P15; P16; P17) who mentioned they like to play games in Net café also stated that they just play games at home because there is no Net café in the UK. P8 also considered “No Net café” as one of his changes.

P8: “I just can play computer games at home because there is no Net café in the UK.”

Three of the 13 participants (P1; P2; P3) also stated that they changed the way to seek information after they came to UK.

P2: “The website to watch game video has changed. For example, I used to watch game video via DouYu (the Chinese game video website) in China, but now I use
Twitch. *I have chosen to seek English game information because I would like to use English to search and scan information for improving my English.*”

Only P6 stated that her change was becoming a gamer because she plays games to kill time.

However, 12 people of the 13 participants (P1; P2; P3; P4; P5; P7; P8; P10; P14; P15; P17; P18) also stated that they still maintain some game habits such as playing game or sharing game information with friends, playing the same game because they cannot change their long-term habits.

The other five people (P9; P11; P12; P13; P16) who stated that they did not feel any changes in playing games also mentioned that long-term habits are hard to be changed easily.


5. Discussion

This chapter is to discuss the results that shown above and compared it to the previous research that was presented in chapter 2. The findings also will be discussed with cultural influences. There are three sections will be used in this chapter. The first section is about participants’ habits in playing games and their motivation. Key findings of participants’ information behavior in playing games and the reason why they like to get information in these ways will be discussed in section 2. Section 3 will present Chinese cultural influences on participants’ gaming and the changes in the UK.

5.1 Participants’ habits in playing games and their motivations

In the research, participants' habits refer to the type of content of game the participants like, the place that participants like to play games and the experiences of attending game clan or community.

Firstly, according to the results, all of the participants stated that the game type they like to play is online games, which provide an online platform for gamers to game or communicate with other gamers. The strategy online game such as League of Legends, Dota2, Clash Royale and Clash of Clans cover almost all of the participants except P11.

Secondly, the results generated from the 17 participants’ answers that there are mainly three answers for the place they like to play games, which are “Net café”, “Home” and “Not specific place”. “Net café” is the most popular place for people to play games and the participants who considered Net café as their favorite place to play games occupies the biggest proportion.

Thirdly, The fact also can be seen from the results that 12 of the participants have experiences on staying in a game clan or community and most of them prefer to stay in one clan for long time because time makes them become friends and they can talk to others freely. It is also presented that four of these 12 participants like to change their game clan for seeking new game items or making new friends.

Moreover, based on the results, it is clearly shown that the motivations for the participants to play games are “make new friends”, “feel interested”, “kill time”, “high achievement”, “socialize with friends”, “simulator”, “leisure activity”, “follow with friends”, “releasing pressure” and involve “low cost”. The first six categories
were ones identified from several publications’ research (Malone, 1981; Amory et al, 1998; Koo, 2009; Gumulak & Webber, 2011) and presented to interviewees (and previously described in the literature review section 2.2).

However, the remainder were new motivations that the researcher collected from the participants. “Leisure activity” means participants regard games as an activity that has the same status with shopping or drinking, and they only play it when they have free time or feel bored. “Follow with friends” is a totally new concept of motivation that mentioned by 8 people and it different from “social affiliation” that mentioned by Koo (2009). In “follow with friends”, participants explained that the reason they start to play games is motivated by their friends because their friends recommended some new games to them and encouraged them to play it. People who considered “ follow with friends” as their motivation in playing games usually start to play the game passively. “Releasing pressure” also a new concept of motivation that is not mentioned by previous research. Two people of the participants who chose “releasing pressure” as their motivation are different with people who playing games for escaping from the real world. These participants usually under pressure by coursework or family and they want to release their pressure via playing the game. The participants also mentioned that playing game could help them to relax and they can get psychological satisfaction from games.

There is a participant who also mentioned that she considered gaming as a low cost activity. In her opinion, games can be regard as a low cost leisure activity that has the same status with shopping but you do not need to spend money on it, and you also can get fun from it.

According to the analysis above, there are four new motivations were identified from this research, which are “leisure activity”, “follow with friends”, “low cost” and “releasing pressure”. Due to the different participants’ group and different time to process the research, the results are different from previous research.

5.2 Participants’ information behavior in playing games and the reason why they like to get information in these ways.

According to the results, the participants’ information behavior can be categorized into two interactions as Bostan (2009) stated that Information behavior that gamers used to help their gaming is related to different interactions that include player-game interaction and player-player interaction. The player-game interaction and the player-
player interaction in this research refer to the game information that participants search from websites about the game itself and the information that participants exchange with their friends. 15 participants stated that they gained useful game information via both asking friends and searching the website. Two people mentioned that they get information from friends and one person clarified that he like to search information via websites.

Through combining the information that the participants share with friends and the ways that the participants to solve the game problem, it is clearly presented that the game information that relates to gaming such as game tricks, game intelligence, game skill teaching video or upgrade information and improving gaming skill were the most popular information or way the participants like to use. This means the participants are concerned about game itself and they prefer to get satisfaction from using useful game information to overcome game challenges as Gumulak & Webber (2011) identified in their research.

However, the other phenomenon should not be ignored that the participants also focus on other game information such as information of professional game team, new game or game screenshots and they also used other more convenient ways like asking friends for help, spending money etc. to solve game problems. It is clearly identified from this finding that some of the participants just regard games as tools for releasing themselves or enriching their activity.

Concerning participants’ attitudes towards playing games with others; all of the participants except P11 mentioned that they like to play games with their friends. They stated that gaming with friends could make the game more interesting, and it also enhances their friendships. They also mentioned that trust and familiarity with each other are the further reason for them to play with their friends.

Additionally, it is also can be identified from the results that 11 of the participants have positive attitudes towards playing games with strangers. They mentioned that they could get new game tricks and different game information from strangers. The further reason for them to play with strangers is to make more new friends. Similar findings can be found in Trept, Reinecke & Juechems’ (2012) research: they stated that gaming with others enhances gamer’s connection with each other and it also gives them additional social support in the offline world. However, the other seven people who have negative attitude stated that they couldn’t trust strangers and they think strangers are difficult to communicate with.
5.3 Chinese cultural influences in participants’ gaming and the changes in the UK

According to the facts that presented in previous two sections, most participants prefer gaming in the Net café and they also attended game clan. There are also four new motivations were generated from the research that different with previous studies. Through comparing the motivation for playing games with participants’ information behavior, it is clearly identified that participants’ information behaviors are partially connected with their motivation. For example, more than half participants clarified that their motivation is related to friends and almost all of the participants mentioned that they get game information from their friends, which means both participants’ information behavior and motivation were related to friends.

The reasons for these facts can be explained from the cultural angle. The participants that were selected for previous research are different from this research because all of the previous research cited in the literature review were undertaken in the western countries while the participants that selected for this research are all Chinese.

The participants in this research are Chinese students who studied in the UK. Based on Hofstede’s (1983) theory of cultural dimension, Singh & Zhao & Hu categorized Chinese culture into high power distance, high uncertainty and collectivism. In contrast, Britain can be identified as low concentration of authority and low structured of activities in its organization and the country with low uncertainty avoidance, low power distance and individualism (Hofstede, 1983). The performance of cultural influences in people’s behaviors can be seen in table1, table2 and table3.

Net café and game clan represent group concept, which fulfills people’s need for belonging to organizations as mentioned by Hofstede (1983)’s theory. Chinese students like to play games in the Net café because Net café provides enough space and equipment for fulfilling the need of group activity, and it can be regard as an appropriate place for gamers communicate with their friends.

Additionally, the motivation of the most participants is “socialize with friends” which also present Chinese culture. Based on Hofstede (1983)’s research, in the collectivist society, people are willing to maintain the relationship with others and people believed that individuals could not live without social connect. These people regard games as an interesting topic or useful platform to keep the relationship between them and their friends. High power distance also results in Chinese people
are influenced by the dominant leader or authorities easily. The influences of Chinese culture in Chinese students’ behavior in gaming can be seen as they considered “follow with friends” as their motivation in playing games. These people usually follow people who have more experiences in this area. These Chinese participants also presented the characteristics of Chinese culture through their performance of information behavior. Chow & Harrison & McKinnon & Wu (1999) stated that Chinese people are more likely to share their information with others even it potentially disadvantage to themselves and they more care about group interests than individuals. In the research, almost all of the participants stated that they share game information with their friends.

However, due to the globalization and cultural fusion, Chinese cultural influences cannot be presented by all of the Chinese students. For example, the motivations of these participants to play games also shown as previous research mentioned that people are motivated by “simulator”, “make new friends” or “feel interested” to play games. Additionally, the most participants also showed that they are not limited in a small circle and they are willing to play games with strangers.

About the changes that the participants felt in the UK, it is clearly stated that eight of the participants contacted with local people whereas the rest of the participants did not and these eight participants mentioned that games are not the main topic of their conversation. Besides, except P11, more than 80% of the participants indicated that they changed their game partners in the UK or absorbed new people in the UK although these new game partners are all Chinese. However, these participants also mentioned that language and different habits are big barriers for them to contact with people who come from other countries.

Moreover, it is also can be identified from the research that 13 people felt changes in playing games and the changes that reported by most of the participants are changing of the game server and there are not Net cafés in the UK. Three participants also mentioned that their change is the way to search the game information. In contrast, the other five people stated that they did not feel any changes in playing games when they stayed at the UK.

According to the changes, it is clearly presented that Chinese students still prefer to interact with Chinese gamers and think language is a barrier to communication between different cultures. Some people still maintain the old habits in playing games.
However, the results also presented that some Chinese gamers were influenced by the new game culture in the UK. For example, a game server is a kind of server that used by game companies to allow their clients to connect with the virtual game world. In order to provide the high quality of game experiences and reduce delay, game servers in different countries or regions has different clients and target languages. Similar findings can be found in Feng & Feng’s (2003) research. Gamers who want to continue the same game as before have to accept the change and accept the English game environment when they stayed in the UK. Also, the lack of Net café environment and the general cultural differences (between the UK and China) are key elements in creating a British game culture, which is different from the Chinese one. Most of the participants did not quit the game when it was changed, which means these Chinese gamers have been influenced by the new game culture potentially when they accepted these changes even though they accepted these changes passively.
6. Conclusion

In this final chapter, the research will be summarized and whether objectives have been achieved through literature and the research will be identified. Additionally, this chapter will introduce the research’s limitation of the research.

6.1 How research objectives have been achieved

6.1.1 Finding relevant research

This objective has been finished via literature review.

There are five types of research have been examined in this research: motivations in playing games, the benefits of playing games, cultural influences in people’s behavior, information behavior in gaming and game server. This research has been drawn on for the current study to strengthen my point and to help to find out the answers to the research questions.

6.1.2 Exploring Chinese students’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK.

This objective has been finished via interview.

18 Chinese participants who studied in the UK were invited to take part in the interview. During the interview, 16 questions were grouped into five themes for each interviewee to state their experiences of playing games, as outlined in chapter 3.

6.1.3 Identify what has changed for those Chinese students when they play games after they live in the UK, and what they did not change.

This objective has been met via analyzing the interview records and the literature. In order to have more insight into gamers’ behavior, they were asked about their motivations for gaming.

It is clearly shown from the research that the motivations for the participants to play games are “make new friends”, “feel interested”, “kill time”, “high achievement”, “socialize with friends”, “simulator”, “leisure activity”, “follow with friends”, “releasing pressure” and involve “low cost”. The first six categories were ones identified from several publications’ research (Malone, 1981; Amory et al, 1998; Koo, 2009; Gumulak & Webber, 2011). The remainder were generated from the research.
According to the results, the participants’ information behavior can be categorized into two interactions as Bostan (2009)’s stated: player-game interaction and player-player interaction. 15 participants stated that they gained useful game information via both asking friends and searching the website. Two people mentioned that they get information from friends and one person clarified that he like to search information via websites.

The concurrent result can be identified from the data is that the game partners of these 17 participants are all Chinese no matter whether they stay in China or stay in the UK. Only P11 stated that he usually plays games alone. 60% of the participants mentioned that their game partners in the UK are new Chinese friends, with the remainder playing games with old friends. 13 people stated that they felt changes in playing games after they came to the UK: the game server and the place to play games are the main changes for them. Only three participants of the 13 people stated that they have changed their way to search game information. Despite these changes, these participants all clarified that they maintain the old habits.

6.1.4 Investigate whether any change or lack of change in behavior is linked to cultural factors

This objective has also been met via literature and the research.

Participants play games to “socialize with friends” or “follow with friends” and they ask friends for solving game problems or seeking game information can be regarded as the characteristics of Chinese culture. Based on Hofstede (1983)’s theory of cultural dimension, Singh & Zhao & Hu categorized Chinese culture into high power distance, high uncertainty and collectivism. In the collectivist society, people are willing to maintain the relationship with others and believe social connections are vital. Additionally, accepting the changing of game servers and the changing of game language can be considered as the new game cultural environment, which influences these participants.

6.2 Summary

In summary, all research objectives that were presented above have been achieved. Through investigating participants’ social behavior in the UK, participants’ motivations of playing games, participants information behavior in gaming and their changes in the UK and relating it to previous research, it is clearly identified from this research that people’s information behavior in gaming may be related to their
cultural background and they were also influenced by new cultural environment after they came to a new country. Chinese students were influenced by Chinese culture (notably in wanting to game with friends with a shared language and culture) but they were also impacted via English gaming culture potentially after they came to the UK, as well as practical issues (notably the game server they connected to, lack of Net café in the UK, and time zone difference from old gaming friends). Additionally, through the research, four new motivations for gaming were identified, which are “leisure activity”, “follow with friends”, “low cost” and “releasing pressure”.

6.3 Limitation and recommendations for further research

The limitations of the research can be seen as follow:

Firstly, the sample size of the research is too small. Just 18 people were invited to the research, which means the research cannot present generalized results. In order to get more precise results, the sample size will be expanded in the future.

Moreover, the interview questions of the research did not cover enough aspects. For example, questions about the value of playing games were not involved in the question list, which make the results are not comprehensive. In the future research, more broadly research questions should be involved in the questions list.

Recommendation:

A questionnaire survey, based on results, could be administered to a larger population of Chinese students in the UK. There were no notable gender differences in this study, so it would also be interesting to see if this emerged more widely.

A sample of British game students could be interviewed, for their motivations, information behavior, and attitudes to Chinese fellow-student-gamers, to compare results with this study.

A case study could examine whether gaming could be used to bridge cultural differences between UK and British students.

Word count: 14895
References


UK government/ 2016/ adults’ media use and attitude 2016/ Retrieved from:  


Appendices

Appendix A: Participants information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project title

Cultural influences in information behavior in gaming

2. Invitation

It is a great honor for me to invite you to take part in my research interview. Before you decide whether join or not it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what specific information involved in this research. Please spend a little bit time to read the following information carefully and think about it. Please feel free to ask us if there any information, which confuses you or you, want specific explain. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thanks for you read this.

3. Project Purpose

The aim of this research is to explore culture influences in information behavior in gaming, specifically to compare the way Chinese students play computer games when they are in the UK, compared with the way they play when in China. This research will help the game company based on specific market to build different game and it also encourage people to communicate with gamers come from all over the world for exchanging game experiences. Generally, the period of 4.18to 6.18 will be used for data collection and literature review. After 6.18, there will be two weeks for processing the data. Finally, dissertation will be started after this. The dissertation will be end before 9.1.

4. Who will be participating?

This research is about to compare the way Chinese students play computer games when they are in the UK, compared with the way they play when in China. So our target interviewees are Chinese students who like to play computer games and continue to play games after they came to UK. We would like to know about your game experiences and changes after you came to UK. There are 18 people will be invite d to our interview and each of you who take part in our research will be reward five pounds. It is free to you to decide take part our interview or not. If you agree to take part our interview, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you still can withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not need any reason for refuse interview.

5. What will you be asked to do?

During the interview, we will ask some question about your gaming experiences and your talking content will be recorded in notes. The interview of each person is processed once. Normally, the interview will be processed at café or other public place e.g. a room in iSpace or Information Commons and you do not need to prepare anything before the interview. The semi-structured interview will be used in my research, so you will be given an opened question about game to start our talking. Once you start this interview, you have to promise that all your talking content is real. You can refuse to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable with or end the interview at any time.

6. What are the potential risks of participating?

There is no disadvantage and risks to you when you take part the interview. Also, you can end the interview at any time. Except that each of interviewee will be rewarded with five pounds, there are no immediate benefits for people participating in the interview. It is hoped
that this work will give inspiration to game company and help them to create more funny games for gamer.

If there anything you feel uncomfortable about or if you have any questions you can contact me at any time. You can contact me via email, social media application and phone number.

7. What data we collect
Additionally, only information relate to gaming will be recorded for my research. Since my research is about cultural influences in information behavior in gaming, your game experience in China and UK both will be recorded for comparing. Based on your game experiences to see different cultural background influences your gaming approach or choice.

8. What do we do with the data?
The digital data that relevant to my research will be stored in my computer, which is password protected; I will set up a independent folder on the computer to store these data. Interview data will also be uploaded to the iSchool's secure research server. Written information or copies will be stored in the named file pocket, which will be kept in a locked place.
Voice information will be stored in my smart phone, which is password protected and which I do not loan to anyone else.
When I start the dissertation, all of the data will be collected and removed to my computer folder. In this period, all of original data will be kept until the end of the dissertation. The personal information or identifiable information will not be shown in the dissertation. After finishing the dissertation, the digital information and voice data will be deleted from my computer and smart phone. Additionally, all of the written information will be destroyed via fire or other ways.

9. Will my participation be confidential?
About the information that includes personal detail, the personal detail part will be anonymized. All of information that collected for the dissertation need will be removed personal identified information. Name and other sensitive personal information will not be reported in the dissertation.

10. What happens to the results of the project?
The results of this study will be included in my master's dissertation, which will be publicly available. Please contact the School in six months. It also be included in publications e.g.journal articles.

11. Who organized this research and Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This interview is only organized by me (the researcher). The research has been ethically approved via the University Research Ethics Procedure

12. Contact information
Jian Song
Email: jsong20@sheffield.ac.uk
Sjsj8023@qq.com

Supervisor (if you have any question) Sheila Webber:
s.webber@sheffield.ac.uk

Finally

Thanks for your time to read all of the information above, and thanks for you to attend our interview.
• I confirm that I have read and understand the description of the research project, and that I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.

• I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

• I understand that if I withdraw I can request for the data I have already provided to be deleted, however this might not be possible if the data has already been anonymized or findings published.

• I understand that I may decline to answer any particular question or questions, or to do any of the activities.

• I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, that my name or identity will not be linked to any research materials, and that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report or reports that result from the research, unless I have agreed otherwise.

• I give permission for all the research team members (i.e. researcher and supervisor) to have access to my responses.

• I give permission for the research team to re-use my data for future research as specified above.

• I agree to take part in the research project as described above.

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Note: If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, please contact Dr Jo Bates, Research Ethics Coordinator, Information School, The University of Sheffield (ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk), or the University Registrar and Secretary.
Appendix B: Research Ethics application form

Application 008405

Section A: Applicant details

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<th>Fri 15 April 2016 at 12:19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First name:</td>
<td>Jian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last name:</td>
<td>Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsong20@sheffield.ac.uk">jsong20@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Programme name:</td>
<td>MSc Information Management</td>
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<td>Module name:</td>
<td>INF 6000</td>
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<td>Last updated:</td>
<td>11/06/2016</td>
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<td>Information School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applying as:</td>
<td>Undergraduate / Postgraduate taught</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research project title:</td>
<td>Cultural influences in information behavior in gaming</td>
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Section B: Basic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Supervisor(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila Webber</td>
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</table>
2: Proposed project duration

Proposed start date:
Sun 1 May 2016

Proposed end date:
Thu 15 September 2016

3: URMS number (where applicable)

URMS number
- not entered -

4: Suitability

Takes place outside UK?
No

Involves NHS?
No

Healthcare research?
No

ESRC funded?
No

Involves adults who lack the capacity to consent?
No

Led by another UK institution?
No

Involves human tissue?
No

Clinical trial?
No

Social care research?
No

5: Vulnerabilities

Involves potentially vulnerable participants?
No

Involves potentially highly sensitive topics?
No

Section C: Summary of research
1. Aims & Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore culture influences in information behavior in gaming, specifically to compare the way Chinese students play computer games when they are in the UK, compared with the way they play when in China. This research will help the game company based on specific market to build different game and it also encourage people to communicate with gamers come from all over the world for exchanging game experiences. The research aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Review previous literature to find relevant research.
- Explore Chinese students’ experiences of playing computer games in China and playing computer games in UK, via interview.
- Identify what has changed for those Chinese students when they play computer games after they live in UK, and what they did not change.
- Collect data and analyze it, and specifically investigate whether any change or lack of change in behaviour is linked to cultural factors

2. Methodology

This dissertation is mainly about exploration of cultural differences in information behavior in gaming. In order to conduct this research and compare the cultural differences, I will compare information behavior that Chinese students used in China with behaviour that they used in UK. Qualitative methods focus on the life experience of participants and how they interpret the the social world (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, qualitative research will be a best choice for this research aim.

Semi-structured interviews will be used as tools for researcher to have rich and deep understanding of the interviewees (Teddie, 2003). In the process of semi-structured interview, in order to guide the interview direction and get relevant answers, some questions will be prepared and administered to all interviewees. Additionally, during the interview, the answer participants give to the question need based on their true experiences, and some follow up questions etc. will vary between participants. Data will be analysed thematically and using any relevant models identified from the literature review.

3. Personal Safety

Raises personal safety issues? No

Personal safety management

- not entered -

Section D: About the participants

1. Potential Participants

Chinese gamer who have spent some time in the UK, e.g. as International students in the UK

2. Recruiting Potential Participants
I will contact Chinese gamers who are friends, or who are referred to me by friends, or who I can contact because they live near me. I will mainly recruit face to face, but may also use other means e.g. personal email, instant message.

### 2.1 Advertising methods

Will the study be advertised using the volunteer lists for staff or students maintained by CiCS? Yes

This email list will be used only if other recruitment channels have not given enough participants.

### 3. Consent

Will informed consent be obtained from the participants? (i.e. the proposed process) Yes

I will give them full information before interview them and obtain written consent.

### 4. Payment

Will financial/in kind payments be offered to participants? Yes

I will give them small incentive to participants.

### 5. Potential Harm to Participants

What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to the participants?

There is no more harm than everyday life.

How will this be managed to ensure appropriate protection and well-being of the participants? participants can stop the interview whenever they want.

### Section E: About the data

#### 1. Data Confidentiality Measures

All of information that includes personal detail will be anonymized. Names and other sensitive personal detail information will not be reported in the dissertation or any subsequent publication.

#### 2. Data Storage

The digital data that relevant to my research will be stored in my computer, which is password protected; I will set up a independent folder on the computer to store these data. Interview data will also be uploaded to the iSchool’s secure research server. Written information or copies will be stored in the named file pocket, which will be kept in a locked place.

Voice information will be stored in my smart phone, which is password protected and which I do not loan to anyone else.

When I start the dissertation, all of the data will be collected and removed to my computer folder. In this period, all of original data will be kept until the end of the dissertation.
The personal information or identifiable information will not be shown in the dissertation. After finishing the dissertation, the digital information and voice data will be deleted from my computer and smart phone. Additionally, all of the written information will be destroyed via fire or other ways.

Section F: Supporting documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information &amp; Consent</th>
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<td>Participant information sheets relevant to project?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Participant Information Sheets</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Participant_information_Sheet.docx</td>
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<th>Consent forms relevant to project?</th>
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<th>Official notes</th>
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Section G: Declaration

Signed by:  
Jian Song  
Date signed:  
Wed 8 June 2016 at 20:05
Appendix C: Certificate of Approval

Jian Song
Registration number: 150137551
Information School
Programme: MSc information management

Dear Jian

PROJECT TITLE: cultural influences in information behavior in gaming
APPLICATION: Reference Number 008405

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 11/06/2016 the above-named project was approved on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 008405 (dated 08/06/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1017511 version 2 (25/05/2016).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Matt Jones
Ethics Administrator
Information School
Appendix D:

Interview questions (English vision)

Participants’ social behavior in the UK:

Do you have any British friends?

How often do you contact with your British friends?

Do you talk to your British friends about games?

Why do/ why do not you talk about games with your British friends?

Are there any differences in playing computer games between you and your British friends?

Participants’ habits in playing games and their motivations:

What type of content of game do you like? Why?

Where do you like to play games in China?

Have you taken part in any game clans or discussion communities? Which games? Was it gamers from same country? Are they all Chinese? Why do/ why do not you stay at one clan for long time?

Participants’ information behavior in playing computer games and the reason why they like to get information in these ways:

Where do you get the game information?

What kinds of information do you share or discuss with your friends?

What information do you use when you get stuck in the game or in what way do you like to solve stuck? Why?

Attitudes towards play games or sharing game information with others:

Do you like to game with your friends or share game information with your friends? Why?

Are you willing to play game with strangers?
Do you think online game is the most important way to contact with home friends or family?

The differences between participants’ experiences of playing games in China and playing games in the UK and their attitude towards these changes:

Are there the same friends you play game with in China or new friends? Where do they come from?

Comparing to play game in China, do you feel anything changed in UK? What reason do you think result in these changes or none changes?
采访问题 (Chinese vision)

参与者在英国的社交行为:

你有英国人的朋友么？

你多久和你英国人的朋友联系一次？

你和你的英国人朋友谈论游戏么？

为什么和或者为什么不和你的英国人朋友谈论游戏呢？

在玩游戏方面，你和你的英国人朋友有什么不同？

参与者的游戏习惯和他们玩游戏的动机:

你喜欢什么类型或内容的游戏？为什么？

在中国，你喜欢在哪里玩游戏？

你有参加过游戏部落/讨论圈吗？在哪个游戏里？玩家来自同一个国家么？他们都是中国人吗？为什么喜欢或者为什么不喜欢长时间待在一个部落？

参与者在游戏中的信息行为和他们为什么喜欢用这种方式获取信息：

你从哪里得到游戏信息？

什么样的游戏信息你会分享给你的朋友？

当你在游戏中遇到困难了，什么样的信息你会使用去解决问题？为什么？

对和他人玩游戏或者分享游戏信息的态度:

你喜欢和你的朋友分享游戏信息或者一起打游戏么？为什么？

你愿意和陌生人一起游戏么？

你认为网络游戏对你来说是联系家乡朋友或者家人最重要的方式么？

参与者在中国和在英国的游戏经验以及他们对这些改变的态度:

你还是跟中国的朋友一起游戏还是跟新朋友一起游戏当你来英国以后？他们来自哪里？

相比于在中国玩游戏，你有没有发觉有任何改变当你在英国玩游戏的时候，你认为是什么原因改变了这些或者没有改变这些？
Appendix E:

Access to Dissertation

A Dissertation submitted to the University may be held by the Department (or School) within which the Dissertation was undertaken and made available for borrowing or consultation in accordance with University Regulations.

Requests for the loan of dissertations may be received from libraries in the UK and overseas. The Department may also receive requests from other organisations, as well as individuals. The conservation of the original dissertation is better assured if the Department and/or Library can fulfill such requests by sending a copy. The Department may also make your dissertation available via its web pages.

In certain cases where confidentiality of information is concerned, if either the author or the supervisor so requests, the Department will withhold the dissertation from loan or consultation for the period specified below. Where no such restriction is in force, the Department may also deposit the Dissertation in the University of Sheffield Library.

To be completed by the Author – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

If you are willing to give permission for the Information School to make your dissertation available in these ways, please complete the following:

√ (a) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the Department and/or University Library for consultation, and for the Department and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study

(b) Subject to the General Regulation on Intellectual Property, I, the author, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ _ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I agree to this dissertation being made available through the Department and/or University Library for consultation, and for the Department and/or Library to reproduce this dissertation in whole or part in order to supply single copies for the purpose of research or private study

Name:
Jian Song

Department: The department of information school

Signed: Jian Song
Date 01/09/2016

To be completed by the Supervisor – Select (a) or (b) by placing a tick in the appropriate box

(a) I, the supervisor, agree to this dissertation being made immediately available through the Department and/or University Library for loan or consultation,
subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project.

*Special restrictions

(b) I, the supervisor, request that this dissertation be withheld from loan, consultation or reproduction for a period of [ ] years from the date of its submission. Subsequent to this period, I, agree to this dissertation being made available through the Department and/or University Library for loan or consultation, subject to any special restrictions (*) agreed with external organisations as part of a collaborative project.

Name
Department
Signed Date

THIS SHEET MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH DISSERTATIONS BY DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS.