

Analysis of Pokémon's Positive Impact on the Economy and Society

Ning Xie *

Department of Economics, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Urbana-Champaign, America

* Corresponding Author Email: ningxie2@illinois.edu

Abstract. Pokémon is the world's most well-known media franchise which makes a great contribution to the economy and society, most people do not know how exactly Pokémon is performing on financial outcomes, how it can create economic and social value, and to what extent Pokémon can reach on the value. As a result, this essay focuses on the questions listed above, analyzing objective data and information listed and collected by professional data websites and studies. The economic data includes the overall revenue, the first month's revenue, the annual revenue, and the revenues of live events, and the social data includes Pokémon GO's effects on the physical activities of players, average steps per day for players, and reflections on mental health. Based on the data, it is found that Pokémon can create tremendous economic and social value by its ability to bring revenues and influence people's activities. More details can be added to the analysis in the future to facilitate studies about the economic and social impact of Pokémon in different specific fields.

Keywords: Pokémon, economy and society, analysis of positive impact.

1. Introduction:

As one of the most successful media franchises around the world, Pokémon has brought huge changes to the world, especially to the economy and society. Pokémon describes stories in a specific universe where unique creatures, known as Pokémon, coexist with humans. It was released by its founder Satoshi Tajiri on February 27, 1996, and later exported to the whole world [1]. Within several years, Pokémon became an outstanding fixture in popular culture, and the release of Pokémon Go in 2016 made it an extremely hot global trend again [1]. Pokémon GO is a free augmented reality mobile game that offers players chances to catch Pokémon, the virtual creatures, in real-world locations, train them, and battle with others via mobile phones. There have been over ten million downloads of Pokémon Go by people around the world.

Under the craze, the enormous popularity of Pokémon has created huge economic and social value for areas around the world. The public only knows and feels that it can indeed produce value, but they do not know the exact details. What is the commercial success and performance of Pokémon? How specifically does it help create economic and social value? What are the values? It is very meaningful to discuss these issues.

This essay is based on data and information shown or collected by specific data websites and studies, attempting to place questions related to the economic and social health value of Pokémon under the test of objective data.

First, this essay lists the value of the Pokémon brand, revenue data of Pokémon Go, and live events to analyze its economic value. In addition, the data from surveys and studies on players of Pokémon Go is shown to analyze its social value.

2. Data Analysis: Pokémon's positive effects on the economy and society

Based on the data from Katharina, among the ten most valuable media franchises in the world, Pokémon had been far ahead of the others by 2021 (Table 1) [2]. Even though Pokémon was created in 1996, which is later than many other media franchises, it is the first brand to achieve a revenue of 100 billion U.S. dollars, with an average revenue of 4 billion dollars per year. Such an amazing

business result proves that it has developed into a veritable gold mine and become the world’s most well-known and successful brand with a broad audience around the world.

Table 1. Most valuable media franchises in the world [2].

Most valuable media franchises in the world	Billion U.S. dollars
Pokémon (1996)	100.0
Hello Kitty (1974)	84.5
Winnie the Pooh (1924)	80.3
Mickey Mouse (1928)	80.3
Star Wars (1977)	68.7
Disney Princess (2000)	46.4
Anpanman (1973)	44.9
Marvel Cinematic Universe (2008)	35.3
Super Mario (1981)	34.6
Harry Potter (1997)	32.2



Figure 1. Pokémon GO's worldwide revenue within one month [3].

In addition, according to the data collected by Randy Nelson, Pokémon GO earned over 160 million dollars in net revenue on the Apple Store and Google Play from July 6 to August 1 [3]. Within only one month, Pokémon GO created an impressive revenue which had the trend to increase at a higher speed. It was shown in Fig 1 that the revenue line became steeper as time went on, reflecting a daily net revenue of millions of dollars and huge economic potential in the future.

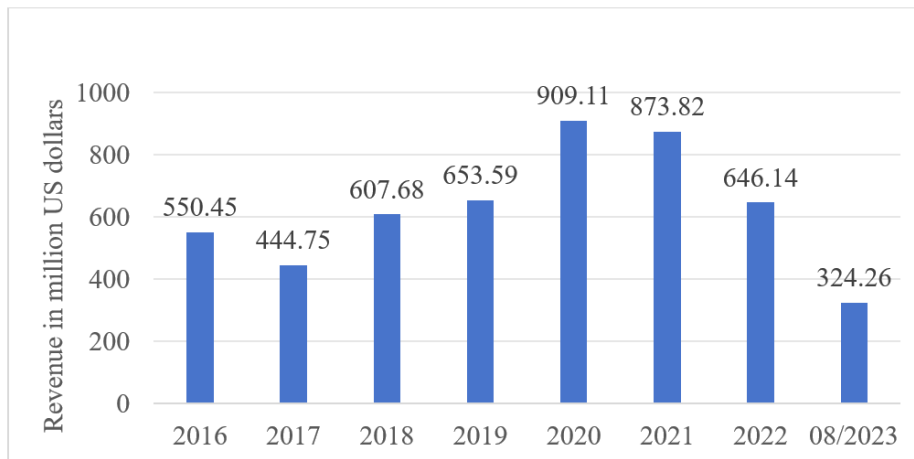


Figure 2. Pokémon GO annual revenue [4].

Besides, the annual revenues generated by Pokémon GO worldwide from 2016 to August 2023 YTD are enormous (Fig 2). Except for 2020 and 2021 which are greatly affected by COVID-19, Pokémon GO keeps a stable average revenue of around 6 hundred million dollars every year.

Table 2. Data of Pokémon GO Fest live events [5]

2022		
Sapporo	Berlin	Seattle
\$81M	\$73M	\$155M
84% from outsiders in the city	43% from outside the city	83% from outside the city
55K trainers	40K trainers	58K trainers
17M Pokémon caught	14M Pokémon caught	17M Pokémon caught
2023		
New York	London	Osaka
\$140.1M	£46M	¥5.4B
21% newcomer	49% want to come again	78% from other areas in Japan
35M Pokémon caught	34M Pokémon caught	21M Pokémon caught

At the same time, the data collected by the research firm Statista shows that Pokémon GO Fest live events brought revenues of over 3 hundred million dollars to the local economies of their host cities in 2022, including Sapporo, Berlin, and Seattle (Table 2) [5]. Also, the live events attracted particularly large numbers of travelers and consumers from other cities, obviously increasing the popularity of these host cities. Then, the next year, the live events added hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of revenue to the local economies again. The data of Pokémon GO Fest live events in 2023 is no worse than the previous year, demonstrating persistence and stability.

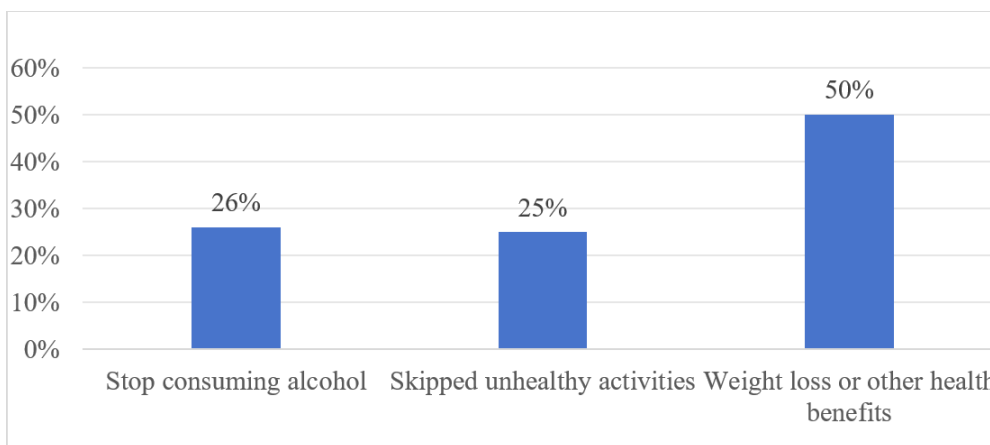


Figure 3. The effects of Pokémon Go on players’ physical activities [6].

Besides benefits for the economy, Pokémon also creates social value. Since the main gameplay of Pokémon Go requires going to many real-world locations to find and catch new Pokémon with mobile phones, players all need to go outside to fully enjoy its content. Fig 3 shows the results of responses from 2191 Pokémon Go players being surveyed [6]. First, 26% of the respondents mentioned that they stopped drinking alcohol or going to bars; second, 25% reflected that they had skipped unhealthy activities, such as watching too much TV at home, to play games; last, half of them had responses of weight loss or other benefits, which is a high percentage meaning that playing Pokémon Go could have apparent positive influences on weight control of players [6].

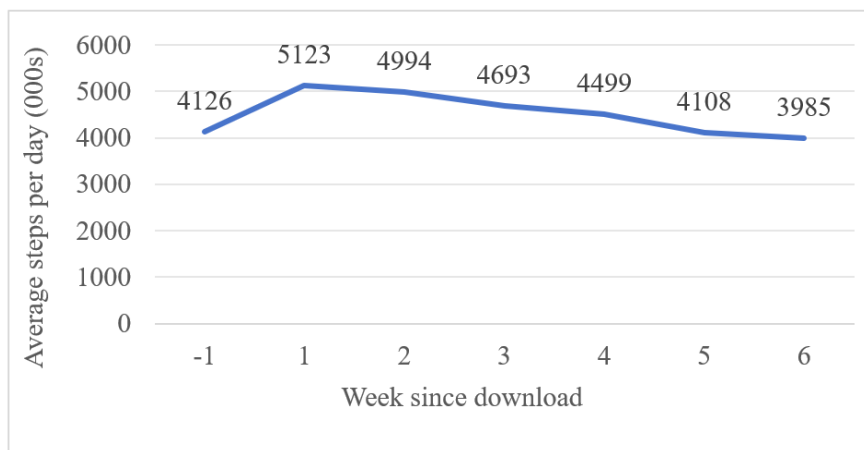


Figure 4. Average steps per day for Pokémon GO players [7].

As shown in Fig. 4, there was an increase in daily steps for the 1182 survey participants aged 18 to 35 years after the downloads of Pokémon GO [7]. Although the influence gradually decreased, the average steps per day within the first 4 weeks were higher than the initial number, which is 4126 steps per day, reflecting that downloading and playing Pokémon Go did help increase the average steps per day for young people and teenagers.

Moreover, the results of an online survey, which focused on 399 American adult players aged 18-75 to test whether Pokémon Go could contribute to their psychological health, reflected that the gameplay brought various positive responses, such as increased positive affect, nostalgic reverie, friendship formation, and friendship intensification [8, 9]. Gameplay indirectly led to a decreased incidence of depression with increased exercise related to Pokémon catching at real-world locations [8, 9]. Some studies also found that playing Pokémon GO may lessen psychological distress and improve family interactions [10, 11].

3. Result and Discussion

It is obvious from the data that Pokémon has tremendous economic potential--it is not only the most valuable and successful media franchise but also has countless impressive financial achievements. Pokémon is the first brand to accumulate revenue exceeding 100 billion dollars, far ahead of any other media brand in the world [2]. The game Pokémon Go took the world by storm once released as one of Nintendo's most well-designed mobile games in 2016. It brought over 160 million dollars in revenue within just one month on the APP Store and Google Play and continues to earn hundreds of millions of dollars every year [3, 4]. Pokémon GO Fest live events have already made great contributions to many local economies. While bringing high revenues, the events also provided countless travelers and customers from different places with chances to socialize, explore things in the real world together, and build larger communities, increasing the host city's overall visibility and popularity and laying a solid foundation for the future economic development of the city. As a result, the temporary financial benefit from hosting the event in the city is the icing on top of the cake.

Based on the data, surveys, and studies listed, the outdoor gameplay of Pokémon Go can have positive effects on players' physical and mental health. It can help reduce the amount of alcohol players consume, and unhealthy activities they may do, and mostly help control the problem of obesity [6]. The average number of steps per day of many players will increase. Even though the influence decreases as time goes on, it does make some positive contribution to physical health, since moderate exercise can lead to better body conditions [7]. Besides, mental health could be improved by playing Pokémon GO. Through socializing with other people, enjoying the process of playing this interesting game, and spending time with family, players can gain positive responses that help fight against depression and other mental illnesses [8-11]. With its huge popularity, Pokémon GO can

affect players all around the world and create social value, reducing or even preventing countless health problems.

4. Conclusion

Through data analysis in this essay, it is found that Pokémon GO has impressive financial outcomes and positive effects on the economy and society, with huge potential for creating economic values for different areas and changing people's behaviors to improve physical and mental health.

Pokémon is analyzed in this essay with objective data, which is beneficial for people who want to know about the financial performance of Pokémon, the ways it helps create economic and social value, and the extent Pokémon can reach this value. This essay also provides people with exact numbers and data to help them have a clear understanding of the benefits and potential of Pokémon.

Finally, this essay only focuses on the basic problem analysis and does not include other details. The overall revenues are analyzed, while revenues for different parts, such as tax, do not have data collected in this essay. The social value in this essay only includes health improvement. In the future, the above-mentioned relevant data can be further refined to facilitate in-depth research on the economic and social impact of Pokémon in different fields.

References

- [1] Salas J. Pokemon Go Takes Over UMass Boston. UWIRE Text, 2018, 1 - 1.
- [2] Katharina Buchholz. 2021.2.24, 2023.11.20. The Pokémon Franchise Caught 'Em All. <https://www.statista.com/chart/24277/media-franchises-with-most-sales/>.
- [3] Randy Nelson. 2016.8, 2023.11.20. Pokémon GO Passes \$160 Million Worldwide Revenue, Usage Remains Strong. <https://sensortower.com/blog/pokemon-go-160-million-dollars-usage-still-strong>.
- [4] J. Clement. 2023.8.7, 2023.11.20. Annual revenue generated by Pokémon GO worldwide from 2016 to 2023 YTD. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/882474/pokemon-go-all-time-player-spending/>.
- [5] NIAN TIC. 2023.11.9, 2023.11.20. Pokémon GO Fest 2023 delivers more than \$300 million in economic impact globally. <https://nianticlabs.com/news/pgo-economic-impact-2023?hl=en>.
- [6] Wang A I, Skjervold A. Health and social impacts of playing Pokémon Go on various player groups. *Entertainment Computing*, 2021, 39: 100443.
- [7] Howe K B, Suharlim C, Ueda P, et al. Gotta catch'em all! Pokémon GO and physical activity among young adults: difference in differences study. *BMJ*, 2016, 355.
- [8] Bonus JA, Peebles A, Mares ML, Sarmiento IG. Look on the Bright Side (of Media Effects): Pokémon Go as a Catalyst for Positive Life Experiences? *J Media Psychol*. 2017, 20: 1 - 25.
- [9] Chong Y, Sethi D K, Loh C H Y, et al. Going forward with Pokemon Go. *Journal of emergencies, trauma, and shock*, 2018, 11 (4): 243.
- [10] Watanabe K, Kawakami N, Imamura K, et al. Pokemon GO and psychological distress, physical complaints, and work performance among adult workers: a retrospective cohort study. *Sci Rep*, 2017, 7: 10758.
- [11] Militello LK, Hanna N, Nigg CR. Pokémon GO within the context of family health: retrospective study. *JMIR Pediatr Parent*, 2018, 1: e10679.