

# Study of Visual Interaction and Experience to Play Farmville Game on Facebook

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## Abstract

*Among social networking media contained in the Internet, Facebook is a social networking media is widely known in Indonesia. In Facebook, there are game application Farmville themed simulation plantation, which is one of popular game and become a phenomenon among the game players in Facebook. Farmville allows players to have a plantation fantasy that consciously or unconsciously, spurring consumerism in the purchase in excess of objects in the game FarmVille. Based on events, it is interesting to analyze gaming experience in Farmville and to identify it to get the meaning of such actions.*

*This study uses phenomenology approach, using data from 10 Farmville gamers who describes his/her experience through in-depth interviews. Informant statements were analyzed with theory of game, theory of player experience and theory of motivation to play. The results showed a tendency of the player interaction experience associated with motivation, purpose, immersivity, graphic and thematic events contained in Farmville. Involving a total (immersivity) players in the game of social media, can occur through the impulse to pursue pleasure, followed by fear, which signified the rules of the game and the visual objects in a certain time. The meaning of the player actions in social media game is escapism, comfort, achievement, shades, embodiment, identity and relationships.*

**Keywords:** Phenomena, Experience, Interaction, FarmVille, Facebook.

## 1. Introduction

The development of the use of internet media in Indonesia can be seen with the widespread use of social media websites. According to Nguyen (2011) states that Indonesia is top ranks in terms of increase in Internet users in Southeast Asia with the penetration of social networking sites in Indonesia achieving the highest percentage at 90%. Examples of social media websites such as social networking sites like Facebook or broadcasting site YouTube is a site that contained in the Internet network.

According to Boyd (2007), social networking sites are site-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, communicate with other users and connected to each other, as well as scroll through the list and see the connections that formed the other users in the system. Of several social networking sites, Facebook is the best social networking site in 2011, followed by MySpace and Bebo in the a second and third, it is reported in the site toptenreview.com (2010). Indonesia is second largest after the United States in terms of number of users of Facebook, where Facebook users in Indonesia median age of 18 years to 24 years, reported by Facebook Marketing Statistics (2010).

In the Facebook social networking site there are third-party applications. Of all types of existing applications such as business applications and quizzes, there are also gaming applications. Game application in Facebook site not only serves as mere entertainment, but also as a social media. Game is a term commonly heard in everyday life. The term gaming in Indonesia is generally used to refer to electronic games such as computer games (PC games) or console games (Playstation, Nintendo and so on).

Jonas Smith (2001) in Newman (2004:5), states that the game is a medium that is often forgotten, and there are two possible causes for it. First, the game is often regarded as a medium for the children who will grow over time and does not require further study. Secondly, the game is considered a low level of art, which often disproportionately compared to the medium of film. Thus, regular games underestimated for review. In fact, according to Newman (2004:3), there are three reasons for researching the game seriously, the game industry is vast; popularity of the game, and the game is an example of a form of human-computer interaction.

Games in the social networking site Facebook, is basically a single player game with multiplayer interaction. In a game that can be found at Facebook, in general, gameplay and visual content presented simply. Rao (2008) states that “Facebook applications do in fact fulfil the definition of ‘games’, then it is usually as ‘casual game’, a particular kind of games performed online that is, among other thing”.

According to Firman (2010) in vivanews.com, Facebook is the most popular game, FarmVille is capable of reaching 76 million users and a gaming

phenomenon for Facebook users. Experience in playing the game FarmVille became a phenomenon in society. FarmVille has a high immersivity, capable of making the players dissolved to the game in the gaming world and forget about their activities in the real world.



**Figure 1. FarmVille Graphic Interface**  
**Source: [http://www.gamezebo.com/files/\\_embedded/Social%20Games/FarmVille/FV%20Screen%20Shot%203.jpg](http://www.gamezebo.com/files/_embedded/Social%20Games/FarmVille/FV%20Screen%20Shot%203.jpg) (01/06/2011)**

Citing Budiarti and Agung (2005:15) states that in addition because of the gap between reality and expectations, problems can arise because of the ambiguity, skepticism towards a phenomenon, or because of the gap between the phenomena with each other. With the phenomenon or the fact that there are experienced Farmville players, then emerged a few unanswered questions, namely; What experience is gamers experienced when interacting in the FarmVille, what visual interaction is contained in these experiences?; What is meaning from the experience of interaction between players and with the FarmVille game world?. Therefore, the question becomes background to the research problem. Phenomena that occur in the community such as the experiences reported in some media to be an interesting thing to be explored and identified.

## 2. Method

The research is a qualitative study conducted in a systematic to describe the player experience phenomenon of interaction in the FarmVille game. From the aspect of the research area, research case study conducted with users of the Facebook site in the Municipality of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. This was based on the idea that Bandung is one of the major cities in Indonesia, which has quite a lot of Facebook users. Facebook users in Bandung reached a high percentage of all users in Indonesia and became the second largest city after Jakarta, quoted in the article pilihponsel.com (2011).

The approach used in this study using phenomenology approach. The approach of phenomenology as a method in this study is based on

the purpose of the study in order to reveal the hidden meaning of something or digging that occurs from an event or experience related Farmville game. According Mudjiyanto and Kenda (2010:55), "The power of phenomenological research method lies in the ability of researchers to enter the field of perception of others, to see life as seen". Therefore the phenomenological method is an appropriate method to achieve the research objectives. According Van Manen (1990) in Creswell (2007:253), "*Phenomenology is not only a description but also an interpretative process in which the researcher makes an interpretation*". Referring to the above statement, then the research is not only a phenomenological description of the experience and behavior that occurs in the player, but also there is the interpretation of the researcher to spell out the things contained therein.

Phenomenology that used in this research is *Realistic Phenomenology* which emphasizes a thorough search of the human in terms of various objects, which includes actions and motives and personality value or meaning for the doer, Mudjiyanto and Kenda (2010:55). There are several steps in the method of phenomenology. The steps performed in the research consists of several stages such as what is stated in the Kuswarno Cresswell (2009), the planning phase of research, the data collection phase, the data analysis phase and phase to make conclusions.

In the planning phase of research, the steps are to make a list or reference questions, selecting informants and document review. Number of informants in Creswell (1998:65 & 113) recommend 10 people to be interviewed as a participant. It is also supported by Boyd (2001) in Groenewald (2004) states that "*10 participant or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation*". Thus, in this study using the informant amounted to 10 players. Creswell (1998) also stated that in phenomenological research informants at least in the same location or region.

Activities in obtaining primary data in phenomenological research through in-depth interviews or commonly called the qualitative interviews. For ease of access and licensing, the interviews conducted on campus, campus location selection associated with the average Facebook user is a student and aged 18 to 24 years (Facebook Marketing Statistics, 2010). Indonesian Computer University selected as the campus-based computers in Bandung. Elections due to campus facilities and computers-based that are familiar with internet access such facilities for the students.

Theory is used as references in this study include *Theory of Element Game* by Newman (2004) and Oxlund (2004), *Theory of Player Experience* from Aki Jarvinen (2008) and *Theory of Achievement-Social-Immersivity Motives* by Nick Yee.

**Table 1: Theory of Element Game**

Element	Short Description
Graphics	Every look and every effect is shown attached to it.
Sound	Any music or sound contained in the game while playing.
Interface	All that players use to make contact to run the game.
Gameplay	Components that make up the experience, challenging players to come back and keep playing.
Story	The story that started at the beginning of the game, while playing up to the end of the game.

*Theory of Element Game* is used to identify the structure of the object of study contained in the FarmVille game. Identify the FarmVille structure is used as a reference in determining the elements or structures in the game that can be asked on informants related to experiences in its path.

**Table 2: Theory of Player Experience**

Goals	Emotions	Self and Others
<b>(Satisfaction)</b> Hunger, Sleep (to get)	<b>(Happiness)</b> Sub-goals being achieved	<b>(Cooperation)</b> Player goals coop with others player
<b>(Enjoyment)</b> Travel, Competition, Exercise (to go)	<b>(Sadness)</b> Failure of major plan or loss of active goal	<b>(Versus)</b> Player goals versus others player's goals
<b>(Achievement)</b> Skill, Social relation, Power (have, to be)	<b>(Fear)</b> Goal treated, goal conflict	
<b>(Preservation)</b> Territory, newborn child (to keep up, to hold on)	<b>(Anger)</b> Active plan frustated	
<b>(Crisis)</b> Health, fire, storm (to hurry)	<b>(Disgust)</b> Gustary goal violated	
Instrumental Help others goal by system		
Delta Help others goal by general planing		

*Theory of Player Experience* used to determine what the experience should be provided by the informant as a player, so that the information obtained from the informant can be synchronized with the existing scientific theories. In a literature study also used the *Theory of Achievement-Social-Immersivity Motives* from Nick Yee (2006). This *Theory of Achievement – Social – Immersivity Motives* used to be a reference in

determining the type of the main motivations of what happened FarmVille gaming experience for the informants.

**Table 3: Theory of Achievement – Social – Immersivity Motives**

Achievement Motives	Social Motives	Immersivity Motives
<b>(Advancement)</b> Progress, power Accumulation, Status	<b>(Socializing)</b> Casual Chat, Helping Others, Making Friends	<b>(Discovery)</b> Exploration, Lore, Finding Hidden Things
<b>(Mechanics)</b> Numbers, Optimization, Templating, Analysis	<b>(Relationship)</b> Personal, Self-Disclosure Find and Gift Support	<b>(Role-Playing)</b> Story Line, Character History Roles and Fantasy
<b>(Competition)</b> Challenging Others, Provocation, Domination	<b>(Teamwork)</b> Cellebration Groups, Group Achievements	<b>(Customization)</b> Appearance, Accessories, Style, Color Schemes
		<b>(Escapism)</b> Relax, Escape from RealLife, Avoid RealLife Problems

### 3. Result and Discussion

Referring to the phenomenology method disclosed by Creswell, Hanson and Morales (2007:255) which states;

“The first question allows us to build a textual description, and a structural description. In the first data anaylisis, we would go through the transcripts from 10 interviews and begin highlighting significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of the overall timing experiences. Next, we would array these statements on paper and collapse them into meaning units or broader themes.”

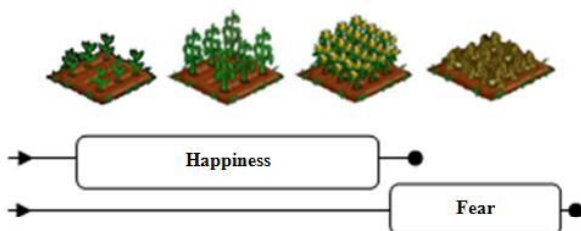
So therefore, in the process of phenomenological analysis FarmVille game, do some stages such as detailing the results of interviews statements and then grouped into meaningful units. Based on interviews, there are some statements which tend to have similar experiences from 10 informants who were interviewed. Tendency of the experience gained from the statements of the informants vary with each style of delivery. Tendency statement and meaningful experiences, as an example is this table 4;

**Table 4: Statements related motivations**

Players	Statements
Player 1	" <i>Soalnya banyak yang mainin</i> ".
	" <i>Because a lot of them playing it</i> "
Player 2	" <i>Buat nunggu waktu luang aja</i> "
	" <i>Just to wait for free time</i> "
Player 3	" <i>Biar ga ketinggalan trend</i> "
	" <i>In order not to miss the trend</i> "
Player 4	" <i>Seneng kenalan sama orang...</i> "
	" <i>Nice to meet each person...</i> "
Player 5	" <i>Buat relasi sosial</i> "
	" <i>For social relation</i> "
Player 6	" <i>Selingan aja kalo ngerjain tugas</i> ".
	" <i>Interlude while working on task</i> "
Player 7	" <i>Ngisi waktu gada kerjaan</i> "
	" <i>For spent time because idle</i> "
Player 8	" <i>Hiburan sementara waktu...</i> "
	" <i>Entertainment while...</i> "
Player 9	" <i>Buat hiburan aja, ngisi waktu</i> "
	" <i>Only for entertainment, to spent time</i> "
Player 10	" <i>Pelarian dari dunia nyata...</i> "
	" <i>Escaping from real life...</i> "

Based on the classification of motivational statements expressed by the informants, there is a tendency statement on players 1, 3, 4 and 5 (for social relations), players 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (to fill the time) and player 10 (for the escape). Each informant measures can be analyzed using the theory which varies depending on their relevance to the statement of the informant. For example to find the play motivation, research used *Theory Achievement-Social-Immersivity Motives*.

Gardening is an activity that tends often done by players. Informant statements regarding total fusion in experienced game, than the statement can be analyzed through the *Theory of player experience*. Immersive tendency that occurs in FarmVille occurred more because of the goals to be achieved. Achievement goals for harvest are goals that dominate immersivity FarmVille players. Immersivity is can happens because emotion to be a stronger player, and are included of fear in the gameplay and story, such as crop failure that is indicated by a feedforward visual like wilting plants.



**Figure 2. Visual happiness - fear**

Visual animation sequences contained on plant growth stage, contains a value that indicates a threat to player, towards the positive rewards as well as negative towards future rewards. Animation sequences also do not know the time of day or night in the real world, so the player made to feel constantly threatened in play Farmville game. tas of goals and emotions derived from the graphics and gameplay elements.

**Table 5: Theory relation**

Theory of Achievement – Social – Immersivity Motives	Theory of Player Experience	Theory of Element Game
(Immersivity)	(Self & Others)	(Story)
(Social)	(Emotions)	(Sound)
(Achievement)	(Goals)	(Interface)
		(Graphic)
		(Gameplay)

Based on the classification of visual objects forming environment in the FarmVille, then there is a visual object; avatar; plants; trees; animals; buildings, vehicles; objects of decoration and complementary (fences, ornamental ponds, flag pole and so forth). Of these objects can be grouped back into the visualization subject - object of primary - secondary object. Subject is player avatar; primary object is an item or object that can produce something like gardens, trees and livestock. While the secondary objects, are objects of decoration such as fences, power lines and other complementary objects.

#### • Interaction subject with subject

Visually, the relationship between avatars with other avatars can be seen from the costumes worn by avatars. Statement informants tend that avatar displayed with the realization that his players, made some sort of deal indirectly, that if the avatar is used sexed female, it is alleged that the player is user avatar is female, though could have been a mistake.



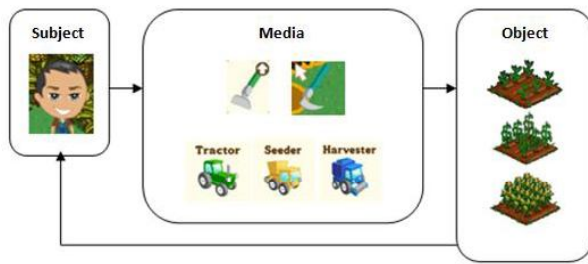
**Figure 2. Interaction subject - subject**

#### • Interaction subject with primary object

Avatar can perform various actions on the primary object, ie to prepare the land with tractors, using hoe or using a vehicle, then plant the seeds, hose down and fertilize then harvest the plant. In such interactions,



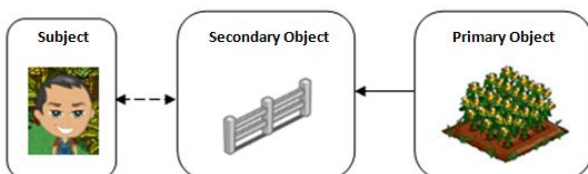
each (such as avatar & plant) give feedback and feedforward from the primary object to the subject, in a visual form.



**Figure 3. Interaction avatar – primary object**

- **Interaction subject with secondary object**

Secondary objects are objects that adorn decorations plantation. Objects of decoration used to embellish the look of the environment in the world of FarmVille. Avatar as the subject will move in accordance with the objects of decoration that blocks the flow passage as boundaries. When there is a fences around the garden, avatars cannot move closer to the garden. The secondary object (decorations) also serves as a barrier in the interaction between subjects (avatars) with primary objects (plant). If the diagram is made, it can be described as follows;



**Figure 4. Interaction avatar – secondary object**

This also works in reverse, where the primary object that sends the message interaction (visualization ready to harvest) for the subject (player), the subject is able to receive messages but cannot respond to messages interaction (to harvest) if there is the secondary object that serves as a barrier (obstacle).

According Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004), stating "Meaning is the core of transcendental phenomenology of science, a design for acquiring and collecting the data that explicates the essence of human experience". Thus, the phenomenological research, meaning in an experience is important to be expressed. Some informant actions can have meaning. In FarmVille, there are meanings contained in the actions of the player such as escape, comfort, achievement, shades, embodiment, identity and relationships. The meaning of various things happening influenced background of the players, so that these meanings can be perceived differently by each player FarmVille.

## 4. Conclusion

Informants in this study represent only a small of fraction FarmVille players, so it cannot be equated to the all FarmVille players. This study is a preliminary study which is still very likely to be developed. Based on the phenomenological research that has been conducted to answer the research question, has described the experience of what happened to the informant, what visual interaction is contained in the FarmVille game and what is formed the meaning of the experience of the player.

In the game of social media, there is a motivation related experience playing, related the immersivity, experiences related the goal, graphical display, subject-objects interaction and related to the forming environment. In the social media game, there is some motivation in playing that departs from socialization motivation, but it can also leave from other motivations such as the motivation to escape from the routine of player satisfaction. Immersivity in the social media game, can occur through the encouragement to pursue pleasure (happiness) followed by fear, so as to make the player feel happy once threatened by the conditions signified by the rules (system) and visualization objects that contains the value of happiness and fear in a given time.

Game in social media, is able to displace some social competition in the real world to the virtual world by creating goals that contains the value of self and others so that there is competition with other players, either directly or indirectly. Freedom to determine the target in achieving the objectives (goals) in the social media game can create the motivation to compete (competition motives), especially with the players themselves alone in meeting an achievement. Display environment in a game, which is expected to be able to create an atmosphere where is gameplay provides an opportunity for players to select and position the objects in the game accompanied by certain rules. Graphical objects in a game that has local values create an immersivity stronger for the players. Avatars customization in game social media become important even with the limited choices and can affect the total immersivity for the player. Elements of religion and belief in the social media game, is able to offer kinship values (relationship) between the players though with different motivation. In the social media game which allows players to adjust the environmental objects at the time of play, can be divided into several object classes that allow better feedback or feedforward in each class. In the social media game, there are meanings contained in the actions of the player such as escape, comfort, achievement, shades, embodiment, identity and relationships. Meanings that occur in this study can be viewed differently by other players. Cases of excessive consumerism in buying objects in the game as well as the case of total immersivity that make an accident or even death, do not occur in the experience of Indonesian informants.

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