

Play-to-Earn: A Qualitative Analysis of the Experiences and Challenges Faced By Axie Infinity Online Gamers Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

One of the most in-demand and divisive of these new games that allow players to collect tradeable crypto currencies is the Axie Infinity. Non-employed, along with the students, are finding it difficult to find stable employment since this pandemic brought many setbacks to employed and more particularly to unemployed students. This study explores the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of Axie Infinity Players amidst the pandemic. The study employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with 20 participants. The following conclusions were drawn based on the study's findings: (1) For the most part, playing Axie Infinity is not as easy as it looks. (2) Most of the Axie Infinity players are students and it takes a lot of their time playing Axie Infinity that most of their time is spent playing instead of resting and studying just to reach their quota for that day. (3) Axie Infinity is both a blessing and stress. The Axie Infinity play-to-earn game is described as a blessing because it became the number one source of income of the participants despite being amid this pandemic. It also became their source of stress because it adds pressure, tension, and strain to their lives as both a player and a student. (4) Axie Infinity players need a strong support system in their psychological, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects to withstand the situation of lacking sleep and rest, the pressure of the need to reach the quota, slow internet connection, judgments of the people that surround them, and not being able to focus in both playing and studying. (5) Finally, Axie Infinity players value themselves by coping with negative experiences and challenges they have been through.

Keywords: *Online gamers, Cryptocurrency, Experiences, Challenges, COVID-19 pandemic*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over several years, cryptocurrency has been a popular topic of interest. One of the most in-demand and divisive of these new games that allow players to collect tradeable crypto currencies is the Axie Infinity. Non-employed, along with the students, are finding it difficult to find stable employment because this pandemic brought many setbacks to employed and more particularly to unemployed students. The number of daily active users on Axie Infinity increased from 30,000 in April to over 1 million in August, with the majority of users coming from impoverished countries struck hard by COVID, such as the Philippines, Brazil, and Venezuela (Servando et. al., 2021). According to World Financial Review (2020), one of the key reasons why the cryptocurrency is so esteemed throughout the world is because there is profit potential and they aren't associated with world governments, which means crypto currencies can remain steady even when a country is in crisis.

Nowadays, more and more people are starting to explore cryptocurrencies such as Axie Infinity. Based on the

information gathered from Heffernan (2021), trading markets are one of the most stressful settings, which has attracted an increasing number of new graduates to the industry, and since the crypto boom, it has even piqued the interest of the younger generation. People as young as 20 years old are prepared to take out loans to play and compete with the tycoons. Both trading and investing though may become troublesome. Cryptocurrency addiction, according to current research and inferences is taken from other compulsive gambling activities, can lead to mental health symptoms such as stress, anxiety, sadness, and mania (Sternlicht et al., 2018).

Simultaneously, online games have grown immensely popular among the younger generation. Using gaming platforms to earn money by streaming and challenging other players. Even when players are frantically trying to relax, many players still find video games to be anxiety-inducing. Anxiety may have a variety of effects on a person's life. According to Williams (2021), a certified psychologist and creator of the Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit, it comes in numerous forms, but frequently entails recurrent unpleasant thoughts that are difficult to ease. Repetitive thinking cycles, especially concerning things we can't finish in the game, might contribute to game anxiety (Mosly & Robin, 2021). Since Axie Infinity is a play-to-earn platform, Axie Infinity Co-Founder Aleksander Leonard (2021), claims that 1 million daily active users of the NFT-based video game had never used a crypto application before and admits that the game's learning curve is very difficult for crypto newcomers. Larsen revealed that Axie Infinity has roughly two million daily active users, 50 percent of whom have never used any crypto program before, during a panel discussion regarding the metaverse at Token2049 (Graves & Stephen, 2021).

According to Co-Founder Aleksander Leonard (2021), it is really hard playing Axie at this time. It is grueling for them since they are not used to playing play-to-earn games. Residents in Cabanatuan City, north of Manila, devised a creative way to cope with the rigors of the lockdowns by investing and playing Axie Infinity as the COVID-19 pandemic expanded across the Philippines. In a new mini-documentary called "Play-to-Earn," released on YouTube on Thursday by crypto consulting firm and gaming company Yield Guild Games, a mother, three young entrepreneurs, a recent college graduate, a pedicab driver, an elderly married couple, and one of the first people in Cabanatuan City to discover Axie Infinity are featured (Nunley & Christian, 2021). There's no doubting Axie Infinity's expansion, especially amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. It has amassed gamers from all around the world and recently passed 2 million daily active users. The volume of Axie Infinity stands apart because it isn't yet available in the Google or Apple app stores. While the digital game has no bounds, it has taken root in the Philippines, which has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. Player Counter (2021) states that the top 1 country in terms of active daily participation is the Philippines, with 40.53 percent. Venezuela came in second place with 6.31 percent. Top three, the United States with 5.72 percent. Thailand comes in fourth place, with 4.73 percent. Brazil comes in fifth place with 3.29 percent. More than half of Axie Infinity's players are from the Philippines, and they participate in a community-created program known as "scholarships." Currently, playing Axie Infinity earns a higher hourly rate than the minimum wage in Portugal, Turkey, and most Asian, South American, and African countries. In the last 24 hours, the value of the in-game Small Love Potion tokens has climbed by another 200 percent, allowing players to earn at least \$5 every hour (Hoogendoorn, 2020).

Even though cryptocurrencies do indeed have a massive opportunity impact on the present independent businesses and future economic possibilities, cryptocurrency technology is still very much in the early stage. Players' potential challenges must be thoroughly scrutinized, while some favorable opportunities should be emphasized. Furthermore, even though there would be a variety of cryptocurrency literature released to the public, including blogs, wikis, forum discussions, codes, as well as other resources, only a few systematic investigations have been conducted. The objective of this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the activities that take place in the daily lives of an Axie Infinity player, with a focus on (1.) Identifying the effects of Axie Infinity on a player's everyday living. (2.) Exploring the underlying factors why players choose Axie Infinity over regular jobs. (3.) Determining how the Axie Infinity players handle the stress especially when the minimum quota is not reached. The researchers also aim to contribute to psychology and society by exploring and understanding Axie Infinity players' lived experiences' timely information through this study.

1.2 Research Questions

This study explores the lived experiences and challenges faced by the Axie Infinity player during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the Axie players during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the challenges faced by Axie players during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. What are the coping mechanisms of Axie players during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Lived Experiences of the Axie Infinity Online Gamers Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Axie Infinity is one of the most popular—and divisive—of these new games that allow players to collect transferable crypto currencies. Players lead colorful, blob-like creatures known as Axies to collect two types of currency in Axie Infinity's virtual environment of Lunacia. Smooth Love Potions (SLP) are granted for winning battles and may be paid in or used to breed more Axies in the game. Seasonal tournaments and selling Axies throughout the game's marketplace can earn you Axie Infinity Shards (AXS). AXS may also be redeemed out, although they're supposed to work as shares, much like other governance tokens. According to Bonheur (2021), several players have earned sufficient capital as a result of their participation in this game. Numerous success stories have been featured in the media in different rural areas of the Philippines, for example. These range from a player who was able to provide for his family's basic necessities during the epidemic to another who was able to purchase a house and property (Servando et. al. 2021).

These works of visual art inspired by blockchain pay respect to the mental health rollercoaster that many people experienced as a result of highly centralized finance during the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent cryptocurrency bull run. Matt Dazinco (2021) shared his experience from the crypto effect. "I know I'm not alone in seeing these ghost charts since I've talked to a lot of other investors who have been hooked to their screens over the last year. So, when we take a break from our computers, why do some of us notice crypto in the real world? What are these faint, floating lines and numbers, and why are they bothering us?" Dazinco said.

He also shared, "When you haven't slept in days and a pandemic is snatching up pals just beyond your front door, worry and exhilaration seem the same. When I think about all the people I trusted online who chanted the crypto song, "We're all going to make it," I still feel a crippling feeling of ignorance. By late May, I'd run out of reasons, had an empty wallet to contemplate, and had developed a new burning passion that was causing minimal hallucinations." According to Dazinco (2021), The entire value of cryptocurrencies soared from around \$242 billion to almost \$2.43 trillion during the height of the outbreak. Only a few days later, the market plummeted by \$1.3 trillion. Indeed, that is a substantial sum of money. But it was the amount of actual individuals behind those stats that concerned me the most – families and bank accounts shattered by market volatility. Cryptocurrency addictions are growing so widespread that a business sector is springing up to cater to them. According to Dylan Kerr, a private clinical addiction counselor, "crypto trading is quite comparable to day trading or gambling."

A cognitive pattern could be a multidimensional, energetic development that incorporates a person's qualities, values, verbose and semantic recollections, and coordinates the preparation of self-relevant data (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Kihlstrom et al. 1988). A person's self-concept is made up of a few distinctive self-schemas and answers to the address "Who am I?" (Myers, 2009). Individuals have a clear understanding of who they are and what they are, agreeing with Campbell et al. (1996), who characterized self-concept clarity as the sum to which the substance of the self are clearly and unquestionably expressed, steady, and transiently stable. Gamers can utilize video diversions to hunt for and clarify their possess self-concept. Matsuba (2006) found that web utilization is conversely related with self-concept clarity, suggesting that the web may be an important device for investigating and finding oneself.

Gamers come in a variety of shapes and sizes. In actuality, their playstyles, abilities, and preferences shift. Despite the fact that they are distinguished by class, they share several similarities. A skilled gamer requires the proper gaming equipment and accessories. The truth is that without gaming knowledge, it is difficult to be a great gamer. Even if a few people are intellectual in other areas, this does not necessarily imply that they are intelligent in gaming. Dedication and commitment are two more attributes that successful gamers possess. That's because they recognize the importance of continuing to hone and improve their skills. As a result, it becomes a part of their lives, and it may be a critical necessity for them. When a player has some spare time, he or she will use it to memorize various perspectives on the game. When it comes to trying out new tactics, all players need is a little creativity. Furthermore, creativity allows you to look at several recreations and come up with something far superior. A great player, for example, can come up with new variations, adjustments, and approaches to the game. Proficient gamers don't jump to conclusions or make assumptions quickly. Or perhaps they are excellent at deciphering problems and can then work to overcome obstacles in their path to success. As you may be aware, gaming can be difficult, and difficult levels can be difficult to overcome. If you want to be successful, you need

to be able to manage emotions and use logic to get through difficult situations. They always believe there is a way out, and they don't give up trying. The aforementioned features or characteristics of a successful gamer should persuade and rouse you to work hard and improve your gaming abilities.

Understanding player experience is a difficult task, according to Birk and Mandryk (2013). People are complicated, and experiences are as well — how individuals perceive gameplay is influenced by the attributes (e.g., our personality) and states (e.g., do people feel anxious or relaxed) they bring into a game (Birk & Mandryk, 2013). Furthermore, games are complicated systems in which the mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics all work together to provide a diverse range of experiences (Hunicke et al. 2004). Above all, how games are experienced is a result of a complicated interaction between the games and the people who play them (Birk et al. 2015; Przybylski et al., 2009; & Reinecke et al. 2014). A variety of hypotheses have been proposed to explain various characteristics of play. For example, flow theory investigates how the balance of skill and difficulty influences experience (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005), whereas immersion theories investigate how individuals feel immersed in an event under various settings (Brown & Cairns, 2004). Other ideas place the knowledge of play in the context of human behavior in general. Mood management theory, for example, is concerned with how humans utilize media, particularly games, to self-regulate our arousal and affective states (Reinecke et al. 2012). Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is another broad theory that uses a theoretical framework to explain why people play. When in our needs for perceived competence (i.e., demonstrating mastery over challenges), autonomy (i.e., doing so on their own volition), and relatedness (i.e., doing so while feeling connected to others) are met, we will be intrinsically motivated to perform an activity — that is, we will enjoy it and put effort into it (Ryan et al. 2006). A variety of elements influence player experience (Berk et al. 2015), how people feel during play (Reinecke et al., 2014), and whether or not our basic psychological needs (Gagné, 2003) are met in life (Przybylski, 2009).

Axie Infinity (2020) interviewed Gabby for "Player Spotlight: Gabby!" in order to learn more about his Axie adventure, the Axie community in the Philippines, and his future forecasts. Gabby is a great leader when it comes to promoting Axie in Southeast Asia. He is from the Philippines. Gabby has a long history of working in the video gaming industry. The first game to be released in the Philippines was by Axie Infinity in 2003. Altitude Games was founded in 2014 with the intention of developing mobile games. When Axie Infinity first learned about smart contracts in 2017, he decided that this was the future of technology and began exploring NFTs and blockchain games (Axie Infinity, 2020). Gabby first learned about Axie in late 2018 when he invited a friend to a discussion about it in Manila. Gabby received three Axies from a friend to begin the game. It literally transformed Gabby's life, he remarked. Gabby began playing the game, became active in the community, and amassed a significant sum of Cryptocurrencies in the process. Gabby made some extremely excellent friends as a result of this, who he may or may not have met in person but who he considers to be some of his most influential people (Axie Infinity, 2020).

The Philippines is proving to be a center for Axie activity, Gabby (Axie Infinity, 2020) believes, because the Philippines is currently facing a number of issues, including massive unemployment as a result of Covid and an economy in crisis mode. When players found out that they could make a career by playing Axie and farming Small Love Potion tokens, word traveled quickly, and the Filipino community grew by the day. Gabby hopes that this trend continues and that it will help to build a valued economy within Axie Infinity for people all over the world to participate in, particularly in disadvantaged nations (Axie Infinity, 2020). Gabby is most enthusiastic about Axie's future, particularly his land gameplay. When all players could do was battle and breed, he was worried about Axie's future, but the land gameplay transforms it into a potentially massive meta economy where people can cooperate and build long-lasting assets that will generate value for the game's players and the larger community for a long time. Gabby also offered projections for Axie and the NFT space. He predicted that blockchain-based games will be nothing more than "games" in the next 12 years, that Axie will outperform the GDP of the smallest country, and that "in the next 12 years, my kids won't need a college degree, they'll just need to know how to create value in virtual worlds to make a living." (Axie Infinity, 2020).

Axie Infinity, the latest play-to-earn fad, has piqued the interest of many. The aforementioned cryptocurrency game's mechanics and gameplay have attracted a lot of attention. But how much do people know about the lives of these Axie "scholars" who make money everyday by playing the game? A "scholar," to refresh your recall, is a player who joins a team led by a "manager" (who may own the Axie pets in use or is a part/full-time investment in the team).

The number of academics on a single team can range from ten to hundreds. Axie pets are also owned by gamers, who are not scholars but openly "playing" owners. Guevarra (2021) conducts an interview with Jawhar "XyvoZ" Usman, one of the hundreds of Axie Infinity students out there! Jawhar is a math instructor who enjoys gaming. Jawhar has been a gamer since he was a toddler, and he has played a variety of games including FPS and MOBA. Jawhar, who enjoys gaming, wanted to play a game that would pay him money. He went online and discovered NFT games where he could "play-to-earn." He claimed that Axie Infinity is the best-rated NFT game, and he watched some gameplay videos on YouTube. Jawhar stated that his cousin messaged him out of the blue and asked if he plays Axie Infinity because a friend of his cousin's boss is searching for players, and Jawhar added that he desperately wanted to play the game and accepted the offer right once. Jawhar also revealed his daily Axie routine, claiming that he gets up as early as 8 a.m. in PH time to grind right away. He also revealed that during his first week as an Axie scholar, he played Axie for 4-5 hours every day. He just spends roughly an hour a day farming silky love potion now that his Axies have leveled up (SLP). He also mentioned that their scholarship program requires them to earn 100 SLP every day, but that now that he has leveled up, he makes around 200 SLP per day. The most rewarding component of being an Axie player, according to Jawhar, is the ability to simply play a game and earn money.

Participating in the "play-to-earn" economy is clearly becoming a feasible way for players to make money from their favorite video games. Furthermore, it is contingent on the Axie ecosystem's and cryptocurrency economy's overall stability, but it is safe to say that things are looking up for the game's players.

The number of daily active users on Axie Infinity increased from 30,000 in April to over 1 million in August, with the majority of users coming from poor nations impacted hard by COVID, such as the Philippines, Brazil, and Venezuela. According to Etherscan, Axie, which was originally developed on the Ethereum network, has been transferring about \$30 million worth of Ether each day for the past month. In the \$2.2 trillion cryptocurrency realm, that's not much, but it's significant for players—and governments—in poorer nations. For years, virtual products with real-world worth have been a hallmark of gaming. Axie differs from most other large in-game marketplaces in that it encourages players to cash out and provides them with the tools and transparency they need to do so. Axie players may take their SLP and AXS to a large crypto exchange and sell for whatever the market would give.

Servando et. al. (2021) interviewed Vincent Gallarte, an IT analyst from Manila who just lost his job last July. However, he discovered an unexpected source of income: an online game that pays participants in cryptocurrencies. Gallarte earned more than 37,000 pesos (\$732) in his two weeks of Pokémon-like questing and battling, more than three times what he would have earned at his "real job." The 25-year-old Gallarte, like many beginners to so-called play-to-earn games, had no special interest in the realm of Bitcoin, Ether, and other cryptocurrencies. He now envisions a successful secondary business. "The same day my company ended my employment, I started playing Axie," he explained "I owe you a debt of gratitude". Gallarte's cousin told him about the game. Nevertheless, to get started, gamers will need three Axies, each costing roughly \$200. That was simply too much for Gallarte, who had recently lost his job. He looked for a sponsor, someone who would lend his Axies to new players in exchange for a share of their in-game earnings, which might be as high as 90%. Whatever a player makes with a loaned Axie goes to the owner, who is expected to wire the player his portion. Gallarte made a Facebook appeal to the Real Deal Guild, a Filipino organization that currently sponsors hundreds of gamers. They agreed to let him play their critters in exchange for a tiny fee: 30% of his revenue would go to the guild..

On Telegram and Discord, aspiring Axie players are asking for sponsors to help them get started. This is how John Aaron Ramos, a 22-year-old university student from the Philippines, claimed he met a Venezuelan player in November, months before the game gained in popularity. He started earning up to 300 pesos (\$6) every day. He produced fresh Axies during the following four months, and the price of Ether increased tenfold, doubling his revenue. He broke up with his sponsor and formed his own team of contract players, leasing Axies to 15 people, including family and friends. He is entitled to 30% of their earnings. He acquired two apartments for his parents south of Manila in March. He also purchased insurance policies and is considering stock investments. "Axie's worth may diminish, but I'm not concerned," Ramos remarked. "I must continue to have tangible possessions in order to be more safe." (Servando et. al. 2021).

The COVID-19 epidemic has added an unwelcome chapter to every life this year. Many businesses have gone out of business, the stock market has fallen, many individuals have lost their jobs, and there has been a plethora

of additional "bad news" along the way. To survive this pandemic, it is necessary to have a source of income. Axie Infinity's Play-to-Earn strategies have proven to be incredibly popular among Filipino players in this area. The lowest Axie now costs 0.05 Ethereum (\$26 at the time of writing). Not all low-cost Axies, however, are capable fighters. By comparing the Axies' stats and cards, the best team synergy may be reached. The requirement to buy three (3) Axies turns off a lot of folks. Fortunately, scholarships are available to help you get started in the game without having to spend any money on Axies. When someone is accepted into a program, they may be eligible for a range of benefits, such as mentorship, profit sharing, and other opportunities (depending on the terms you agreed on). Despite this, Filipino gamers enjoy the game, and many have earned far more than the minimum wage. It's also incredible to realize that some folks saw this as a way to put food on the table. Ian Inanoria (2020), the journalist and interviewer, contacted two Axie players who were making more than minimum pay. Ian first inquired about Kael's beginnings as a player. Before the pandemic, Kael had a simple food store in San Francisco Village, Muzon, Taytay, Rizal. Due to the spreading virus, he had to shut it down and lose three months' worth of revenues, leaving him with a meager budget. He wasn't going to sit around doing nothing; he was on a mission to discover a way to make money. Kael came across a post about Axie Infinity on Facebook. Despite having no prior knowledge of cryptocurrencies or blockchain, he gave it a go by purchasing Php3.5k worth of Axies (\$73 as of writing) on the official marketplace. Within a few weeks, he was able to retrieve his money, pay his bills, and buy food for his family. By selling his SLP and breeding Axies while playing the game, he was able to acquire new friends and maximize his earnings.

Ian also spoke with John, a player from Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. He recently earned a bachelor's degree in business administration. He was unable to find a job as a result of the outbreak and was obliged to stay at home. During a conversation with his cousin, he learned about the game and decided to put money aside to get Axies. As the days passed, John realized that putting together a good team would take some time, so he enrolled in a Kookoo scholarship program. Since he began performing in the first week of October, he has been able to financially support his family, which is especially important given his mother's recent delivery. Ian's interest in these scholarship prospects was stirred by John's story. Ian met with Kookoo, an Axie Angel now located in Cebu and in charge of a small team of academics. On August 29, he started playing and began supporting other members of the community, earning him the moniker Axie Angel. Kookoo is currently guiding five personal scholars and has recruited eight new members for the YGG guild (Yield Guild Games). Because he is an Axie Angel at heart, he launched a YouTube channel. The main motivation for generating instructional DVDs was to save him and new gamers time. Because there was little to no information using the Filipino language to educate the mechanics before Kookoo, the films were favorably accepted by the local community. As a result of the community's response, he will be creating more content on crypto and blockchain in general, in order to raise awareness about future scamming attempts and provide education in general.

Apart from generating real income for players, play-to-earn games also create communities where gamers and creators can meet, share wisdom, and do deals with one another. A good example of this is The Sandbox, a game in the same genre as Minecraft where players build things and exchange them with one another as NFTs. Now that games like these are possible, it seems likely that they are here to stay. Many games have sustained online communities in the past, but by adding the ability to make financial gains, play-to-earn games will potentially lead to even more successful communities in the future. If this corner of gaming is new to you, it's time to start watching closely. (Cattanach, 2021) Now that Axie is popular the players found a new community. Many Axie players see Axie as a fun game and a social community to meet friends. More than 50% of Axie players prefer the gameplay and community to the economic aspect. These players value the fun and relationships that they make through Axie much higher than any potential earnings; these players make the economy stronger in the long run (Axie Infinity). At the moment, there are many more [people that want to play] around the world than there are in assets to go around," said Leah Callon-Butler, a director of the consulting group Emfarsis, which has produced market analysis for the Axie Infinity community in the Philippines. Secretary echoed. "Everyone I know is trying to play," he said (Elliott, 2021).

The Challenges Faced by Axie Infinity Online Gamers Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Every gamer, at some point, encounters a situation that makes gaming appear more like a stressor than a de-stressor. These are the most problems that every gamers has faced: Gaming has melded with the internet world throughout time. As a result, players have been able to play multiplayer games online and have progressed to multiplayer professional games. Because of the toxicity and other horrible things that occur when playing games

with strangers online, gaming is no longer enjoyable. Parents just did not appreciate how critical it was to reach that one stage or complete the level you had been working on for days. Nothing is more frustrating than having to restart a game after you've worked extremely hard to reach a specific stage. If you failed, you'd have to restart all over again. It's devastating to lose all of your progress. When you have to manage your career, education, home, and even rest, when is the best time to play? If you're a dedicated player, this can be a huge concern. It feels more like you're making an "appointment" when you pencil time into your schedule. When playing games on the PC, freezing or game hanging is a typical occurrence. It's aggravating when your screen becomes stuck or freezes for several seconds, interfering with your game. Many gamers become frustrated when a frozen screen remains stuck for an extended period of time. Of course, all of your unsaved progress is gone after all of your hard work. If you play online games, you're familiar with the agony of lag. Lag may be quite bothersome, especially when playing online matchmaking games. While playing, a decent internet connection and speed are required for the greatest experience. It can make any online match almost useless, from people teleporting and running in place to your bullets not hitting the adversary. To make matters worse, you appear to everyone else as a lousy player, which means you'll be less likely to be depended on in team efforts and will be pushed to the side (Hawks, 2017).

Axie Infinity is not just a "game" but a play-to-earn game that involves a lot of money and investment. Axie Infinity Shards (AXS) and Smooth Love Potion (SLP), both Ethereum-based crypto tokens, are used. This game, which was released in 2018, grossed USD 42 million in June 2021, making it one of the most high - cost NFT collections on the market. Bonheur (2021) reported that several players have benefited immensely from this game. These vary from a player who was able to provide for his family's basic necessities throughout the outbreak to another who was able to purchase a home and a permanent settlement. Even though there are many benefits in playing Axie Infinity and earning money through trades of cryptocurrencies, there are still limitations and issues.

One of the challenges that Axie Infinity players in the Philippines are facing right now is they may have to start paying tax to the government. Players of the popular online game Axie Infinity who sell "pets" and earn money in the real world must pay income taxes due from such transactions, the Department of Finance (DOF) said "Whoever earns currency from it, it is income you should report it," Finance Undersecretary Antonette Tionko told reporters last week. Amid the prolonged COVID-19 quarantine, CNBC in May reported thousands of Filipinos getting addicted to play-to-earn games like Axie Infinity, where players earn cryptocurrency and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) by growing fantasy creatures called "axies". While players cannot yet monetize the NFTs they gain in the game itself, trading pet axes online generates thousands of pesos when sold. Regardless of whether axes are paid by money or in kind, Tionko said these transactions were taxable (De vera 2021). Tionko said even the cryptocurrency earned in Axie Infinity were taxable, although the government has yet to put in place a mechanism to determine the amount and actually collect tax from these digital assets. "Cryptocurrency is an asset, so it's already taxable in the Philippines. What kind of tax applies? Certainly, the gains are subject to income tax," said Tionko. Online gamers earning an income are not exempted from paying taxes, the Bureau of Internal Revenue warned on Tuesday. The agency said those who earn from playing the popular online play-to-earn game Axie Infinity are subject to tax requirements (CNN Philippines, 2021). According to BIR players are earning, they are given benefits or currency that they can trade, convert and use as cash. At the end of the day, there's a flow of income to players. So this income can be taxable.] The official said players who have annual net earnings of P250,000 or less are exempted from paying taxes. The BIR urged eligible gamers to register and pay their taxes, adding that failure to do so may lead to imprisonment and fines (CNN Philippines, 2021). On the other hand this Taxation is not already implemented Nobody really knows what the new tax will mean for Axie Infinity gamers a tax seems justified wherever any income is being made. On the other hand, regulators don't really know 'what' to tax — does one tax the actual NFTs or the in-game crypto tokens? (Gill, 2021).

According to Stefanie Yeo (2021), there are issues that Axie Infinity needs to address to avoid game over. Over the last week, Stefanie, who works from Tech-Asia spilled a lot of digital ink talking about Axie Infinity. The blockchain-based, play-to-earn game has not only taken popularity in the last year, but it has also turned into a source of income for many gamers, particularly those whose livelihoods have been impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak. It's also been questioned, with some claiming that the game is a Ponzi scam. While not all of the critiques mentioned to Axie Infinity are true, the game does have significant issues that its makers must address. A lot has been said about Axie Infinity, some of it not so kind. However, if Sky Mavis, the game's Vietnamese creator, wants to be in the game for the long run, it must fix some serious issues. Axie Infinity provides a

scholarship program that allows "managers" or owners of axies – the in-game digital monsters – to loan them out to "scholars" or players who can't buy their own, with the parties splitting the earnings according to a percentage split agreed upon. There are no institutional processes in place, however, to prohibit managers and/or students from cheating or breaking agreements. Another point of worry is that video games have rather limited shelf life. Given that many users rely on Axie Infinity for money, the game's producers must improve it in order for it to survive in the long run. Despite this, many people are optimistic about its possibilities. Small love potions, or SLPs, are Axie Infinity's in-game money, which can be purchased on major cryptocurrency exchanges like Binance. There are concerns that more speculative investors may flock to SLPs and seek to "short" them. However, according to Sky Mavis co-founder and chief operating officer Aleksander Larsen, this is a "doomsday scenario" that is unlikely to happen. Sky Mavis has "a robust staff to cope with any severe market manipulations." Leah Callon-Butler (2021), wrote that the scholarship arrangement of Axie Infinity isn't completely trustworthy. After many days of playing under a scholarship scheme, con artist Axie owner may decide to retain all of the SLP revenues and refuse to give the player their portion. A user might even use many pseudonymous profiles to collect awards from various scholarship programs at the same time. Community leaders absolutely forbid and closely oversee this behavior.

According to Kou et. al., (2018), the gamers described that streaks were typical in their gaming experience. They had to deal with streaks on a daily basis. Unsurprisingly, many players talked about their bad feelings while they were on a losing run. On Reddit, as one player put it, "These streaks are so predictable." I can tell when they're going to start, which causes me a great deal of concern. Winning streaks, on the other hand, did not soothe players and might instead induce negative feelings. "I'm simply extremely bored of winning streaks after losing streaks after winning streaks", as one player put it. He also stated, "It's inconvenient and unpleasant. And, when I'm on a winning run, I lose all drive to keep playing, first because I don't believe I deserve some of those victories, and second because I know a losing streak is likely to begin. It's about to slam into me like a truck, and that won't be fun." This player had a losing run, resulting in a rank that did not reflect their true ability. This condition resulted in internal disagreements between the athlete and their teammates, who had particular performance expectations of the former.

Consumer behavior was observed to differ in settings involving three alternative payment technologies (cash, credit cards, and contactless smart cards) in a study by See-To and Ngai (2018): Consumers' perceptions of payment security determine their preference for a particular source of spending (See-To & Ngai, 2018). Returning to the issue of determining one's attitude toward cryptocurrency as a payment instrument, the researchers point out that its innovative nature and high level of technology are factors that complicate the process of perceiving and comprehending the phenomenon of "cryptocurrency," which can lead to phobias (Zhuravlev & Nestik, 2016). Money attitudes in many settings, such as economic and psychological adaptation to changing living circumstances. The severity of financial anxiety (as a component of attitude toward money) is considered one of the indicators of a person's subjective economic well-being (Hashchenko, 2012), which serves as a compensatory function by robbing psychological sovereignty (Golubeva, 2012) and aids in coping with unemployment (Drobysheva, 2017).

According to Bonheur (2021), There are cons of playing Axie Infinity and one of those is the specific earning limitations of the game. AXSs or SLPs are awarded to players who complete in-game missions or other in-game activities. However, the amount of money a player may earn by completing daily missions, engaging in player-vs-player or Arena events, and performing specific objectives inside the in-game adventures has been capped by the creators. Earning cryptocurrency also takes a significant amount of time and work. To earn 50 SLPs each day, for example, you'd have to complete the daily check-in requirement, 10 adventure mode levels, and 5 PvP matches. Spending more time in adventure mode and finishing more levels will earn you more SLPs. The aforementioned prerequisites take a long time to complete. As a result, wealthy players are more likely to lend their Axies NFTs to other players. It's also worth noting that, owing to a variety of variables, creating continuous and constant revenue streams is challenging, especially for individuals with full-time employment or other commitments. Also, one of the cons of Axie Infinity is the issues with NFTs and Blockchain Technology. The rising popularity of selling and trading non-fungible tokens has raised worries among many observers. Some have speculated that the present interest in NFTs might lead to an economic bubble that would burst owing to market hype, speculation, herding behavior, and overvaluation of digital NFT assets.

The bitcoin industry is not without its own set of dangers. Despite the fact that the value of cryptocurrencies

like Bitcoin and Ether has risen over time, these digital assets remain unpredictable. Within the short- and medium-term, historical trends show that the market has undergone dramatic highs and unexpected catastrophic losses. Blockchain technology, on the other hand, has a number of flaws and complaints. One of the most significant drawbacks of blockchain is that the entire system requires a significant amount of energy. Experts have warned that growing its use, particularly through a variety of NFT use cases, might have a harmful influence on the environment. Lastly, one of the cons is the high cost of starting Axie Infinity. It is, absolutely a fact, a play-to-earn game. It is not, however, free. One of the most significant downsides of Axie Infinity is the high upfront cost. There was a time when purchasing at least three Axies required a \$500 investment. However, the price has already risen to above USD 1000. To begin, a player must own at least three Axies. Eventually, a workaround exists. This is evidenced by the situation in nations like the Philippines. Individuals have discovered a way to play the game without spending any money, as mentioned above, by locating an existing player willing to share his or her collection of Axies NFTs. Many owners have assembled teams of sponsored players who are responsible for playing their Axies NFTs on their behalf. Of course, locating these proprietors might be difficult. Individuals would have to make an extra effort not just to find these owners, but also to persuade them to join their teams (Bonheur, 2021).

Experts explain the creation of cryptocurrencies through globalization processes, which include "the emergence of a multipolar world system and the growth of cultural diversity," (Zhuravlev et al., 2018). Based on My Cryptocurrency Earnings (2018), Unlike financial specialists, who see cryptocurrencies as a new type of electronic money that can help people improve their financial situation rapidly, the public sees it as a new form of electronic money that can help them improve their financial situation quickly (How I Earned Cryptocurrency, 2018). In this regard, it is critical for psychologists to recognize and follow the analysis of concepts and attitudes around bitcoin. The coexistence of many forms of money (cash, bank accounts, credit debit cards, gift tokens, and so on) in modern society, according to Webley and Lea (2014), suggests that people have various types of financial requirements (Webley & Lea, 2014). According to research, different types of money elicit different emotions and are spent in different ways. Russians, for example, have a low level of trust in monetary innovations, a strong demand for cash, and a distrust of other types of money.

To this day, Cloudwhite (2020) favorite question to ask community members is, "What do your friends and family think about your involvement in Axie Infinity?" Everyone that has invested in Axie up to this point has most likely faced some sort of social adversity. Most people Cloudwhite barely know what cryptocurrency or Bitcoin is, let alone NFTs or digital pets that sell for tens of thousands of dollars. When Cloudwhite show loved ones his land pixels on the map, and try to explain the rise in prices, Cloudwhite can see their eyes rolling in the back of their heads. The ability to weather this adversity bonds them all together. They won't be crosseyed and confused for much longer (Axie Infinity, 2020). On the other hand, Baronar (2020) older son got interested in mining and had his own rig back in the day. Baronar said that it was pretty neat to see his son earn/acquire/earn/acquire. They do some of that now as well. It is an interesting proposition that a game, headset, graphics card, etc. is just a certain amount of daily quests away from acquiring! Baronar's youngest son had heard him talk about crypto, but this was his son's first direct experience with crypto. Baronar's youngest and oldest son both found ways to become landowners as well. Baronar looks forward to seeing them build their own resource farms and enter into that marketplace. Baronar also stated that there is something special about the Axie community. When Baronar interviewed Trung, Trung actually used the word "family" to describe it. The community shares a joint excitement for the world of Axie Infinity that is building. The feeling Baronar gets is that, for the most part, they want it to be a positive, supportive place where everyone has a shot at the "play to earn" model and just has a great, enjoyable experience. There is a real money component to this Axie experience, so to see the community build around positivity and excitement is special (Axie Infinity, 2020).

Several familial variables may impact an adolescent's likelihood of becoming a problem gamer, including parent-child relationship, parental media restriction and monitoring, and parents' marital and socioeconomic circumstances. A large body of empirical research has examined the relationship between teen electronic media use and family functioning, with much of it originating from East Asian countries (Koo & Kwon, 2014; Xiuqin et al. 2010).

The difficulty of determining youngsters' views about a new socio-economic phenomenon—cryptocurrency—was discussed in Gagarina et al(2019) 's study. Because "cryptocurrency" is a poorly understood word, the study identified the semantic field of Bitcoin representations, which revealed that the concept's core idea is the source

of profits. A three-factor model of attitude was confirmed during the research, including beliefs in cryptocurrency's potential as a payment tool, concerns regarding the introduction of cryptocurrencies in the future, and desire to use cryptocurrencies. The content of each component of the attitude toward cryptocurrency in a group of young students was analyzed, and it was discovered that this phenomenon is seen as inevitable owing to scientific and technical progress. Young people's concerns about the criminalization of financial transactions appear to be a roadblock, limiting their readiness to use cryptocurrencies as a source of income. Individuals' value orientations, moral foundations, degrees of confidence, and money attitudes, as well as gender and age, were all considered socio-psychological determinants in attitudes toward cryptocurrencies (Gagarina et al., 2019).

Bloch (2021) claims that losing a substantial sum of money can be stressful for people, especially if the loss affects important life milestones such as retiring, paying for a child's school, or purchasing a home. Many people may believe that there is no way to recover from their financial losses and, as a result, adopt activities that worsen the situation. One of the recent topics has been the prospect of bitcoin investors losing money. Cryptocurrencies "have no intrinsic value," and investors should expect to lose all of their money if they invest in them (Bailey, 2021). Digital currencies like bitcoin, ether, and even dogecoin have been on a run this year, according to CNBC (2021), reminding some investors of the 2017 crypto bubble, when bitcoin soared above \$20,000 before plummeting to \$3,122 a year later.

According to (Cajigal et al. 2021) it is critical to evaluate the purpose of SLP. SLP is used as a component by breeders to create Axies that can be sold for a profit in the market for new entrants. However, as the game loses participants, the demand for SLP from breeders will fall, resulting in reduced costs. If managers sell their SLP at the incorrect moment, their profits will be severely reduced, and they may even lose money. It is still vulnerable to rivalry. Blockchain games, like Axie Infinity, have a role in the digital economy. Other games, such as MyDefiPet and CryptoBlade, have already made their appearance on the market. In a growing blockchain game industry, Axie Infinity's market domination may be impacted, leading in a similar fall in demand. As a result, while deciding how much to invest, think about what you think the game's demand will be in the near future. Managers can get their SLP every two (2) weeks, which they can instantly sell while demand is high, according to the game's play-to-earn approach.

Finally, there is always the possibility that the game can have server troubles, resulting in the loss of your earned SLP. Although losing your SLP has never happened, the game has encountered server difficulties in the past. Players will find it challenging to acquire SLP as a result of this. However, the game creators have now corrected these bugs, and because the game is still in alpha stage and has yet to be launched on the App Store or Google Play Store, the game developers are still refining it. Like any other investment, it's critical to follow two basic rules: First, conduct your own research and never engage in anything you don't understand, and second, only spend money that you can afford to lose (Cajigal et al. 2021).

The most challenging part about Axie when Owl (2020) was just starting out is getting used to the Blockchain environment. Most data will be fetched from the chain and players need a decent understanding on how it works. After that, as long as players can google, and understand fundamental practices in coding, players can pretty much build anything. Owl sucks at web development for example so that's why Owl decided to keep improving his discord Bot. Owl is motivated to challenge himself to become a better developer and strengthen the community's user experience. Owl really wants to work full time in the Blockchain scene and starting out with community projects are the best way to improve players skills and get feedback on the ideas players built (Axie Infinity, 2020).

Meanwhile, Seuchenhund (2020) also finds it hard when he got into the Axie Infinity universe, it was very hard for Seuchenhund to differentiate bad Axies from the good ones, so he started looking for a tool with advanced and beginner friendly filters and result data but Seuchenhund couldn't find one that fit his needs. That's why Seuchenhund decided to build his own tool and after finishing and using the first version of his finder, Seuchenhund thought, why not share with everyone? That was the birth of Axie.zone. The positive and constructive feedback Seuchenhund got from the community kept and still keeps him motivated to improve and expand Axie.zone. Seuchenhund like to make it the number one site for advanced Axie resources and statistics, for beginners and veterans alike (Axie Infinity, 2020). Exhuman (2020) also revealed that At the beginning of 2019 he was trading crypto and it was stressing him out. Exhuman also worked for a large crypto company managing their crypto capital. He knew that he had to change something because it turned out that trading was

ruining his health, despite the decent gains he was making. Exhuman was sure that he wanted to remain connected to the blockchain field, he just didn't want to trade anymore. Exhuman started researching Non Fungible tokens and blockchains games which landed him in the Decentraland Discord. Exhuman thought that he could use his trading skills for flipping parcels in DCL. Exhuman have been a part of various crypto-related communities in the past and Axie is a shining example for all the rest in terms of moral values, communication, and atmosphere (Axie Infinity, 2020).

Cassiopeia Services (2019) stated that the main issue and the biggest problem of crypto users in the crypto market right now is the lack of security. Coin Desk reports that \$2.7 million is stolen from exchange every day, with the amount of cryptocurrency stolen in 2018 increasing 13 times over the previous year. \$2.7 million worth of crypto assets are stolen daily, or \$1,560 every minute (Cassiopeia Services, 2019). Beyond a lack of regulation and dormant duties, cryptocurrency has practical challenges. Although cryptocurrency has been out there for a long time, in a system where alternative solutions are widely scaled and accepted above it, the technology is still in its early stages and is still immature (Jeffrey, 2020). Boukhalfa (2019) stated in her article that even if they perfect the technology and eliminate all of the difficulties and hindrances in playing or investing in cryptocurrency, there will still be a greater risk in investing in this technology until it is approved by federal governments and regulated.

The Coping Mechanisms of the Axie Infinity Online Gamers Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

The usage of video games by players to cope with stress and anxiety might be a key etiological element in video game addiction. The current study investigates whether persons who have higher anxiety and use video games to cope with it are more likely to develop a video game addiction. Two surveys with undergraduate populations were used to evaluate the theory. Even after adjusting for frequency of playtime and other maladaptive coping techniques. An investigation of serial meditation revealed that anxiety is associated with mental illness may lead to increased usage of video games as a coping mechanism, which is linked to increased video game addiction (Plante et al., 2019). Problem video game use (PVGU) is said to be related to behavioral addictions such as problems gambling. The determinants of online PVGU, unlike other addictions, have not been fully investigated. PVGU was studied using a stress-coping paradigm that had previously been created for electronic gambkiung addiction. In this approach, stresses cause excessive behavior by causing the behavior to engage in maladaptive coping techniques. According to Moroney et al. (2019), video game users (N=2261) answered an online questionnaire on their gaming behaviors, as well as self-report measures of depression, loneliness, social anxiety, and escapist and social interaction motives for gaming.

According to Kou et. al., (2018), the term "streakiness" refers to the tendency for certain patterns to develop in a predictable order. In online gaming, streakiness is common, where a player consistently wins or loses for a short period of time. Kou et. al., (2018) showed in their data how players cope with their streaks. The players cope through quitting the game for a while, manage their own mentality, improve their skills, and folk strategies. When gaming experiences resulted in unpleasant feelings, gamers desired to regulate those emotions in ways that game developers could find it objectionable. The essence of Kou et al. (2018) data precludes them from knowing the exact description of the timespans during which gamers quit. Instead, they discovered that participants frequently used ambiguous phrases like "for a time," "around two months," and "about a year." Several players realized that streaks are an unavoidable part of their gaming experience, and that in order to better their rankings, they needed to use what they already understood about streaks to build coping tactics. One of the most prevalent is to control one's own thoughts. In addition, players discussed ways to enhance individual talents to overcome a losing streak in response to one of the main causes, poor individual performance. Individual talents discovered included both personal gameplay proficiency and social skills for cheering on teammates. To deal with streaks, players devised four techniques. "Folk strategy" refers to player strategies developed based on their understanding of how the game operates.

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic started, video games have developed into an increasingly important form of entertainment for many people. They are engrossing in a way that television and literature are not, and they frequently occupy the portion of your brain that ends up scrolling mindlessly on social media. As we've all been stuck at home with nothing to do, video games have stepped in to fill the void (Krishna, 2021). Since online games provide intriguing scenarios to ponder about, they can help people to detach themselves from unpleasant thoughts and situations. Playing a casual video game on a mobile device, console, or computer might help

someone to forget about their problems for a bit (Startup Info Team, 2021). Apart from relieving stress, online gaming can improve one's self-esteem by making themselves feel good every time they are winning or they feel in control, especially when they win with their own ingenious plan (Bates, 2020). Excessive video game play should appeal to persons with poor psychological functioning since games allow them to escape from their daily troubles and immerse themselves in another world (Taquet et al., 2017). Furthermore, video games allow people to socialize with others despite any more or less obvious psychological issues they may have (Kowert et al. 2014).

Players use video games for a variety of reasons (Ryan et al., 2006; Yee, 2006), including to divert themselves from stressful situations or to enjoy the social relationships they have formed in the virtual world. Furthermore, gamers' motivations for playing and favorite game genres were linked to psychological functioning in distinct ways, with the most striking findings for distraction-motivated and action game players. Future research is needed to see if these mental health hazards are caused by video gaming or if they are the result of it (Heiden et. al. 2019). According to Newzoo (2017), With over two billion players globally, video gaming is a very popular form of entertainment. Excessive video gaming, however, has been highlighted by the media and experts as a possible threat. While video gaming is known to have certain advantages, such as enhancing attention, multitasking, and working memory, it can also have drawbacks when used excessively. Excessive video gamers are at danger of inferior scholastic and job performance, peer difficulties, and social skills as a result of spending a significant portion of their day gaming (Mihara and Higuchi, 2017).

According to Burns (2020), the brain secretes dopamine, which is one of the body's natural feel-good chemicals, when a person plays video games. Overcoming obstacles and honing strategy in video games may be extremely satisfying and beneficial to one's self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, rapid gratification given by online games can relieve tension associated with working toward long-term goals by offering instant gratification when it is most required. Burns (2020) also added that gaming can also induce a flow state, which is similar to meditation in terms of benefit.

Examinations, work responsibilities, and athletic contests all put strain on people. When you're playing competitive matches or online multiplayer games, it's difficult not to feel the strain when you're up against a strong opponent (Sacco, 2012). Because the challenges to success are as many outside the game as they are terrifying inside it, the life of a pro gamer necessitates unusual discipline and determination. Parents will not appreciate what you do, fans will not understand if you fail, and the majority of the money will go to the finest of the best. As difficult as that may be, competitive gaming is gaining in popularity due to enthusiasm, team bonding, and a growing recognition of e-sports as a viable professional path (Savov, 2014). Professional gaming is, in the end, "still a passion industry," according to Dan Chou. It can offer fortune and notoriety to a select few, but the bulk of individuals who pursue it as a career do so because it is an outstandingly gratifying experience. E-sports involve competitive thinking at its simplest level, and the finest of them transmit a genuine sense of success and failure with every action a player makes (Savov, 2014).

Toxicity in online contexts is a complicated and systemic issue, according to a study conducted by Türkay et al. (2020). Toxic behaviors appear to be particularly prevalent in collegiate esports communities. Negative behavior in esports games, such as harassment, can create barriers to players reaching high performance and limit enjoyment, leading to them leaving the game. The research looks into how players define, feel, and respond to toxicity in the esports games they play. Players define toxicity as behaviors that disrupt their morale and team dynamics, according to Türkay et al. (2020) findings from an interview study and five monthly follow ups with 19 participants from a university esports club, and are inclined to normalize negative behaviors, rationalize them as part of the competitive game culture akin to traditional sports, and engage in a form of gamer classism, believing that toxicity is more common in lower level play than in professional play. Collegiate esports players use a variety of coping methods, including ignoring offenders, deescalating uncomfortable confrontations, and employing technologies to mute offenders. Understanding the causes behind collegiate esports players' toxicity participation could help the rapidly developing sport chart a constructive path toward healthy play (Türkay et al. 2020).

According to the study conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (2021) on gaming toxicity, over 80% of multiplayer games had recently experienced some form of toxicity and the majority of which is connected to gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and ability. More than a tenth of gamers reported the toxicity caused them to have depressed or suicidal thoughts, and more than 20% said that toxicity in games made them totally quit gaming. Women are more likely than men to be affected by gaming toxicity. As a result, the negative

impacts are more severe for them. Aside from the psychological implications, study reveals that toxicity lowers women's motivation to play video games (Ratan, 2021). Gamers are subjected to a great deal of internet abuse. In the first six months of 2021, 71% of individuals aged 18 to 45 experienced serious abuse, including physical threats, stalking, and prolonged harassment (Scribner, 2021). While gaming may be constructive, it also has the potential to be a source of cyberbullying. Other players may use vile words or make nasty remarks if someone is not performing well in a game, which can grow into bullying or result in the user being banned from the game entirely (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021).

Open Access Government (2021) claims that people who are weary and turn to smartphone games, according to a recent study, may be adopting "maladaptive" coping strategies that exacerbates their real-world problems. While studies have looked at how loneliness may contribute to internet addiction in adolescence or how pandemic-related changes have disproportionately harmed the mental health of young girls, when it comes to smartphone gaming, there are less alarm bells sounding in public. "Those who play video games to escape have a stronger flow and positive effect than other gamers," observed cognitive neuroscience professor Michael Dixon (2021), "creating a loop of playing video games to lift a negative mood." While this enhances your mood, it also makes you desire to play more. Playing for long periods of time might become addictive, leaving less time for other, healthier hobbies. It's possible that this will make your depression worse."

The idea of motives to play (Yee, 2006) may be essential in describing the relationship between Emotion dysregulation and problematic gaming, as it relates to escapism, motivations to play and emotional coping. For example, Billieux et al. (2013) discovered that in-game motivations have unique, meaningful linkages, implying that psychological motives are trustworthy indices of players' interests and requirements. Escapism has been examined extensively among the numerous reasons for playing. Escapism is the term used to describe the behavior of playing video games to unwind or divert oneself from real-life issues (Yee, 2006). It could be one of the most important aspects that contribute to the enjoyment of online gaming, yet it is not always linked to poor outcomes (Bowditch, Chapman, & Naweed, 2018; Hussain & Griffiths, 2009; Kardefelt-Winther, 2014c). Kuo, Lutz, and Hiler (2016) defined escapism as an "active," emotion-focused coping technique that provides players with stress reduction as well as a sense of efficacy and empowerment. However, escapism motive is one of the biggest indicators of problematic gaming in terms of its avoidant, passive, and disengaging nature in multiple research (Ballabio et al., 2017; Billieux et al., 2013; Bowditch et al. 2018; Kuss, Louws, & Wiers, 2012; Schimmenti, Infanti, Badoud, Laloyaux, & Billieux, 2017; Zanetta-Dauriat et al. 2011). Some writers have proposed that escapism's negative potential is related to its connections with other vulnerability variables like psychological discomfort, low psychosocial well-being, or inadequate coping resources to explain this contradiction (Ballabio et al. 2017; Bowditch et al. 2018; Demetrovics et al. 2011; Kardefelt-Winther, 2014b, 2014).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the strategy of inquiry. It aims to contribute comprehensive comments of personal lived experiences. It generates experiences rather than theoretical ideas where it acknowledges human endeavors as sense-making beings. It is essentially idiographic in its adherence to exploring specific experiences of each occurrence before proceeding on to more general statements (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

3.2 Respondents of the Study

The present study involved the following participants: Axie Infinity online gamers. Purposive sampling was used to intentionally select the participants, who play Axie Infinity with the following inclusion criteria: Filipino citizenship; Male; Full-Time Axie Infinity online gamer; and the age range of 18-25 years old.

3.3 Research Instrument

The research employed a structured interview guide in which the interviewer asked a specified set of questions. Questions are organized and developed ahead of time, which means that all respondents were asked the same questions in the same sequence to collect relevant data and replies. Also, this study used a consent letter sent to the participant beforehand on account of ethical consideration. The questionnaire was checked thoroughly through content validation to verify its reliability. Before interviewing the twenty (20) participants, the revision, analysis, and adjustment of the used tool were conducted.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

For the data collection technique and devices, the present study seeks clearance from their research professor. Ethical standards shall be scrupulously followed to guarantee that permission is granted. Participants who were selected and qualified to be included based on the criteria stated above were asked to provide express consent through informed consent with the professor's help. In compliance with the protocol standard in data gathering, written informed consent was discussed. The study's nature and objectives were explained; the research objectives of the participants were clarified regarding their voluntary involvement and were assured that they can withdraw their involvement anytime. Furthermore, the participants were assured that all data obtained throughout the creation of the study would only be utilized for academic and research reasons and that their identities would be protected through the use of code names. As a result, the interview guide's language was adequate for the participants' reading level. In addition, the program's conduct and execution took the participants' availability into account.

3.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before beginning the data collecting process, the self-created research instrument was tested for validity to verify that the data acquired from the respondents is of high quality. A panel of five specialists approved the interview guide. Before the interview, the participants were briefed on the interview questions they are asked and the study's goal. The researchers also underlined that their identity and privacy are safeguarded, and that before publishing the interview in the article, the participants' permission is asked to use their names in the study and that their replies to the interview would be kept secret. The data are conceptually processed, analyzed, and interpreted after it has been acquired.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

Data for data analysis can be collected in a variety of ways. One of the most efficient ways to avoid data inaccuracies is to record and transcribe the interviews. To make sense of the data received from the Axie Infinity gamers, a detailed analysis is required first. The interview transcript was submitted to a comprehensive examination and also included each participant's precise statements verbatim. It is essential to get to know the data and potentially generate some basic analytic ideas from it. The next step was to create initial codes identify which ones will be captured and unified each piece of data. The participants' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms will be the key elements of this study. Furthermore, the approach concluded additional particular sub-themes, resulting in a compact and coherent report that covers these sub-themes. These tactics ensured that the data are trustworthy, accurate, and unchangeable.

4. RESULTS

4.1 The Lived Experiences of the Axie players

Most participants shared that being an Axie player is both a blessing and stress. They have shared various positive and negative experiences as an Axie player. As shown in Table 2, the experiences of Axie players interviewed were narrowed into five (5) subthemes: self-image of axie players, influence of playing axie infinity, changes in player's life, axie as the primary source of income, and thrilling aspect of playing axie.

Table 1. *Self-image of Axie players*

Variable	Frequency
Average Player	14
Skilled Player	6

Self Image of Axie Players

Gamers come in a variety of shapes and sizes. In actuality, their playstyles, abilities, and preferences shift. Despite the fact that they are distinguished by class, they share several similarities.

Average Player

Majority of the Axie players see themselves as average players. Some of the interviewees stated that:

"Sakto lang. Hindi mahusay, maalam lang ganon." - Interviewee 3

"Average lang ako, di naman gaano kataas yung MMR ko tipong palong palo talaga mag laro." - Interviewee 8

Normal lang, average lang. Nasa hindi magaling pero hindi bobo ganon." - Interviewee 9

“Marunong lang, hindi masyadong magaling ‘di rin masyadong ano... in between ganon.” - Interviewee 16
Skilled Player

While some of the respondents confidently stated that they are knowledgeable when it comes to Axie.

“Magaling ako e, hahah o malakas lang talaga yung axie ko haha.” - Interviewee 1

“Marunong, strategic tsaka knowledgeable sa game. Adaptable din, nakikita ko mga mistakes ko, naga-adapt ako na next time hindi na ganito yung gagawin ko.” - Interviewee 18

Table 2. *Influence of Playing Axie Infinity*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Stress	8
Less self-time due playing	5
Develop critical thinking	1
Lack of sleep	4
Playing Axie has become routine	3
None	2

Influence of Playing Axie Infinity

There are a lot of factors in playing Axie that affect the player. Particularly, playing Axie can influence a player's time, rest, thinking, and however some players are not that influenced.

Stress

Stress is common when spending a lot of time on a specific work and the tasks are many and difficult. Most Axie players stated that they spend more than 3 hours playing Axie Infinity. 8 out of 20 respondents are stressed by every gameplay.

One of the interviewees said that he was once a cheerful person but when he started playing Axie, he was now always stressed.

“Dati akong masaya ngayon araw araw ng stress.” - Interviewee 1

Other respondents also stated how stressful playing Axie is:

“Wala naman. Parang naiiwasan ko lang mag-isip ng kung ano ano. Pero dagdag problema din siya pag puro talo.” - Interviewee 4

“Mostly nagiging stress din siya sometimes kasi diba, sumasabay ‘yung mga school works tapos may Axie pa tapos kapag puro talo syempre stress.” - Interviewee 14

“Nakakaapekto siya, minsan kasi ano eh pag halimbawa lose streak syempre ‘yung sa surrounding mo minsan na ba-badtrip ka kasi may biglang mag-uutos sa’yo tapos lose streak ka na, syempre nakakaapekto ‘yon.” - Interviewee 16

Less self time due playing Axie

The influence of playing Axie has caused some players to have less time for themselves. According to the respondents:

“Hindi ko na madalas nagagawa yung mga hobby ko. Di na ko nakakapag-bike madalas hapon na lang nakakapag-bike or jogging.” - Interviewee 6

“Nagbago sakín, mostly no sumikip ‘yung oras, yung responsibility ko sa mga gawain ko, tapos kapag puro talo nakaka-stress. kasi ano siya diba pet kapag nanalo ka edi may kita ka.” - Interviewee 14

“Dagdag oras kasi siya sa araw-araw eh, since ngayon december na, maraming requirements na kailangan ipasa, may research din kami, nakakaapekto yung Axie sa oras ko tsaka sa mental health ko din. Tsaka nakukulangan din ako sa tulog minsan.” - Interviewee 18

Develop critical thinking

Playing Axie Infinity is not just an easy game but it requires using strategy and thinking beyond your expectations from the opponent. One of the respondents stated that the influence of playing Axie has developed his critical thinking.

“Yun nga, katulad ng sinabi ko nag i-improve talaga yung critical thinking at skills. Yung, tawag neto? Yung... nare-refresh yung utak mo sa bagay bagay.” - Interviewee 5

Lack of Sleep

Some respondents are having problems with their sleeping schedule. The influence of playing Axie to some players is lack of sleep. Most of the respondents are students which left them no choice but to play Axie in the late hours.

“Sakin kasi sa ano, sa puyat. Ang laro ko kasi madaling araw. Pag umaga may online class ako tapos bantay sa bahay kaya madaling araw talaga ang free time ko. Kaya laging puyat.” - Interviewee 7

“Uhm sa health madalas puyat. Sa daily life nag e-earn naman, so nakakaya ko na bilhin mga bagay na gusto bilhin kasi I have my own money na.” - Interviewee 11:

“Ahh... ayun nakaka apekto yun sa pag tulog ko siguro kasi ano gabi kasi nagsisimula ako magdrawing tas ngayon pagtapos ko pag 12-1 na dapat matutulog na ko non pero kailangan i-quota ko pa. So, nakakatulog ako around 2-3. kaya gigising ako halos tanghali na so ayun di na nagiging productive.” - Interviewee 12

Playing Axie Has Become Routine

Axie Infinity is a game where it has to be played everyday using the 20 energy given that resets every 24 hours. Players need to gain SLP and finish the daily quest in the game. The setup of playing Axie is the same everyday that makes the respondents consider it as a routine. Interviewee 10 said:

“Uhm, halos naging routine na siya like magdamag cellphone. Diba may manager kailangan mong kumota, wala kang privilege mag ano. Yung tulog, di pwedeng matulog ng di kumokota. Quota everyday.”

Also, Interviewee 13 stated:

“Malaki kasi ano nag iba ‘yung routine ko simula nung nag-laro ako ng Axie. Kung бага nag iba na ‘yung routine ko na unlike dati na kain tulog aral lang. Ngayon tulog axie tapos ibang laro na ginagawa ko pero nag-aaral parin ako, malaki ‘yung naging improvement.”

None

Some of the respondents are not affected or influenced that much in playing Axie.

“Ah...sakin ano... wala ganon pa rin kasi ano lang naman siya e...kumbaga hindi mo naman siya pwedeng i-priority e. Kumbaga sideline lang ganon.” - Interviewee 2

“Hindi masyado kasi ano e mahilig talaga ako sa laro. So ayun hindi naman siya masyadong nakaapekto kasi naglalaro lang ako. Ang pinagkaiba lang is habang naglalaro ako e kumkita ako...iyon lang.” - Interviewee 9

Table 3. *Changes in Player's Lives*

Variable	Frequency
Financial Increase	12
Popularity	1
Less time	2
Easily irritated	1
None	3

Changes in Player's Lives

While some axie players that were also interviewed said that nothing has changed in their lives, the majority of the respondents said that the game Axie Infinity changed their lives and the way they live.

Financial Increase

Nearly all of the respondents' ability to buy the things they desired and have their own money without asking their parents was the major change in their life when they began playing axie. Interviewee 7 stated,

“Syempre nung naglalaro na ko ng axie, nakakabili na ako ng mga gusto ko, nagkakaroon na ng sariling pera na hindi nanghihingi sa magulang. Nakakakilos kilos din ako kasi yung paglalaro anytime naman pwede.”

Similar for Interviewee 3, a lot has really changed since Interviewee 3 played Axie. He was able to build a house, buy a car, everything he wanted and was also able to help his parents.

“Marami. As in marami talagang nagbago simula nung naglaro ako ng Axie. Nakapag pagawa ako ng bahay,

nakabili ng sasakyan, lahat ng gusto ko nabibili ko na tas nakakatulong na rin ako sa magulang ko. Marami talaga kong naging investment ng dahil sa Axie.”

Same as Interviewee 12,

“Marami, sobrang dami...Sobrang daming pagbabago ah siguro sabihin na lang natin na nabibili ko na gusto kong bilhin ganon tas nakakatulong na rin ako sa kapatid ko, sa pinsan ko kasi kinuha ko silang ano kinuha ko silang scholar. Nakakatamad kasi mag-Axie so sila na pinag gagamit ko...ganon.”

Popularity

Being a skilled player is what makes you popular and known in a game. Interviewee 6 shared that there are many managers who wanted him as their player and a lot of new scholars are approaching him to teach them.

“Madami. Madami kasing kumukuha sakín na iba manager, madami nakakakila sakín tsaka nagpapaturong yung mga bagong scholar.”

Less time

Axie Infinity takes time like 2-4 hours and some players still have responsibilities at home and school work which lessen their time to do whatever they wanted to do. Some of the respondents said:

“Nagbago sakín, mostly yung time medyo sumikip na ‘yung oras ko kasi kailangan ko siyang i-maximize sa mga gawain ko.” - Interviewee 14

“Laging boring hahaha di ano siyempre tutok mo oras mo don e bihira ka na lang makasama sa mga gala mga ganon. Pagkatapos maglaro, matutulog ka pero siyempre kailangan mo magtira para sa sarili mo pero nakakaboring talaga.” - Interviewee 20

Easily Irritated

Lose streak, updates, and the opponents somehow changes a player’s mood. One of the respondents, Interviewee 15 said:

“Mabilis ng uminit yung ulo, lalo nung mag update, ang dame ng malalakas na naglalaro , nakaka badtrip talaga.”

None

Some respondents said that there is not much change in their lives:

“Wala naman. Parang ano lang...wala, wala talagang nagbago.” - Interviewee 4

“Sa ngayon, sa ngayon di ko pa po sure kasi wala pa pong ano e parang di pa po kasi nakakapag cash out e. Parang normal pa lang po magmula pumasok ako sa Axie.” - Interviewee 19

Table 4. Primary Source of Income

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Axie as permanent job	0
Did not consider Axie for the long run	20

Primary Source of Income

All of the respondents said that they still consider finding another stable job and not totally rely on playing Axie and make it their permanent job. The respondents have the same agreement that Axie is not a permanent job to consider and must find another real job.

Interviewee 2 said,

“Para sakín ano...sakín hindi ko pinupursue na permanent kasi syempre hindi naman natin alam kung hanggang saan, hanggang kailan lang yon. So kung meron kang alam na sure, halimbawa nakatapos ka di ba, may trabaho ka, at least yon alam mo na legit na (may income ka talaga).”

Interviewee 3 shared,

“Yun nga para magka income tas makatulong sa pamilya. Para sakín, hindi siya pwedeng gawing permanenteng trabaho kasi crypto nga siya, pabago bago ang value, hindi stable. May chance na ma-burn ang puhunan mo, may chance na lumago ito. Hindi talaga pwedeng mag stay dito, hindi pwedeng dito lang umasa.

Some of the respondents’ answers:

“Ah, syempre ano mag hahanap pa rin ng trabaho kasi, ‘di naman stable kasi crypto currency eh. minsan bumababa ‘yung value ng isang coin kaya para sakín hindi siya stable.” - Interviewee 16

“Hindi naman siguro permanenteng trabaho, parang sideline lang para nakakahawak din ako ng pera.” -

Interviewee 18

“Nakakatulong din sa magulang...hindi naman siya permanenteng trabaho mas maganda pa rin yung may trabaho kumbaga nakakatulong din talaga kahit ganito lang ginagawa ko dito.” - Interviewee 20

Table 5. *Thrilling aspect of playing Axie*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Socializing	4
Pay out	6
Win streak	6
High value of SLP	2
Being challenge by the opponent	2

Thrilling Aspect of Playing Axie

At some point, Axie Infinity is also thrilling for the players in different aspects. Some are because of socializing with new co-players, pay out day, win streaks, high value of SLP, and the thrill of facing an opponent.

Socializing

Some of the respondents stated that the most exciting part of playing Axie is meeting new friends and socializing with them. Interviewee 2 said,

“Yung ano syempre...yung kung sino sino yung makakalaro mo sa arena kasi iba’t ibang tao yung maano mo...kumbaga maano yung utak mo...magagamit.”

Likewise, interviewee 5 also enjoys playing with different people everyday.

“Yung araw-araw kang haharap sa iba’t ibang tao, iba iba yung makakalaban mo. Nakaka-pressure siya pero nakaka-enjoy at the same time. Nakaka-enjoy naman minsan.”

Interviewee 11 shared the same thoughts.

“Siguro having a lot of friends. Nagkaroon ka ng kaibigan dahil sa axie.”

Pay out

Most of the respondents are looking forward to the day of payment. In line with what the respondents had stated,

“Ano...tuwing sahurang (laughs).” -Interviewee 3

“Pag ca-cash out na.” - Interviewee 6

“Pag sasahod.” - Interviewee 8

Win Streak

The majority of respondents agreed that winning the game consecutively is the most thrilling part of playing Axie.

“Pag nananalo ka syempre.” - Interviewee 4

“Ang nakaka excite siguro ano ngayon kasi hmm siguro yung ma-win streak ganon pero yung pinaka masayang mangyari is yung tumaas yung SLP, tumaas yung value ng SLP. Ayun lang ma-win streak ganon laging panalo or mas maganda kapag may bago kang Axie marami kang gagamitin.” - Interviewee 12

“Yung palaging panalo ayun, isan ‘yun sa nakaka-excite na bagay kapag panalo kasi pag palaging talo wala eh, panira ng araw.” - interviewee 16

High Value of SLP

While almost all of the respondents said that the most exciting part in playing Axie is getting paid and winning, some respondents said a different thing.

“Syempre ‘yung kapag ano, malaki ‘yung commission na nakukuha mo. Tuloy-tuloy ‘yung panalo mo sa arena, kasi kapag tuloy-tuloy ‘yung panalo mo malaki ‘yung SLP o ‘yung kita mo.” - Interviewee 14

Being Challenged by the Opponent

Interviewee 7 stated that the most thrilling part in playing Axie was when he is being challenged by his

opponents and thinking of strategies and doing his best to defeat them.

“Siguro sakin kapag nachallenge ako sa mga katapat ko, kumbaga pag iisipan ko talaga kung paano matalo yung katapat ko, talagang ma eenjoy mo yung laro.”

4.2. The Challenges Faced of being an Axie player

This exceptional theme explores the difficulties and struggles that the game has given them. The respondents' stated that they had difficulties in mental health when the minimum quota was not obtained. As shown in Table 3, several themes under difficulties in mental health emerged from the participants' responses. The themes that were identified from the data include: Stress and frustration, sadness, still positive, not affected.

Table 6. *Difficulties in Mental Health*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Stress and Frustration	13
Sadness	1
Still Optimistic	1
Not affected	3

Stress and Frustration

Majority of the respondents shared that stress affects their mental health the most when they don't meet the minimum quota needed. Interviewee 5 said that his manager is strict, so whenever he doesn't meet the minimum quota that is needed, he will receive a warning which causes pressure.

“Medyo stressful kapag di nami-meet yung quota kasi eh mahigpit yung manager na humahawak sa akin. Kapag hindi ko nameet yung quota ko within a week, magkakaroon ako ng warning, kakausapin. Nagp-provide naman sila ng training, kapag hindi nag improve, possible na matanggalan ng scholarship. Kaya minsan stressful, minsan okay naman.”

Interviewee 14 said that it affects his mental health when his stress overlaps.

“Sa mental health, nakaka-stress talaga siya ‘yung tipong sumabay yung school works, tapos puro talo ka pa ngayong araw kaya nakaka-stress talaga.”

Interviewee 18 said that he used to be so strict on himself whenever he did not meet his quota.

“Dati naranasan ko din, kasi sobrang strikto ako sa sarili ko dati na kapag di ko na aabot quota talagang nafu-frustrate ako talaga. Tapos nung first time kong di maabot yung quota for that day talagang nag message ako, ayun babawi ako. Lalo na yung sobrang lose streak na, yung one time na 5 lang yung wins ko, nag memessage rin ako agad sa manager ko, babawi ganyan, sorry. Minomotivate din naman ako ng manager ko kaya nawawala din yung frustration.”

Sadness

1 out of 20 respondents said that they felt sadness everytime they did not meet the minimum quota needed, especially when they did their very best in playing and improving their MMR.

“Minsan nahulumbay ako, tapos yun mag lalaro ako ng mag-damag, saka mag-lalaro ako ng isang linggo, 900 lang MMR ko.” - Interviewee 18

Still Optimistic

Like in sadness, only 1 out of 20 respondents shared that despite continuous loss in Axie, he remained calm and optimist.

“Ano naman sa akin pag di ako umabot sa quota, okay lang kasi kinabukasan parang mababawi ko rin naman. Problema lang ‘pag ano kapag sobrang baba na talagang...talagang iisipin mo rin paano ko ba babawiin ito bukas? Mag iisip ka pero ano at the end of the day maiisip mo rin na kaya kasi sa amin sa quotahan namin ng manager ko ano siya per 2 weeks kaya mahahabol ko rin.” - Interviewee 9

Not Affected

3 out of 20 interviewees shared that they are not affected at all even if they did not reach the minimum quota required by their managers. Interviewee 2 shared that he feels no pressure because his manager, Interviewee 3, is not really strict and does not require any quota.

“Wala. Hindi ka naman ano e...hindi ako napepressure kasi mabait naman si Vincent. Hindi naman siya nang aano ng ano e...(ng iskolar).”

Interviewee 10, one of the respondents, shared that it does not affect his mental health at all.

“Hindi pa kasi ako...hindi lang ako nakaka quota kapag ano e may alis or galing date. May jowa kasi ako pag magkasama kami halos whole day kinakain so pag pagod ako at alam kong di makaka-quota, tutulugan ko na lang. Hindi naman natatamaan mental health ko, ganun pa rin yun lang.”

Table 7. Difficulties in Finance when Minimum Quota

Variable	Frequency
Low income	8
No pressure	11
Never missed a quota	1

Low Income

8 out of 20 respondents claimed that if they did not reach the minimum quota needed, it would result in low income which can affect their payout.

“Sa financial naman, the same lang naman. Pag di nari-reach yung quota, mas mababa yung income na matatanggap mo.” - Interviewee 5

Interviewee 1 shared that if he did not meet the required quota, it would severely affect his finances since he only received 20% of his income.

“Bababa yung sahod. Mababa na nga yung bigay, bababa pa lalo.”

Interviewee 4 said that if you lose too much, your payout will be affected since you didn't meet the required quota due to losing streak, then add the low exchange of SLP which also affects the finances of the players.

“Syempre bababa yung ano... Halimbawa, palitan na ng SLP ganon, mababa lang kikitain mo kasi marami kang talo. Hindi mo nakukuha yung mga kota mo araw araw.”

No Pressure

Most of the participants felt no pressure even when they did not meet the minimum quota. Like Interviewee 3, he stated that not reaching the minimum quota does not affect his finances since playing is not just his focus but also breeding.

“Sakin wala naman kasi hindi lang naman sa paglalaro ng Axie lang ang focus ko e. Nag b-breed din ako.”

Interviewee 6 said that it does not affect him financially but only affects him mentally.

“Para sa akin, di naman sya nakakaapekto sa financial. Sa mental health talaga stress kapag di nakaka-quota.”

Never Missed a Quota

One of the respondents, Interviewee 20, said that he was not mentally and financially affected by this since he always reached his quota. He stated that *“Hindi ko alam yan e kasi nakaka quota naman palagi.”*

Table 8. Doubt from the family and others

Variable	Frequency
Disappointed	8
Neutral feeling	5
Supportive Family	7

Disappointed

7 respondents felt disappointed when their family did not believe them that it is possible to earn money by playing Axie Infinity. Interviewee 12's parents were not convinced when he first introduced Axie to them and doubted where he got the money.

“Medyo nakakalungkot kasi noong una nung iintroduce ko sa kanila ito...yung papa ko kasi hindi

naniniwala. Sabi niya “San galing yung pera?” Akala niya kasi yung Axie is parang alam niyo yung ano manonood parang Youtube. Manonood ka parang iggrind mo yung nood nood. Mismong pinanonoodan niyo is kumikita tas ngayon pag kumita sila may bahagi kayo ganon. Sabi ko inexplain ko siya ng mababaw yung maiintindihan nila. So ayun simula noong nagkaron ako ng manager tas nakikita naman nila na may kita pero nung una di pa rin siya kumbinsido pero later on ano kasi nakabili ako sariling account sa kapatid ko so yun medyo nage-gets na.”

Neutral Feeling

While some respondents felt disappointed when their family didn't believe them when they first introduced Axie to them, some did not mind whether their family would believe them or not. Interviewee 6 stated that what he did was he just proved to his parents the authenticity of Axie.

“Wala, pinatunayan ko lang tapos isang araw nagbigay na lang ako ng pera sa kanila. Naniniwala naman na sila kaya sinusuportahan na nila ko ngayon.”

Supportive Family

While other players were doubted by their parents, some players had very supportive parents from the very beginning and never doubted them. Interviewee 9 shared that his parents never doubt him in everything he does and just supports him all the time. Sean stated,

“Hindi naman sila nag-doubt kahit anong gawin ko sa buhay ko suporta lang pamilya ko kaya wala akong problema sa ganyan.”

Interviewee 10 also have supportive parents. He even said *“siguro mas natuwa sila kasi meron pang extra grocery.”*

Table 9. Confidence in Axie as stable source of income

Variable	Frequency
High	4
Moderate	9
Low	7

High

While average respondents do not think that Axie will last for a lifetime, there are also players who truly trust the possibility of Axie to last for a long time. Interviewee 1 stated that he has high hopes for Axie and he believes that the game will improve more since it is not yet done.

“Sobrang taas. Mataas talaga kasi hindi stable ang SLP. Pwedeng tumaas, pwedeng bumaba. Hindi pa siya tapos e.”

Interviewee 14 shared that he was super confident in Axie and he believes that it is not a short term but for a long term. He also said that he is confident that the Axie will be stable.

“Super confident ako na tatagal ‘yung Axie kasi hindi siya pang short term, pang long term siya. Ibig sabihin kapag tumagal mas lalo pang mag-uupgrade ‘yung Axie, so ang tendency niyan mas lalo pang tataas ‘yung value ng SLP, so lalaki din ‘yung kita mo. Confident ako na magiging stable and kikita ka.”

Moderate

Average respondents believe that Axie is not for a long run and they believe that they can't only depend on Axie as their source of income. Like Interviewee 6, he stated, *“Para sakín kasi hindi naman panghabang buhay ang Axie, parang source of income ko lang sya ngayon habang nag-aaral ako.”*

Interviewee 4 also doubts the stability of Axie and says he was not sure if Axie can be a lifetime source of income or for only a meantime.

“Hindi...mga 50% lang kasi dahil sa palitan. Habang dumadami yung player ng Axie, bumababa yung palitan kaya hindi mo sigurado kung yung Axie ay panghabangbuhay.”

Another respondent says he doesn't take Axie seriously. Interviewee 2 shared *“Ahhh...para sakín ano lang, sakto lang kasi tulad nga ng sinabi ko, hindi ko naman sineseryoso. Kumbaga ano lang...kasi hindi rin nga natin alam kung hanggang kailan or ano.”*

Low

Some players have low hope in Axie and they are just rolling with the punches and going with the flow. Whether they know how crypto works or not, they have low expectations in this game. Like what Interviewee 20 said, “*Sa ngayon parang yung pera hindi kasi mababa yung value, depende sa value.*”

Interviewee 19 believes that investing in study is much more important than investing in Axie. He stated that “*siguro para sa akin sa ngayon mas good pa rin yung mas good investment pa rin yung pag-aaral pero sa Axie po ano kung bibigyan po ng percent siguro 20% tas 80 % sa pag-aaral po.*”

Interviewee 18 also said that he does not rely on Axie and he only considered it as his sideline not as his permanent job.

“*Hindi ko inaasahan yung Axie na makaka-angat sa buhay, for me kasi sideline lang siya na, kikita lang ako ng ganitong pera, tapos ayon for expenses lang sa sarili ko ganon.*”

Table 10. *Dealing with the changing value of SLP*

Variable	Frequency
Expected	19
Pressured	1

Expected

Majority of Axie players interviewed were prepared in the dynamic of the value of SLP, and they already expected the constant changes in its value. Interviewee 1, although he already expected the outcome, says that he still faced the inconsistent change of SLP narrow-eyed.

“*Pikit mata kasi sa araw ng sahod namin don na mag cacashout yung pinaka manager namin. So kung ano yung SLP nung araw na yon, yun na. Wala na kami magawa. Bawal ihold e (yung SLP).*”

Interviewee 3 claimed that he was still calm no matter how unpredictable the SLP would be since he was already used in crypto.

He stated, “*wala, kalmado lang kasi sanay na ko jan e. Sanay na ko sa crypto.*”

Interviewee 14 shared the same sentiment with Vincent. He said that before he entered the crypto world, he was already knowledgeable about it so the unpredictable changes in SLP was not new to him.

“*Yung doon kasi bago ka pumasok sa ganiyan, ‘yan ngang block chain na tinatawag hindi talaga sila stable ibig sabihin kung may knowledge ka doon alam mo na ‘yung papasukin mo.*”

Pressured

Among the 20 interviewees, only 1 interviewee admitted that he gets pressured due to unpredictable behavior of SLP.

“*Ah yon, yon. Nakakaapekto yon syempre kasi bilang ikaw, hindi mo sariling ano (account), syempre mape-pressure ka kasi hindi mo alam kung malay mo biglang mawala di ba. Nag ipon ka tas ayon (biglang nawala).*”

- Interviewee 2

Table 11. *Most Frustrating Part in Playing Axie*

Variable	Frequency
Lose streak	11
Internet connection	4
The game itself	3
Low value of SLP	1
Quota is not obtained	1
None	1

Lose Streak

Almost all players' main problem and number one cause of frustration are lose streaks. Majority of our participants said that losing streak was their number one cause of frustration. Interviewee 16 said that it is more annoying and frustrating when everything happens at once like having a slow internet connection and losing all the time at the same time.

"Minsan sa internet connection pag mabagal tas nag arena ka na talagang nakakainis yon, tapos pag talo pag lose streak ayun sabay-sabay."

Interviewee 9 also said that lose streaks and critical opponents usually made him lose his cool.

"Lose streak. Yung palaging nag c-crit yung kalaban mo yun ganon."

"Siguro...lose streak. Kapag ano pag palaging talo ayun pinaka nakakainis." - Interviewee 12

Internet Connection

While average players' most frustrating experience was lose streaks, some players' major problem is their internet connection. Interviewee 20 said that the most annoying part in playing Axie is when you're about to win and then suddenly you get disconnected.

"Disconnect syempre isipin mo mananalo ka na tas biglang mad-dc"

Interviewee 17 and Interviewee 16 also share the same sentiment with Interviewee 20 regarding the problem of having a slow internet connection.

"Ano lang siguro, if naglalaro ka ng axie tapos mabagal yung internet...Ma-AFK ka." - Interviewee 17

"Minsan sa internet connection pag mabagal tas nag arena ka na talagang nakakainis yon." - Interviewee 16

Interviewee 7 also said that disconnection is the most infuriating part in the game since the energy is the most important in Axie then in just one internet disconnection, your energy will be put to waste.

"Pinaka nakakainis yung pag nadi-disconnect habang in game kasi napaka importante ng energy tapos masasayang lang pag nadisconnect."

The Game Itself

Axie itself has become a problem for some players. Interviewee 18 said that critical used to be his biggest frustration but now it's the bug of the game.

"Yung bug kasi dati yung critical, super dalas nung critical, yun yung nagpu-frustrate talaga ako, one time sobrang napu-frustrate talaga ako, hinugot ko yung keyboard tapos diba naksaksak yung charger ng phone ko, hinila ko talaga like, sobrang frustrated ko. Pero ayun naman, madali naman ako maka-cope up. Saglit lang parang 30 seconds lang akong ganon."

Aside from bugs in games, some players' problem is when they face a terminator opponent.

"Kapag nakatapat ka ng terminator saka kapag lose streak." - Interviewee 1

Interviewee 5 said that he gets pressured everytime he gets an unfavored card since it was given to players randomly and he was worried that he may lose because of his cards, and that is what frustrates him the most.

"Sa Axie kasi may draw ng cards randomly, pag panget yung cards na napunta sayo, medyo nakakapressure na baka matalo ka. Ayun yung nakakainis na part sa axie. Tsaka isa pang nakakainis na part sa axie pag bumababa nang bumababa yung value ng SLP."

Like Interviewee 5, Interviewee 14 also shared the same point of view about the random cards given to him which also makes him annoyed.

"Nakakainis na part eh doon sa mismong laro, kunwari kapag nag arena ka may times na mali-mali 'yung Axie 'yung mga cards mo bigla-biglang binababa. Random kasi 'yun tas kung ano 'yung cards na binigay sa'yo ayun na rin 'yung lalaruin mo, hindi mo mapapatay 'yung isang Axie agad ganon."

Low Value of SLP

Unpredictable behavior of SLP causes frustration to some players. Interviewee 5 stated that the annoying part of Axie is when the SLP keeps on going down or keeps on decreasing its value.

"Tsaka isa pang nakakainis na part sa Axie pag bumababa nang bumababa yung value ng SLP."

Quota is Not Obtained

Quota is the most important part in Axie if you want to earn a huge amount of money. That's why not reaching the required quota is the main cause of exasperation in most players. Interviewee 11 stated, *"Yung ano, yung di mo nahahabol yung reset. Kulang ka sa ano sa adventure, kulang ka sa SLP, di mo natatapos yung daily quest...kasi yun nga puyat ka maglaro di mo na naabutan ay naabutan ka na ng reset."*

Interviewee 15's one of many frustrations in the game includes not reaching the quota needed. He stated that *"ano kapag na lo-lose streak, tapos kapag nag di-disconnect saka kapag dika nakaka quota, nakaka badtrip talaga."*

4.3. The Coping Mechanisms of an Axie player

Coping is a response to mental stress, which is frequently brought on by changes, in order to maintain mental and emotional health. For the Coping Mechanisms of an Axie player category, several coping strategies have been identified based on the descriptions of the participants.

Table 12. Coping Mechanism when Lose Streak

Variable	Frequency
Using different strategies	6
Self-time	10
Hobbies	4

Using different strategies

Every gamer has different strategies to cope with the game they are playing. For Axie Infinity players, using strategies to win the game is essential. Interviewee 1, a participant, shared his strategy when having a hard time playing.

He shared that when he is facing a lose streak game, his strategy is calling someone for help, *"Magtatawag ng gabay. Yung tutulong sakín habang naglalaro. Mag sha-share screen, magtuturo kung ano dapat kong itira"*.

Also, most answers from the participants is that their strategie when having a hard time playing the game, they will stop playing and do other activities to divert their frustrations like what Roimel suggested, a participant.

Interviewee 5, an Axie player, shared his different view of how he will accept and face a lose streak game, he even explained how Axie energy works for him, *"Nagpapahinga ako. Sa axie kasi merong energy, as of now mayroon akong 20 energy, Sa energy kasi ako nakaka-gain ng SLP, sa 20 energy na yon pag naubos na, di na ko makaka-gain ng SLP na naco-convert into peso. Kapag natalo ako ng 2 to 3 times na sunod-sunod, nagpapahinga ako siguro mga 1 hour, 2 hours ganon. Depende sa mood ko kung kailan ko gusto ulit mag laro."*

Interviewee 6 also shared the same strategy similar to Interviewee 5, but Interviewee 6 takes control of his emotions to cope when facing a losing streak.

Self-time

After facing a lose streak game, most players/gamers will eventually stop the game and rest for an hour or so. Interviewee 14, a participant, uses his self-time differently. He said that,

"Kapag natatalo ako, naiinis ako, mas nagiging competitive ako lalo sa Arena. Ayun mas natatanggal 'yung stress ko, staka mas marami akong panalo ngayon kaysa kahapon". Another participant, Interviewee 15 shared another different style of how he spends his self-time.

He shared that, *"Dinadaan ko na lang sa basketball ganun, tapos nakikipagkwentuhan sa mga kaibigan ganun."* Instead of having an alone time, he will go outside to cool down with his friends.

Interviewee 16 is similar to what Interviewee 15 will do after facing a lose streak. Unlike Interviewee 15 who spends his time with his friends, Interviewee 16 enjoys his alone time like Interviewee 14. Interviewee 16 also added that after a long losing game, he will rest for 3 hours while browsing on Facebook or Twitter. He spends his time cooling down for hours.

Hobbies

Most Axie Infinity players watch movies or series to ease the pain that a lose streak game brought them. Interviewee 7, a respondent shared that what he does after several losing games is to rest, sleep and think of regaining what he loss the next day. Interviewee 9 said,

"Ano dinadaan ko sa music, ibang laro, or ano...anime. Kapag wala talagang nangyayari itutulog ko na lang." Interviewee 9 uses the opportunity that a lose streak game brought him to rest, listen to his all-time playlist, play other games or watch his favorite anime. Another participant who grabs the opportunity is Interviewee 11. He said in the interview that whenever he faces a lose streak game, he just uses his extra energy to play in

Adventure in Axie Infinity.

Table 13. *Coping Mechanism when minimum quota is not obtained*

Variable	Frequency
Reached minimum quota	2
Speak with the Manager	3
Not affected	5
Regain loss	10

Reached minimum quota

Reaching quota for Axie Infinity players has been a big part of their gaming experience. Without reaching the minimum quota for a day, the salary that they will gain is low. Despite the pressure of reaching the quota, some respondents had shared that they do not care much about reaching the quota, like what Interviewee 18 said, at first he is very strict with himself about reaching the quota,

“Ngayon chill lang. Dati kasi mataas yung quota namin, 195 SLP per day, oo sobrang laki pero naaabot ko naman yun ngayon kaso kasi, nagreset diba? Tapos nadouble aqua pa yung isa kong team. Sinabi naman kasi ng ano namin na sige laruin nyo lang. Nung sinabi kasi yon parang wala na kasing quota non. Ngayon kasi for every 2 weeks na kami tapos yung pinaka quota talaga is 2730 for 2 weeks yon, eh nareach ko naman na yun ngayon so like, nagexceed na ako don so.”

Most participants also shared the same thoughts about the gaining of their quota. Some shared that they will just focus on the goal and learn their lessons for them to improve for the next game. Another participant, Interviewee 4, shared that he does not need to reach the minimum quota with the reason that he already owns the account. Other Axie Infinity players also do this to gain more money and also to avoid stressing everyday just to reach the quota.

Speak with the Manager

Not reaching the quota for Axie scholars has an impact on their managers. Most participants shared the same experience of not reaching the minimum quota for a day or week and reaching their managers to apologize. The reason why they were not able to reach the quota for that day is that sometimes they lack time because they are studying. Intervention on the internet connection, and sometimes they lack sleep. An experience from a participant,

Interviewee 5 shared that he himself reaches to his manager to schedule him for a training to be a better player, *“As of now, ako mismo lumalapit sa manager ko, nagpapa-schedule ako ng training para tumaas yung knowledge ko as an axie player”*, he said.

Interviewee 7 also shared what he does when he does not reach the minimum quota,

“Sa quota naman, wala, tinatanggap ko na lang kapag di nakakaquota. Nagrereport kami sa manager namin tapos kailangan na lang talaga bumawi kapag di nakaquota, dapat madoble namin yung SLP na makukuha namin ganon.”

He shared that he reports to their manager and tells him that he will eventually reach the quota for the next day. Most of the players share the same experiences when it comes to speaking with their managers, they ask for advice, for apology, and do what they have to do to make it up to their managers by reaching the minimum quota for the next day and doubling it.

4.1.3. Not affected

Some of the players of Axie infinity said that they are not affected whenever their minimum quota is not obtained. Most of them don't mind the losses, instead they use these instances as a motivation to do better in their next game. According to Interviewee 9,

“Ano naman sa akin pag ‘di ako umabot sa quota, okay lang kasi kinabukasan parang mababawi ko rin naman. Problema lang ‘pag ano kapag sobrang baba na talagang...talagang iisipin mo rin paano ko ba babawiin ito bukas? Mag iisip ka pero ano at the end of the day maiisip mo rin na kaya kasi sa amin sa quotahan namin ng manager ko ano siya per 2 weeks kaya mahahabol ko rin”.

He said he is not disappointed whenever the quota is not obtained, he knows that he can still make it next time. There are some players who are not affected when the minimum quota is not obtained because they have their own Account.

Interviewee 14, a scholar player of Axie Infinity but now owned an account said that,

“Sakin kasi ‘yung sarili ko hindi ko na hinahangad ‘yung malaking quota, kahit anong quota makuha ko basta matapos ko lang ‘yung quest kasi sa quest mas maraming achievement kasa sa arena tapos ‘yung 50 limit adventure’”.

He’s not pressured at all because he is happy on any quota he will get.

Regain loss

Most of the participants expressed their sentiments about being given the chance by their managers to regain what they lost for not being able to reach the quota. For them, not reaching the quota for that day is okay because they have an understanding manager looking out for them. Interviewee 2 stated that,

‘Ano, wala. Sakto lang. Kasi ako hindi ko naman iniistress sarili ko. Ganon lang, chill lang.’

Interviewee 5, an Axie player shared that,

‘Gumagaan pakiramdam ko kapag nami-meet ko yung kota, pero sometimes kahit di kataasan basta ma-maintain ko MMR ko, wag lang bumaba.’

He explained that even if he does not reach the minimum quota, it is still okay because his MMR is still high. This explains that they can still regain what they lose if they have a high MMR and still continue playing for the next few days until they reach the quota for two (2) weeks.

Interviewee 7, another participant, an Axie Infinity player stated that,

“Sa quota naman, wala, tinatanggap ko na lang kapag di nakakaquota. Nagrereport kami sa manager namin tapos kailangan na lang talaga bumawi kapag di nakaquota, dapat madoble namin yung SLP na makukuha namin ganon.”

Table 14. Steps to feel better after playing Axie

Variable	Frequency
Everyday routine	12
Playing other games	8

Everyday routine

Players who prioritize themselves will have a better gaming experience according to most gamers. Ian, an Axie player, shared that after long hours of facing the computer and playing Axie Infinity, he will rest by going outside to get some air, which is guaranteed the best option to let both eyes and mind rest.

Another participant, Interviewee 18 shared what he does to make it up to himself,

“Madalas kasi after ko mag-axie ano, kasi inuuna ko talaga school work tapos axie. Tapos after non ano na, most of the time maglalaro ako ng isang game sa valorant or like, league of legends tapos mag start na ako matulog, manunuod muna ako tiktok ganon, or isang episode sa ganyan hanggang sa antukin na talaga ako. Pahinga lang talaga.”

His best idea of self-time is playing other games, watching a series of TikTok videos or an episode in a series that eventually helps him relax to fall asleep. Other participants also shared that to release the stress of hours of playing, they will play basketball or go to the gym.

Like Interviewee 6 who bikes after stressing about axie, *‘Gumagawa lang ako ng activity after ko mag laro tapos nagba-bike sa hapon, ganon lang’*

Playing other games

Playing other games after the stressful and tiring hours of playing Axie Infinity is one of the coping mechanisms found by the players to relax their mind. They said playing other games makes them feel more relieved and calm while enjoying the game. Interviewee 13 and Interviewee 18 are both players of the game Valorant. To ease all of the frustration caused by playing Axie Infinity according to Interviewee 13,

“Naglalaro lang ako Valorant’.

The same statement is said by Interviewee 18,

“Madalas kasi after ko mag-axie ano, kasi inuuna ko talaga school work tapos axie. Tapos after non ano na,

most of the time maglalaro ako ng isang game sa valorant or like, league of legends tapos mag-start na ako matulog”.

He said before sleeping he would play another game but he made sure that he settled all his schoolworks first.

Table 15. *Axie Infinity as Coping Mechanism*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Useful	3
Stressful	11
Sometimes useful and stressful	6

Axie is useful as coping mechanism

In some cases, there are players who use the Axie Infinity game itself to help them lessen the stress. However, there are only 3 out of 20 respondents that see Axie as a useful coping mechanism. One of the participant, Interviewee 5 stated

“Pag ako kasi naglalaro ng Axie, lahat ng problema ko na isasantabi ko kasi focus ako sa laro.”

Also, the other participant enjoys the game because he can invite friends for a friendly match. Interviewee 9 said,

“Ayan kapag kunware ano si Liam minsan aayain ko mag ano “friendly match tayo” ayun kasi walang mawawalang slp sa’yo kaya pwede mong enjoyin yung laro.”

Interviewee 17, the participant who finds Axie Infinity an enjoyable game just like the game Mobile Legends. He stated that,

“Ano siguro like kapag nastress ganon, naglalaro lang ako Axie. Kasi kahit ma-lose streak ka nakaka-enjoy pa din maglaro Axie. Kumbaga game pa din naman siya diba? Kumbaga parang ginawa ko siyang ML (Mobile Legends) ganon.”

Axie is stressful and not considered for coping mechanism

Meanwhile, many of the respondents have agreed that Axie is not a coping mechanism and that the game just causes them to be more stressed out. There are 11 out of 20 participants that see Axie as a stressor. Some of the respondents stated:

“Dagdag stress lang yung Axie e minsan kasi nakakastress talaga yung axie.” - Interviewee 20

“Hahahaha! Coping mechanism ba yan, yan nga yung stress eh. Hahahaha dati siguro oo. Nung mga first day syempre enjoy enjoy pa, schoolworks tapos ay maglalaro muna ako axie, tapos parang chill muna kasi tumataas naman MMR, ay mataas okay lang. Kaso ngayon di na eh, siya na yung source of stress.” - Interviewee 18

“Nakakadagdag pa kasi aarangkada nanaman ako sa laro lagi ko siyang iniisip so dagdag stress talaga siya. Hindi siya nakabawas ng stress kasi dagdag problema pa siya hahahaha.” - Interviewee 16

“Actually ‘di ko ginagamit ‘yung Axie pang cope eh, kasi sa Axie rin na i-stress ako. Kadalasan pag na i-stress ako nanonood ako anime or kaya natutulog ako.” - Interviewee 13

Axie are sometimes useful or stressful

Some of the participants admitted that there are times Axie can be useful and stressful as a coping mechanism. There are 6 out of 20 players that find Axie useful and stressful. One of the participants, Interviewee 11 said

“Uhm minsan nagagamit ko siya sa mga friendly battle, inaaya ko yung mga tropa ko doon na may Axie din. Ganon lang medyo nagkaka bet game tas bonding na rin. Bonding na rin naming magkakaibigan.”

Meanwhile, Interviewee 8 stated,

“Minsan nakakadagdag pa kasi ng stress yan. Depende sa mood ng axie, kapag win streak ka malaking tulong sa stress mo yan, pero pag lose streak nakakadagdag stress.”

Also, Interviewee 7 answered.

“Minsan kapag nakakaramdam ako ng stress, minsan naglalaro na lang ako ng axie kasi minsan nakaka enjoy naman talaga, pero madalas axie ang dahilan bakit kami naii-stress kasi ayun nga pag malalakas mga kalaban namin.”

Interviewee 2 also shared,

“Depende. Kasi kung mananalo ka, alam mong kikita ka ng ano (malaki), so hindi siya makakadagdag pero pag talo ka...depende naman.”

Table 16. *Stressful situations in personal life affects Axie player's performance*

Variable	Frequency
Affected	1
Not affected	11
Somewhat affected	8

Axie players personal life and performance are affected

1 out of 20 respondents said that his personal life was affected by the stressful situation because of playing Axie Infinity.

“Minsan ganon, ang ginagawa ko minsan nagpapalamig muna. Minsan nadadala ko rin yung laro sa bahay o sa sarili ko”. According to Interviewee 6 his time playing Axie Infinity sometimes affects his daily life.

Axie player's personal life and performance are not affected

Half of the respondents stated that their personal life and performance are not affected by the game Axie Infinity. They can still do whatever they want even if they are engaged in the game. Players still manage their time despite a busy schedule, their daily lives and other responsibilities are still obtained. On the interview of Interviewee 5 he said that,

“Hindi naman nakakaapekto ‘yung personal kong problema pag nag lalaro ng axie kasi focus talaga ko pag naglalaro. Hindi rin naman nakakaapekto yung Axie sa personallife ko, more on ang axie nakakaapekto talaga sa physical health, kasi napupuyat. Minsan gusto maglaro sa madaing araw, minsan sa umaga, may mga player talaga na bumabase sa time gap ng paglalaro, kaya nakakaapekto sa physical health dahil sa puyat. Sa mental naman, hindi naman din nakakaapekto dahil mas naboboost pa nga yung thinking”.

While Interviewee 7 said giving himself a time to compose himself before going back to the game

“Minsan nagbibigay ako ng time kapag okay na ko, tsaka lang ako maglalaro para di matalo sa laro or parang gusto ko lang matapos na yung laro. Kaya inaano ko muna yung sarili ko, parang cinu-cool down ko muna yung sarili ko, pag okay na ko ayun tsaka ako maglalaro. Pag naii-stress naman ako sa axie, halimbawa na lose streak ako ng limang beses, ang ginagawa ko ini-stop ko muna yung laro ko ng ilang oras kasi talagang maii-stress ka kapag tuloy tuloy talo mo, kasi wala ka talagang kikitaing SLP.

Like Interviewee 7, Interviewee 8 also managing his time and making sure that he does not prioritizing Axie Infinity on a daily basis

“Basta time management lang talaga, mamanage mo mga kailangan mo sa buhay kahit may axie ka. May times na kapag stress ka, iba na takbo ng isip mo so maiiba strategy mo sa paglalaro ng axie”. Roimel also said he don't prioritize Axie *“Ako ano, syempre inuuna ko muna yung mas mahahalagang bagay kasi pwede namang gawing last na ano yon...kumbaga sa araw, pwede mo siyang ihuli kasi hindi naman yon ang pinaka priority.”*

Axie player's personal life and performance are somewhat affected

Some players admitted that there are some times that Axie affects their personal life and performance. Interviewee 19 said that:

“...Oo siguro ganon parang minsan mga kapatid ko napagbubuntungan ko ng galit ganon.”

Interviewee 18 also claimed that somehow it affects him somehow.

“Yung una muna yung personal life. Wala naman kasi talaga akong problema sa buhay. Hindi siya nakakaapekto sa playing ko. Minsan kapag stress naman sa school, nakakaapekto rin siya sa paglalaro ko ng axie kasi syempre time management eh. Tapos hala dami kong dapat

ipasa today tapos kailangan ko pang laruin yung axie ko ganon. Nakakaapekto siya minsan ganon, nawawalan ako ng focus sa laro, hindi ako nagiging strategic ganon. Tapos kapag vice versa naman stress ka minsan sa axie, nadadala ko din siya minsan sa bahay.”

Interviewee 7 shared how he handles the times when Axie affects him sometime.

“Minsan nagbibigay ako ng time kapag okay na ko, tsaka lang ako maglalaro para di matalo sa laro or parang gusto ko lang matapos na yung laro. Kaya inaano ko muna yung sarili ko, parang cinu-cool down ko

muna yung sarili ko, pag okay na ko ayun tsaka ako maglalaro. Pag naii-stress naman ako sa axie, halimbawa na lose streak ako ng limang beses, ang ginagawa ko ini-stop ko muna yung laro ko ng ilang oras kasi talagang maii-stress ka kapag tuloy tuloy talo mo, kasi wala ka talagang kikitang SLP. “

Table 17. *Playing Axie while in the middle of pandemic*

Variable	Frequency
Extra income	7
Stay at home job	8
Opportunity while pandemic	5

Extra income

Play-to-earn games are a big help to sustain the needs of some respondents especially in this time of pandemic where jobs are mostly needed.

“Mostly talaga, yung axie nagiging source of income ko ngayong pandemic. Kahit ngayon na wala akong trabaho, at least may income ako kahit nasa bahay lang.” - Interviewee 5

“Sa akin kasi para ano makatulong ako sa pamilya ko kahit nag aaral pa lang ako, nakakapagbigay na ko.” - Interviewee 6

“Syempre motivation mo ‘yun lalo na pandemya, totally ‘yung parents mo nawalan ng trabaho pero sakin naman medyo stable naman ‘yung work ng Papa ko since siya lang ‘yung may work. Nakatulong siya ngayong pandemya since nga kumikita ka.” - Interviewee 14

Stay at Home Job

Some respondents consider Axie Infinity as a stay at home job during this pandemic. Some of the respondents stated:

“Oo. Nakatulong siya ng sobra nung pandemic kasi di ba nasa bahay lang tayo, wala tayo halos ginagawa so ayon lang yung ginagawa ko.” - Interviewee 3

“So, ayun, dahil online naman yung axie basta may pc ka or phone makakapaglaro ka kahit pandemic kasi di mo naman need lumabas pa, kahit nasa loob ka lang ng bahay. Ako kasi phone lang gamit ko, so ayun magload lang ako, tsaka ang kagandahan pa ay hawak mo ang oras kasi pwede ka mag laro anytime. Tsaka 3-5 hours lang naman ang paglalaro, di tulad ng mga normal work na 8 to up ang working hours.” - Interviewee 7

“Wala namang kaso don kasi nag-a-Axie ka nasa bahay lang, nasa pandemic tayo di tayo makalabas. So okay na may Axie kasi parang isa yan sa mga nakatulong na imbes lumabas, kumota ka na lang.” - Interviewee 9

“Uhm kase naman yung Axie, homebased. Homebased game hmm di ko naman siya nakikitang makakaapekto sa akin kasi nasa bahay naman ako lagi. Kaya may pakinabang nagagamit ko siya, di naman siya nakakaapekto sa akin ngayong pandemic kasi hindi naman ako laging lumalabas.” - Interviewee 11

Opportunity while Pandemic

Earning while in the middle of a pandemic is truly an opportunity. Finding a job is not easy these days especially since it is pandemic. Axie Infinity is seen as an opportunity by some of the respondents.

“Ano sa ngayon uhm pilitin na lang enjoyin yung game kaya diba sinabi ko nga di ko mahanap enjoyin yung game pero tinitii ko para ngayong pandemic lahat ng tao kailangan kumita kaya mas magandang opportunity to na ano gawing pagkakitaan naman na income pangtulong din sa magulang ganon.” - Interviewee 19

“Ano nasa gitna tayo ng pandemic ahh ano e mahirap kumita ng pera ngayon e kasi pandemic parang ayun pinaka inspirasyon mo kung bakit ka nagg-grind e, bakit naghanap ka ng manager, bakit nag grind ka sa discord para mukha. Parang ganon ayun yung pinaka dahilan mo para pagpatuloy mo paglalaro.” - Interviewee 12

“Actually kaya naman, kasi mas pumabor nga dahil pandemic hindi rin naman tayo masyadong nakakalabas ng bahay so madaming time kaya ayun parang...okay lang na nagkaroon ng pandemic.” - Interviewee 16

5. DISCUSSION

This study explores the lived experiences and challenges faced by the Axie Infinity player during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the participants' reports, life as an Axie player has not been simple. The purpose of this research was to examine and explain one of the most important aspects of Axie Infinity players' lives that is

rarely discussed in the Blockchain Community in the Philippines. The Axie Infinity Filipino players' lived experiences are examined in this study. More information was gathered and analyzed to gain a better understanding of their difficulties and coping mechanisms in various aspects of their lives as players. After interviewing 20 Axie players, several observations about their attitudes about self-image, life changes, mental health and financial challenges, and coping techniques when losing streak or when the minimum quota is not reached were made.

Furthermore, the game Axie was introduced to some participants through acquaintances, friends, and family members, whilst others discovered the game on their own through social media and the internet. The majority of participants that are mostly students said that the main reason they played Axie during the pandemic was for financial reasons because they could earn money by playing Axie, which they did for 2-5 hours per day and all of the participants began playing in the year 2021, which is when the game Axie in the Philippines takes off.

Moreover, when it comes to how players perceive themselves, some consider themselves as an average player, whilst others are certain that they see themselves as successful Axie players. All of the participants encountered stressors in their life as Axie players. Axie players deal with stress in a variety of ways, some feel frustrated by the situation, some separate themselves from the game to recharge, and still, others show courage and remain cheerful while playing the game. Axie Infinity players require a strong psychological, spiritual, emotional, and physical support system to cope with a loss of sleep and rest, the strain of meeting quotas, poor internet connections, social judgments, and inability to concentrate in both playing and academics. Axie Infinity players gain self-esteem by overcoming adversity.

6. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn based on the study's findings: For the most part, playing Axie Infinity is not as easy as it looks according to Axie Infinity players who have been interviewed. Most of the Axie Infinity players are students and it takes a lot of their time playing Axie Infinity that most of their time is spent playing instead of resting and studying just to reach their quota for that day. Axie Infinity is both a blessing and a stress.

The Axie Infinity play-to-earn game is described as a blessing because it became the number one source of income of the participants despite being amid this Pandemic. It also became their source of stress because it adds pressure, tension, and strain to their lives as both a player and a student.

Axie Infinity players need a strong support system in their psychological, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects to withstand the situation of lacking sleep and rest, the pressure of the need to reach the quota, slow internet connection, judgments of the people that surround them, and not being able to focus in both playing and studying. Finally, Axie Infinity players value themselves by coping with negative experiences and challenges they have been through.

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