Rajabhat Chiang Mai Research Journal : RCMRJ
Vol. 24 No. 1 January – April 2023 : TCI 1, ACI

# Measures to Promote Creative and Safe Online Games for Children and Youth Through a Collaboration Network

**Theeravut Ninphet and Kantita Sripa***

Faculty of Social Science, Police Cadet Academy, Thailand

E-mail: theeravutn@rpca.ac.th and kantitas_sp@rpca.ac.th*

*Corresponding author

*(Received: 30 October 2022, Revised: 3 December 2022, Accepted: 23 December 2022)*

https://doi.org/10.57260/rcmrj.2023.261694

## Abstract

Nowadays, children and youth have easy access to online games. Inappropriate online gaming can be harmful to young people. As a result, the purpose of this research study is to study the situation of online games and online gaming among children and youth, and to create a network of collaboration in order to develop measures to promote creative and safe online games for youth through research and development (R&D). The findings revealed that Thai children and youth play more online games, and Thailand still has legal restrictions on online game services. The measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth are based on the principle of *"controlling and promoting"*, which consists of (1) controlling the manufacturing process; (2) controlling the process of providing online game services; (3) surveillance and supervision; (4) promoting the production of creative and safe games; (5) promoting secure gaming online. The implementation of measures requires mechanisms at both the policy and operational levels; It should be implemented in a network affiliate manner to promote the products and services of creative and safe online games for young people.

**Keywords:** Gaming policy, Juvenile, Online game, Creative game, Safe game

## Introduction

One of the world's fastest-growing industries is gaming. In 2019, data from gaming industry analytics firm Newzoo revealed that the global gaming industry was worth two and three times more than the global music and film industries in the same year, with a market capitalization expected to exceed $218 billion by 2023 (Marketeer, 2021). This is consistent with the widespread use of internet gaming in today's world. According to a survey of the critical factors of the ever-increasingly popular online games, the first is that the Internet is now more accessible and faster, allowing people to play online games from anywhere. According to the Digital Stat Thai 2021 survey, 69.5% of Thais had Internet access in early 2021, which is higher than the global average. Thai internet users will be ranked fifth in the world in 2020. (Peer Power, 2020). Another critical factor is e-Sports, a sport derived from online games that is becoming more popular. Thailand's e-sports industry is expanding, as it ranks first among the top five countries in terms of live gaming streaming on Facebook, demonstrating its popularity. Another factor is government support, which resulted in the establishment of the Thailand E-Sports Federation (TESF) in 2017, causing Thailand's gaming industry to grow even more as a result of the creation of many new gaming careers (Peer Power, 2020).Besides this, several educational institutions offer esports and game development courses in order to produce a large number of professionals to feed the industry (Lao, 2018), demonstrating the gaming industry's support in all forms and capacities.

The expansion of the online gaming industry is beneficial to the economy. However, given the social and public health consequences, there is a problem that needs to be addressed and prevented, particularly among vulnerable teenagers who play video games constantly and ignore school. They are so preoccupied with the game that they have no interaction with the people around them, which leads to violence (Ramsutra, 2014; Pengpan, 2017). Regarding the hidden dangers of online games, some children might be persuaded to spend money. It was found that some children spend more than 5,000 baht per month (The Social Communication Group, Office of the National Health Commission, 2021). They are lured into gambling hidden in the game and tempted to lose property or be sexually harassed by people in online gaming. However, some types of online games can positively affect children and young people, such as entertaining, promoting thinking, technology, and teamwork skills, and observing strategy games and etiquette. Furthermore, playing online games can generate income and create careers for children and youth (Radio and Media Association for Children and Youth, 2021; Phewku, 2017). In fact, it is impossible to prohibit children and young people from accessing online games, while so many online games are still inappropriate for children and youth, and there are still dangers lurking in online gaming, such as the previously mentioned negative effects of playing online games on children and youth. Therefore, it is critical to promote creative and safe online games for children and adolescents. In terms of society, Thailand still has some good news. As it has been discovered, some game developers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of social gaming and service, such as dealing decisively

with aggressive and rude players in games. or adding a menu to assist players in the game, such as adding assistance for colorblind players or having captions for the deaf, etc.

**Theories concerning children's and youth's online gaming**

According to the literature review, an increasing number of Thai children and youth are playing online games. A study of 3,292 students in grades 1-6, Vocational Certificate, and Advanced Certificate found that 85.18% played online games, 88.57% were male, and 83.93% were female. The study also discovered that 69.79 percent of people played games almost every day. (Social Communication Group Office of the National Health Commission, Social Communication Group, 2021) The following theories can explain children's and youth's online gaming behavior.

***Neo-Freudians of Alfred Adler,*** one of his most important ideas of Adler is the concept of superiority and inferiority, in which he believes Human beings have one important motivation: "Striving for superiority," the desire to be outstanding. It is associated with feelings of inferiority and the pursuit of compensation. Adler believes weakness makes humans have "inferiority feelings," trying to compensate for their inferiority. In addition, if the online gaming behavior of children and youth is described under these concepts, it may be due to the need to compensate for the inferiority of real-world sense of self-worth or social power, including aiming to win in the game fiercely. It made him unable to manage himself properly in the game (Davis & Palladino, 2002; Kaewkangwan, 2018). It may be due to the need to seek out more significant clues.

***Abraham Maslow's Theory of Needs*** explains that human motivation arises from five hierarchical needs (Costa & McCrae, 1994; Kaewkangwan, 2018). It starts from Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belongingness and love needs, and Esteem needs, and the highest is the need to develop one's capacity to achieve self-actualization. This concept can be used to describe the needs that cause the motivations of children and youth playing online games at various stages, such as the need for security. This is because some children may feel that the in-game society is safer than the outside society in which they may be bullied or undervalued. They need love and praise from people in the game society as game-winner. Even some teenagers have a clear purpose in life to use online games for a career. However, they should be moderately adapted to meet their gaming needs. They should start by understanding to what extent they do not meet their needs by choosing a way to satisfy them to meet their needs, instead of obsessing over the game alone.

***Carl Rogers' Self Theory*** discusses the key elements that cause the formation of the behavior and personality of a person (Coon & Mitterer, 2008; Kaewkangwan, 2018). The first element is (1) Organizing valuing process, Roger believes ambient experiences affect the development of a person's values. Suppose the children are in a safe environment full of love and care; in that case, they will express the experience positively and develop positive values. (2) Positive regard from others and Self-regard, The self of a person develops from interaction with the environment. When children learn which behaviors will be acceptable to others, they will choose to show that behavior. Moreover, a person will begin to learn to accept himself from his perception that others accept him. (3) The condition of worth in which a person will feel that they are valuable when he can accept himself. There is no sense of self-worth when used to describe a child who escapes from the real world and immerses himself in the world of online games. The real world does not make him feel worthwhile or feeling not accepted by others or unable to look at themselves positively in the real world.

Therefore, he turns into the world of games that help him feel more tangible or valued, especially by family members. Feeling valued will help him develop into a person with positive values and be able to control his behavior in the right direction.

***Behaviorism*** focuses on the environmental factors that influence a person and how to condition the stimuli that motivate the person to act. Key theories in this group are Classical conditioning and Operant conditioning (Pavlov, 1960; Skinner, 1938, 1953; as cited in Palmer, 2003). The classical conditional theory describes behavior caused by two stimuli together. In terms of online gaming, the behavior of children and young people arises from how a person associates a game stimulus with the positive feelings experienced by the player. It is a condition that encourages the wanting to play the game because of the happiness that will be received. It includes how online games are linked with colorful and virtual in-game elements or society the children pursue. It becomes a familiar stimulus that encourages them to play more. The operant conditioning theory emphasizes the effects of reinforcement after a person exhibits a behavior from this concept when children play games and become happy, a feeling of self-esteem or feel accepted, thus, becoming a positive reinforcement that makes children play more games.

***The socio-Ecological Model*** by Bronfenbrenner (1977) believes that a person's behavior results from the interaction between the person and their surroundings which determines the behavior of children in playing games appropriately or inappropriately. It is a result of various factors, including individual, organization, community, and public policy, such as the upbringing of parents and schools as well as the gaming industry and social media that encourage children to become more interested in online games. This concept is in line with Jiamjai Srichairatanakul and the others (Srichairatanakul et al., 2020), who also discussed online game playing of children and young people, by explaining this concept as playing games causes them to release dopamine, a neurotransmitter of happiness. Therefore, they want to play more games, especially when other stimuli such as phone calls, friends, and family of children who lack discipline make children pay more attention to games. It was also found that many children obsessed with games have problems in family relationships, causing them to stress and turn to games and having friends who support playing games. The social condition has a stimulus to encourage children to turn to games.

***Social control theory*** proposes social control or organization to prevent members from violating social norms or engaging in deviant behavior (LaPiere, 1954). There are two types of social controls, namely, *internal control*, which arises from the ability to learn and be trained and makes a person see the need to comply with the norms of society. Moreover, they need to practice until it becomes a habit; *external control* uses methods such as rewards when meeting social norms and punishment when violating social norms, including providing education and training and various incentives.

According to the review of the aforementioned theories, there were factors in both psychological and social dimensions that influenced children and youth to play online games, which if playing online games that are inappropriate and unsafe will inevitably have a negative impact on children and youth who are vulnerable groups. For prevention According to the social control theory concept mentioned above, it should be noted that appropriately controlling online games for children and youth necessitates both internal control and external control, such as providing education, training, or discipline to children and youth to help them gain

control of their behavior in order to play online games responsibly. As for external controls, this is achieved through measures that include both promotion and appropriate sanctions to ensure the production and delivery of creative and safe online games for children and young people, in order to avoid the negative consequences and harm that may occur as a result of children and youth playing online games.

**Prior review**

In Thailand, there are numerous studies that provide guidelines for preventing problems associated with online gaming among Thai children and young people. For example, the research of Patcharaporn Hongsibsong and others (Hongsibsong et al., 2014) has proposed ways to strengthen cooperation among schools, families, and communities in order to encourage children and youth to spend their free time productively and to organize creative activities for children and youth. Finally, game store employees must be trained in ethics in order to raise awareness and social responsibility. In addition, research by Pirongrong Ramsutra (Ramsutra, 2014) proposed the role of each sector in preventing and resolving problems of online game addiction among Thai youths: (1) The government should impose a rating system and organize training and treatment programs for game addicts. (2) Parents should help their children develop their knowledge, understanding, and rules for playing online games. (3) Civil society focuses on educating children and their families about online media literacy. (4) Schools should focus on enhancing youths' knowledge and understanding of online games. (5) Mass media should disseminate accurate and creative information about online games. (6) In the game industry, the rating system should be used as part of rules, regulations, etiquette, and professional norms.

Based on a review of previous research, It was revealed that the majority of the studies proposed policy approaches or guidelines for problem prevention. However, no research studies have been found to formulate measures with concrete driving mechanisms and practical guidelines, and the majority of the guidelines are aimed at preventing game addiction in children and young people. Studies that focus on promoting creative and safe online games for children and young people, on the other hand, have yet to find a study that offers a concrete approach. This is in accordance with the relevant literature review. It was found that there is still a lack of integration between various departments involved in collaboratively promoting creative and safe online games for children and youth. As a result, the focus of this research study is on reducing the negative impact of online gaming on children and youth. by promoting creative and safe online games for them.

## Methodology

According to the literature review and related research, Thailand still lacks concrete measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth. As a result, the purpose of this study is to (1) study the online gaming situation of Thai children and youth. (2) examine national and international online gaming policies, regulations, and laws, and (3) establish a collaborative network in developing measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth. Research and Development (R&D) was used as the research methodology, with a focus on solving problems from practice in order to produce products that are useful and expandable. The emphasis is on developing a cooperative network at every stage of research and development to provide concrete measures for promoting creative and safe online games for children and young people through harmonious collaboration among network partners.

***Research and Development process and Participants***

The research and development process is divided into five steps, with each step emphasizing the establishment of a cooperative network. A purposive sampling method was used to select 82 participants. The following are the research methods and participants in each step.

**Step 1 (R1)** is a research process in which relevant knowledge is analyzed and synthesized.

*1) Documentary Research,* in which researchers analyze and synthesize relevant documents, including Thai and foreign literature, relating to the nature and form of the problem, the factors related to the problem, as well as the impact of online gaming on children and youth in Thailand and abroad, including policies, measures, and laws relating to online games in Thailand and abroad.

*2) In-depth interview,* to gather information about the current state of online gaming, current measures or practices, and proposals for problem prevention. The 44 participants included (1) 20 students from four primary and secondary schools, (2) student families, (3) five representatives from educational agencies, (4) two officers from the Royal Thai Police, (5) five experts in adolescent psychology and psychiatry, (6) eight stakeholders, and (7) three online game operators.

**Step 2 (D1)** is a step in framing and developing measures to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth. Six workshops were held. Participants included experts in psychology and sociology, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Culture, the educational agency, and law enforcement, for a total of 5 participants.

**Step 3 (R 2)** examines the systems and mechanisms for implementing measures and reviews their effectiveness. Ten participants were experts and representatives from various sectors involved in preventing and resolving issues related to online media or online games.

**Step 4 (D2)** is a step in which measures are improved and developed. The researchers held four workshops, totaling 5 people, with experts in psychology, psychiatry, law enforcement, and experts from the sector that will implement the measures.

**Step 5** is the dissemination step, which is critical for driving the enhancement of the measures developed from the research study. Using the method of meetings, seminars, and dialogue. Participants in this step include representatives of social networks from both the public, private, and civil society sectors who have experience dealing with the prevention and treatment of children and youth's use of online media, as well as stakeholders in the measures' implementation, totaling 15 people.

The research and development process can be summarized as shown in Figure 1.

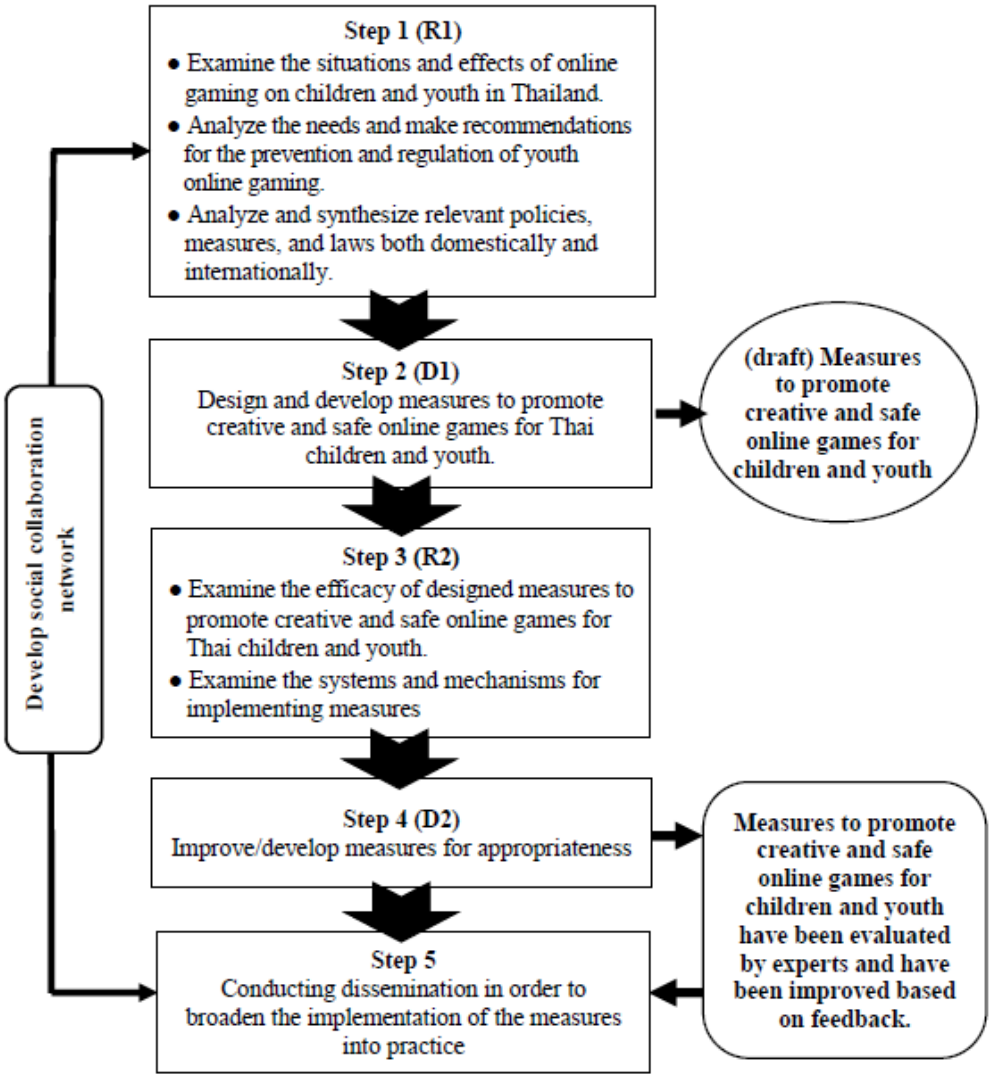



**Figure 1** Display the research and development (R&D) process in action

***Data Analysis and Creditability***

Data analysis employs qualitative content analysis. The analysis steps were as follows: (1) identifying and collecting data, (2) determining coding categories, (3) coding the content, (4) checking validity and reliability, and (5) analyzing and presenting results. Using Triangulation for research findings credibility consists of (1) checking from multiple sources whether the data from research groups and documented data are consistent or have the same conclusion or not, (2) examine analyses from multiple investigators and experts, and (3) examine the same data from various theoretical perspectives to see if it affects the interpretation of the data.

***Research Ethics***

Before collecting data, this study was reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Institutional Review Board: IRB), faculty of Social Sciences, Police Cadet Academy, book number SSRPCA-REC no. 2-016/2564. The researcher gave the participants preliminary information about the study by using the participant information sheet and showing their consent to participate in the research on the Informed consent form.

## Results

The following are the findings of research studies on important issues that are consistent with research objectives:

**1. Thailand's online gaming situation**

**1.1 The current situation of online games in Thailand,** It was found that more than 90% of online game producers who provide services in Thailand are foreign companies with Thai distributors. Most online games available today are addictive, challenging, beautiful, and more realistic, with group play from all over the world on the same platform. Online games come in a variety of forms. There are violent and competitive games, as well as creative games that focus on problem-solving or planning skills, with cryptocurrencies serving as the center of exchange in the games. Other than manufacturers and distributors, game designers, and graphic designers, there are people in the gaming market who use online games for their careers, such as game streamers or game casters, and these occupations are idols of the new generation of Thai children and youth. Furthermore, there is no legislation in place to supervise or regulate these occupational groups.

*"Currently, games are virtual. It's similar to when we watch movies, everything in the game is almost like a film, the game's resolution immerses players more."* (representative of the ministry of culture)

**1.2 The situation of Thai children and youth who engage in online gaming,** according to the study, the rate of Thai children and youth has increased over the last 6-7 years, particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak. It was discovered that junior high school students were the most active players of online games. However, among elementary school students, the age of children and youth playing online games is rising. The study also found that the games chosen by children and young people, mostly males, are frequently violent and inappropriate for the age of the players. Female students, on the other hand, prefer less intense games. Furthermore, more than 85% of youth between the first and second grades play online games, and a third of them play online games every day, with 10% playing games for more than five hours per day. This demonstrates how much time is spent playing online games. Concerning the control of online gaming by Thai children and youth, the family situation has evolved into a more urban society. Some families raise their children by providing them with a cell phone or tablet, or the parents themselves are role models for online addiction. As a result, children are more likely to engage in online gaming.

*"I play all the time; as soon as I finish my homework, after school, I call my friends and invite them to join the game."* (youth group)

*"...but at the same time, being a parent with no time... working alone, throwing the iPad when their son cries..."* (specialist in sociology)

**1.3 Online gaming's hidden dangers,** it was also found that there are hidden dangers with online games, such as online games that use cryptocurrencies, which is a game style to buy tokens first. and whoever wins will receive the prize money, which is a form of gambling. There is also a lot of gambling among people playing online games. Cheats hidden in the game pornography Including the society in the game may be tempting. or fraud can see examples of girls being seduced by playing games with unknown people in the game. causing in addition to the loss of assets may also be tempted to commit sexual harassment.

*"There are dangers all over the Internet, the girls were duped. Even though it is obvious that the players spend a lot of money on the game, he occasionally claims that he also makes money from it, as a result, it is hidden gambling."* (specialist in education)

**2. Proposals from collaboration networks to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth.**

The researchers emphasize the importance of social networks in developing measures to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth, which research findings The following key discoveries were made:

**2.1 Controlling the process of providing online game services that are appropriate for children and youth.**

*"If we control the origin and destination, they will only get what is good and right." That is, the law must regulate producers to determine what level of control they have and allow them to operate, but it must not be overly burdensome."* (representative of the civil society)

***- Clearly defining the scope and level of control.*** It should cover both the manufacturing and service processes. For example, the control should be age-appropriate, manage threats or deceptions, and determine the level of intensity, which should be set appropriately while not imposing too many restrictions on the gaming industry.

***- Controlling online game content*** that is harmful to children and youth, as well as preventing impersonation or unwanted behavior after online gaming, such as violent games with gambling-related content, is emphasized, and appropriate penalties should be imposed. Among the key proposals for implementing measures to control online game content are establishing online game ratings for children and youth, as well as encouraging entrepreneurs to self-certify in accordance with the framework established by the Ministry of Culture. Finally, develop technology to monitor or control the content, which should be used to monitor inappropriate game content in order to promptly block the dangers or negative impacts caused by online games of children and youth.

***- A screening system in the game to limit the playing time of children and youth.*** It has proposed collaborating with game developers to use technology to verify and limit the age of online gamers, which should be able to filter to some extent to prevent children and youth from playing inappropriate or unsafe online games. It specifies the minimum age for making financial transactions related to the game. Furthermore, there may be a system in place

to limit the amount of time they spend playing the game. There is currently no law requiring online game operators to implement such a system.

***- Provide information about online game services notification.*** The online game service provider should provide notification information on the online game service so that parents can help monitor and determine which games are appropriate for their children's ages. They should also be informed about the potential risks associated with gaming.

***- Communicate and build understanding with entrepreneurs at various stages of establishing measures*** or improving the law that should allow entrepreneurs to participate. As a result, they will create understanding and guidelines for standard practices to protect children and young people from playing online games creatively and safely without impeding the growth of the gaming industry, particularly games that are creative and useful for children and young people.

***- Communicate and build understanding with online game-related professionals*** such as game casters or game streamers who make a living presenting or advertising games to a large number of young fans. According to the findings of the study, some professionals use inappropriate communication, such as profanity or misbehaving. The practical guidelines emphasize asking for cooperation. Additionally, families and educational institutions should keep an eye on following these presentations to prevent children or youth from imitating unwanted behavior.

**2.2 Promoting the development and distribution of creative and safe online games for children and youth.**

*"A creative and safe online game is one that contains no violent content and is appropriate for the age and development of students of various ages... It is a game that broadens children's learning horizons and fosters the development of various potentials and skills."* (representative of education)

***- Identify the characteristics of creative and safe online games.*** The definitions from the research study are as follows:

*"Creative online games for children and youth"* should promote education and learning while also assisting in the development of potential and skills including academic, calculation, creative, analytical thinking, planning, and problem-solving. The game should aid in the development of professional skills, the promotion of a positive culture, the development of personality, the development of muscles, and the creation of positive emotions.

*"Safe online games for children and youth"* must not contain violent or harmful content nor encourage them to imitate deviant or inappropriate behavior, such as causing aggressive behavior based on violent game content. Imitate criminal methods, be indistinguishable from the real world, and so on. Safe games should provide a warning of potential hazards or caution to the purchaser.

***- Promote the development of creative games.*** Policies or measures should be implemented for the development or availability of creative and safe online games. It not only promotes the online gaming industry for the benefit of the country, but it also assists in the protection of children's and youth's welfare.

***- Encourage education in the development of safe and creative games.*** Online game production and design courses, particularly in higher education, should be promoted in order to produce graduates who can support current and future world changes. These graduates should be instilled with a code of ethics in game production and design or gaming-related careers, focusing on the financial benefits while also taking social responsibility into consideration.

***- Allocate budgets to promote the production of creative and safe games.*** Encourage Thai game developers to have investment opportunities and the potential to produce more creative and safe games both in the design, production, and marketing processes. In this regard, the government should advance an adequate budget support policy while promoting products that provide a balance of economic and social benefits.

**2.3 Monitoring for children's and youth's safe and creative online gaming.**

*"All departments, all parties, including parents and society, should be monitoring and strengthening media literacy skills or games on social media."* (Representative of Education)

***- Understanding children and youth in the digital age.*** Instead of directing or controlling children or youth, the emphasis should be on optimizing behavior and building consensus.

***- Raise public awareness about online games and create a network of collaborative surveillance.*** To promote online game literacy, the government and related agencies should promote and support training courses, learning materials, and public relations through a variety of channels. Families, society, and relevant agencies must work together to monitor online gaming that may harm children and youth or expose them to the inherent dangers of online gaming.

**2.4 Establishing or improving laws governing online games.**

*"There must be a law to regulate this, as well as cooperation in taking the law seriously and organizing online games." Strictly limiting the age of gamers for children and youth does not suffice and leads to undesirable behavior."* (specialist in psychology)

***- Establishing specific game laws.*** According to the research study, Thailand does not have a specific law on online gaming, unlike some other countries that have laws governing the game as well as child and youth protection laws. Alternatively, even in the absence of specific legislation, strict measures to control game content, such as time limits, will be implemented in some countries, such as China. As a result, some key informants believe that Thailand requires specific game laws to protect children and youth. Some may argue, however, that having specific laws may limit the growth of the gaming industry.

***- Expand existing laws to include online gaming.*** The Ministry of Culture is currently revising the Film and Video Act B.E. 2551 to make it more modern and relevant to today's digital society. The emphasis is on resolving the problems of children and youth who play online games. Improving the law's content to include online games can also be accomplished by incorporating cooperation from relevant agencies to help optimize the law. This approach is entirely feasible.

**2.5 Establish a network of partners to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth**

*"It has to have a policy unit, and the horizontal unit in policy coordination, as we said, and the horizontal coordination may also go hand in hand in the manufacturing sector to help each other, or in law enforcement, they must help each other.* (Representative of the Ministry of Culture)

In order to achieve efficiency in implementing research-based measures and promoting creative and safe online games for children and youth. Mechanisms at the national policy level, the government, should be linked to operational-level mechanisms that operate on the same plane of cooperation among different sectors. Agencies or groups of people, such as parental networks, education, mental health, legal, social and cultural sectors, as well as business or private sectors, should work together.

**3. The development of measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth.**

The finding of document analysis and analysis of proposals or needs of participating network partners. Table 1 summarizes the specific details of the measures.

**Table 1** Measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth

| Measure | Guidelines of Implementation |
|---|---|
| **1. Regulate the content of online games that are appropriate for children and youth, determines the type of game that should be controlled.** | (1) Determine strategies for controlling online digital content.<br>(2) Specify the type of game to be controlled, with an emphasis on games that are inappropriate and insecure for children and young people.<br>(3) Define features or levels of control over online game content in a clear manner.<br>(4) Provide guidelines for categorizing games by age range (rating categories).<br>(5) Build understanding with game operators to see the importance of measures and cooperation. |
| **2. Establish guidelines for displaying critical information to users concurrently with online game services.** | (1) Establish guidelines for online game operators to follow when publishing and serving games, with important information prominently displayed for users.<br>(2) Build understanding and discuss with game operators to see the importance and jointly determine the guidelines for displaying information for users. |
| **3. Track and examine offensive and dangerous online game content.** | (1) Supervise, monitor, and randomly inspect online game services and games used in e-sports activities, both produced in Thailand and imported from abroad. |

| Measure | Guidelines of Implementation |
|---|---|
| | (2) Notify law enforcement agencies If an online game service is found to be an offense under the Computer Crime Act or the Consumer Protection Act, or other relevant laws.<br>(3) Utilize contemporary technologies to simplify censoring or screening online games.<br>(4) Develop channels for people to make complaints or report clues.<br>(5) Establish a network that enables civil society to participate in monitoring, tracking, and examining inappropriate and insecure online game content. |
| **4. Promote and encourage the production of creative and safe online games for children and youth.** | (1) Promote and support the gaming industry which benefits the economy, society, culture, and national security, while keeping a balance between profit and social benefit.<br>(2) Promote Thai game developers and encourage the production and development of creative online games for children and youth, including online games used in e-sports activities<br>(3) Collaborate with online game developers to create mechanisms or features that make online games secure and appropriate for children and youth.<br>(4) Encourage the establishment of funds or fundraising efforts to promote the development of creative and safe online games for children and youth. |
| **5. Oversee and safeguard children and youth from the dangers posed by online gaming.** | (1) Establish guidelines for surveillance and investigation of potential threats associated with online games. They may consider guidelines for defining payment gateways for providing transparent online game services for Thailand.<br>(2) Cooperate with game operators to develop procedures to prevent online game users from gaining unauthorized access to the personal information of others.<br>(3) Collaborate with law enforcement. If any online game service or action that is an offense under the law is revealed hidden with the service, the emphasis on legal proceedings should be swift and serious in order to protect the welfare of children and youth. |

An efficient drive mechanism is required in driving measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth as proposed above. The mechanisms at the policy level should have clear policies to promote and support working mechanisms at the operational level. Supporting the development of laws that can be enforced covering online games, in particular, or requiring specific laws relating to online games. Including the development of a mechanism to drive in the form of network partners, which necessitates the development of a strategy to strengthen the network in order for it to operate collaboratively.

## Discussions

**1. The situation of online games among children and youth**, the trend of playing online games among children and youths has increased. This corresponds to an increase in the number of online gamers and participation in e-sports competitions. One of the reasons is the ongoing support of the public and private sectors, although some segments of society may oppose the development of online gamers and E-Sport competitions as a career, it must be recognized that this type of business can generate a good income for players. Furthermore, the liberalization of the online gaming industry will allow it to expand, causing children and youth to receive more public relations media in this regard. This issue appears in a study by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (2020), online media had the second greatest influence on the decision to play online games among young people, following the solicitation of friends or families who are unfamiliar with online gaming and does not have enough time to raise their children, including failing to teach children to be disciplined when playing online games. As can be seen, a variety of factors influence children and young people's interest in playing online games. This is explained by the Socio-Ecological Model, which holds that a person's behavior is determined by their relationship with their environment. At the individual and community levels, the environment is a factor, as are organizational and societal factors at the macro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

**2. Proposals from collaboration networks to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth,** including (1) controlling the process of providing online game services that are appropriate for children and youth, (2) promoting the development and distribution of creative and safe online games for children and youth, (3) promoting the development and distribution of creative and safe online games for children and youth, (4) creating or improving online gaming laws, and (5) stablishing a network of partners to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth. The previously mentioned offer This is consistent with the social control theory concept (LaPiere, 1954), which proposes social control to prevent members from violating social norms or behaving defiantly. The network partners' proposals are quite consistent with external control, proposing laws and procedures for the relevant authorities to control the production and service of online games. and monitoring to prevent children and youth from engaging in destructive online gaming and endangering themselves. In addition, proposals from network partners who are involved in research on various issues from research studies. There is a trend toward wanting to regulate

online games without negatively impacting the national economy; that is, there must be a balance between promoting creative online games business and social benefits. particularly to protect the welfare of children and youth. There must be a mechanism in place that can function properly and rely on the cooperation of network partners from various sectors.

**3. The development of measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth.** Measures to promote creative and safe games for children and youth are classified into five categories: (1) regulate the content of appropriate online games for children and youth, determining the type of game that should be controlled, (2) establish guidelines for displaying critical information to users concurrently with online game services, (3) track and examine offensive and dangerous online game content, (4) promote and encourage the production of creative and safe online games for children and youth, and (5) supervise and protect children and youth from the dangers of the internet. Measures 1, 2 and 3 are related to the control of online game services. These measures focus on content control appropriate for children and youth, which has been monitored under the control framework by appointing the Ministry of Culture as the primarily responsible body. It is consistent with Phirongrong Ramsutra's (Ramsutra, 2014) study, which discusses the role of government organizations in regulating online games. Part of this is the enactment and enforcement of laws and measures. The Ministry of Culture is in the process of improving existing laws and enforcing them to cover the subject of online games, seeking guidelines for grading the suitability of computer games and online games, including surveillance and inspection, and in accordance with the legal measures governing or controlling that online game. Furthermore, according to Arthit Wongyarit's (Wongyarit, 2010) study, the definition of the Film and Video Act B.E. 2551 should be expanded to include online games, and the rules and procedures for reviewing and permitting should be improve. Additionally, all agencies and sectors should collaborate to enhance consumer protection awareness, particularly, among children and youth.

In terms of measures 4 and 5, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society is primarily responsible for utilizing network partner cooperation to support the operation, primarily to protect children from the hidden dangers associated with online games. It necessitates the cooperation of law enforcement agencies such as the Royal Thai Police or the Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB). These two sub-measures emphasize the importance of striking a balance between promoting a creative and safe gaming industry and social responsibility in preventing children and youth from using online gaming services. However, it was discovered that the applicable law may still have limitations. It is consistent with the research study of Pharunyu Kaewkla and Rung Srisomwong (Kaewkla & Srisomwong, 2017), who investigated the legal principles for the protection of consumers who use online game services. It was discovered that there is no specific law to be enforced. It discovered a problem with false advertising to invite them to play online games or is unable to make consumers understand the essence. It includes the use of unfair messages or certain conditions that cause consumers to misinterpret the essence and have no power to negotiate with the business operator. As a result, this study proposes a law to bridge the gap and protect consumers from being exploited, including educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities and striking a balance between promoting the economy and protecting consumers at the same time.

Concerning the mechanisms proposed in the research findings for driving measures to implementation, the emphasis is on the connections between mechanisms at the policy and practice levels, including the operation of a cooperative network, which is consistent with the study by Thipwimon Saengsuwan (Saengsuwan, 2018), which mentioned the achievement of networking in accordance with the set goals of cooperation and good relationships by having a solid network. It increases the likelihood of problem-solving, policy advocacy, and the creation of power or bargaining power. The important thing is to establish a process of continuous learning and development. In this regard, the benefits of cooperation networks in implementing measures from this study are a synergy by bringing together the potential of various sectors to help prevent and solve problems more effectively than having one agency operating alone or each unit operating separately.

## Conclusion and suggestions

The rising rate of game industry growth is one of the critical situations related to Thai children and youth playing online games. Most online games' interfaces have been improved to make them more addictive, challenging, and realistic, including the creation of an online game society in which players from all over the world can play on the same platform. Furthermore, in today's Thai families, parents rarely have time to care for their children. As a result, children are more likely to play games online. Because the majority of online game manufacturers are foreign, it is difficult to control game content. At the same time, there are hidden dangers that come with online games in a variety of ways, such as gambling cheats embedded in the game, pornography, and the society in the game that may be tricked or defrauded. Furthermore, while it has been declared that e-sports are professional sports, there is no law directly regulating online games, which is distinct from other countries according to this study, some countries have specific laws governing online games. Despite the lack of specific legislation in some countries, each has a separate agency in charge of overseeing the online gaming service. For proposals from network partners involved in research on a variety of issues arising from this study, there is a trend toward wanting to regulate online games without negatively impacting the national economy; that is, there must be a balance between promoting creative online games business and social benefits, particularly to safeguard the well-being of children and youth. There must be a mechanism in place that can function properly and rely on the cooperation of network partners from various sectors.

The findings of the proposals submitted by network partners participating in the research, as well as the findings of the document analysis, indicate that ***"Controlling and Promoting"*** is the main principle that guides the development of measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth. The ***"Control"*** section is concerned with overseeing the manufacturing process and providing online game services, including the approval of games appropriate for children and youth. The emphasis in the ***"Promotion"*** section is on promoting the development of creative and safe games for children and youth, as well as creating a safe online environment for threats associated with online gaming. This crucial conclusion resulted in the establishment of all five sub-measures, as well as the

identification of the primary responsible person. Collaboration from mission-based social networks is required, and each sector must draw on its own expertise and experience. Furthermore, a mechanism for driving at the policy level is required. Furthermore, a mechanism for driving at the policy level is required. The government should develop policies and strategies to support the serious and continuous implementation of measures. In particular, it may consider having a specific agency to achieve unified operations while focusing on the integration of cooperation from relevant agencies in cooperating with this specific agency. Figure 2 displays conceptual conclusions related to the development of measures to promote creative and safe games for children and young people.

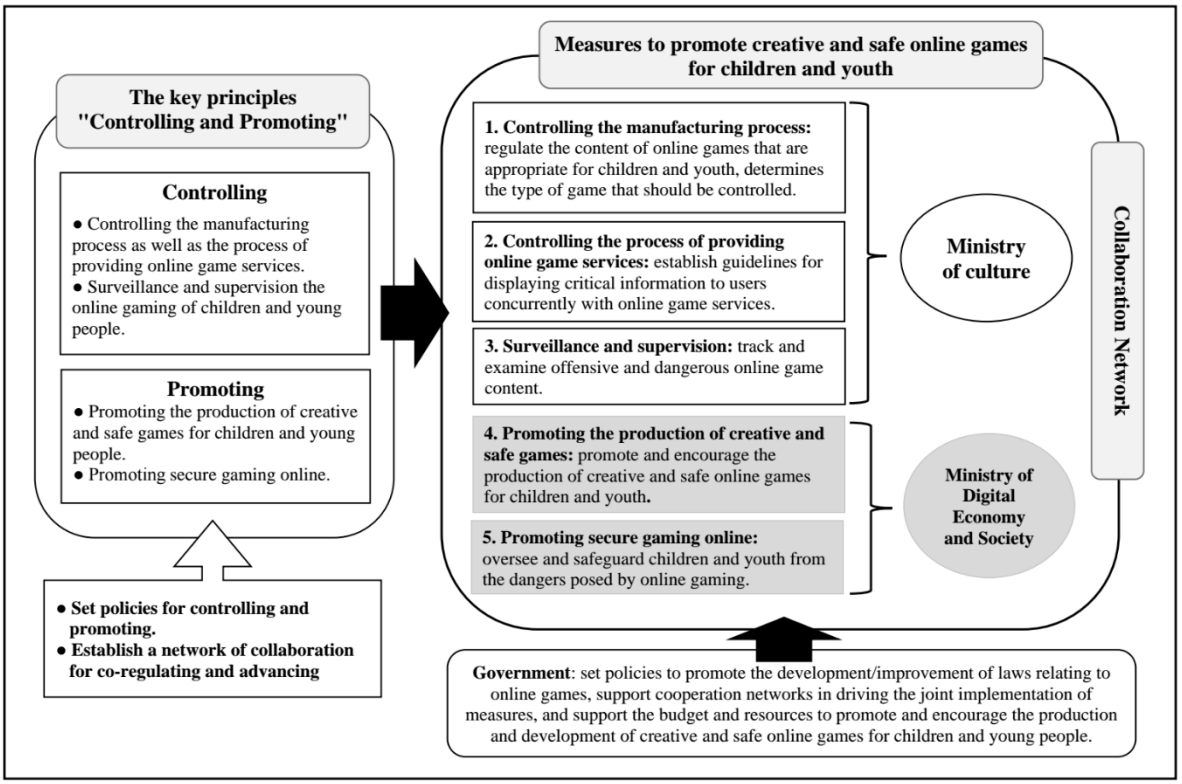



**Figure 2** the relationship between the key principles of "Controlling and Promoting," as well as the establishment of measures to promote creative and safe online games for children and youth in Thailand

In order to drive the measures in the same direction, policy should be communicated to the operational level before they are implemented. The person with the primary responsibilities outlined in the measure should communicate continuously and on a regular basis to foster understanding and cooperation among network agencies, ensuring that the measures are consistent and mutually supportive. To enable the implementation of measures to cover children and youth throughout the country, the Ministry of Education should oversee the implementation of measures to cover both children and youth in the education system and informal education. Departments at the policy level of other ministries related, such as the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, should have a clear policy for implementing relevant guidelines based on research

findings in order to proceed with children and youth who are not enrolled in the Ministry of Education's education system by cooperating. Another significant offer is that online game business operators, including game casters and streamers, should keep a balance between profit and social responsibility in protecting children and young people from the harm caused by gaming, while also recognizing the reduction in risk of deviant behavior from inappropriate online game content and imitation of undesirable behaviors. Furthermore, those who have a close relationship with children and youth, such as parents and teachers, should seek knowledge and understanding about children and youth who play online games. It also teaches children and youth how to distinguish between creative and non-creative games, as well as how to play online games responsibly.

## New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The new knowledge gained from this research is the "key principles" used to formulate measures to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth, namely ***"Controlling and Promoting"***, which focuses on controlling online game services to be creative and safe for children and young people without employing overly strict controls that will limit Thailand's game industry's expansion. At the same time, it focuses on promoting the development of creative and safe games for children and young people, with the goal of stimulating the Thai economy without causing social problems. This principle resulted in the development of "measures to promote creative and safe online games for Thai children and youth", which clearly define the guidelines that Thailand had never imposed before. In addition, the relevant cooperation network partners have established a mechanism to drive cooperation in the implementation of measures. In addition, as part of the R&D process, the researchers formed a collaborative network to make proposals and contribute to the development of these measures. The positive effect is networked participation in the development of measures recognizing the impact of online gaming on children and young people, as well as obtaining guidelines for implementing the measures obtained from research studies in accordance with the agencies' roles and missions, including the establishment of a cooperative network to jointly push the measures toward policy formulation and more directionally focused guidelines. Finally, the researchers delivered the measures to the Ministry of Culture for application of measures to improve laws, rules, or regulations in order to effectively implement the ministry's mission of promoting the creative online game industry, as well as protecting children and youth from online game threats.

## Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the National Research Council of Thailand for funding this research. We also thank all participants from various agencies, including government agencies, private sector and civil society that took part in the study and enabled this research to be possible, especially for their focus on implementing the measures from this study to bring about benefits.

## References

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist. 32*(7), 513 - 531. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

Coon, D., & Mitterer, J.O. (2008). *Introduction to Psychology: Gateways to Mind and Behavior*. 4thed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Costa, P. T. Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1994). Set like plaster? Evidence for the stability of adult personality. In T. F. Heatherton & J. L. Weinberger (Eds.), *Can personality change?* (pp. 21–40). *American Psychological Association.* https://doi.org/10.1037/10143-002

Davis, S. F., & Palladino, J. J. (2002). *Psychology*. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Hongsibsong, P., Toemsombatthaworn, N., & Narinrat, S. (2014). Need to solve the problem of the online games and internet of young people in Du Tai municipality, Nan. *RMUTP Research Journal*, Special Issue. 119-124. http://repository.rmutp.ac.th/handle/123456789/1676 (In Thai)

Kaewkangwan, S. (2018). *Theory of personality psychology.* (17th edition). Bangkok: Folk healers. (In Thai)

Kaewkla, P., & Srisomwong, R. (2017). Legal measures to protect the rights of online game service users. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 6*(1), 1-19. https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/MFUconnexion/article/view/241292 (In Thai)

LaPiere. (1954). *A Theory of Social Control.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Marketeer. (2021, 12 February). *Game Industry: The more you play, the more you grow. Business opportunities of entertainment media in the digital age.* Retrieved from https://marketeeronline.co/archives/209418 (In Thai)

Palmer, J. E. (2003). *Offending Behaviour: Moral Reasoning, Criminal Conduct and the Rehabilitation of offenders.* Portland, Oregon: Willan Publishing.

Pavlov, I. P. (1960). *Conditioned Reflexes.* New York: Dover Reprints.

Peer Power. (2020, 19 June). *Industry "Thai game" 2020.* Retrieved from https://www. peerpower.co.th/blog/smes/thai-game-industry/ (In Thai)

Pengpan, K. (2017). Preventing health problems of childhood addicted to online games. *Journal of Ratchathani Innovative Health Sciences, 1*(1), 16-32. https://he02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JRIHS/article/view/171116/122950 (In Thai)

Phewku, C. (2017). Online game communities toward communities. *Journal of MCU Social Science Review*, *6*(2-01), 143–158. https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index. php/jssr/article/view/240198 (In Thai)

Radio and Media Association for Children and Youth (2021). *The proposed policy to government agencies, the private sector, and civil society involved in measures to supervise and protect children and youth competing in video/online games to complete for eSports prize money safety and knowingly.* Retrieved from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.healthymediahub.com/storage/mediafiles/050070013W.pdf (In Thai)

Ramsutra, P. (2014). Immunization against online game addiction for Thai youth. *Journal of Communication Arts, 32*(2), 25-44. https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jcomm/article/view/179045/127185 (In Thai)

Saengsuwan, T. (2018). *The role of the network in community energy management: a case study of Singburi renewable energy group.* (Master's thesis, National Institute of Development Administration). (In Thai)

Social Communication Group Office of the National Health Commission. (2021). Research results indicate that children and youth are addicted to games on average 5 hours/day, costs 5,000 baht/month. Retrieved from https://www.nationalhealth.or.th/th/node/3006 (In Thai)

Srichairatanakul, J., Aphisitthiwat, N., & Thiammork, M. (2020). Teacher's Perspectives on Game Addiction of Students in Elementary Schools. Primary Education Area 2, Nakhon Pathom Province. *Journal of Health and Nursing Research, 36*(3), 244-258. https://he01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/bcnbangkok/article/view/247023/167859 (In Thai)

This is Games. (2021, January 21). *Newzoo analyzes the direction of the gaming industry in 2021*. Retrieved from https://www.Thisisgame thailand.com/content/Newzoo-Predicted-Five-Trends-in-Gaming-Industry-This- Year.html (In Thai)

Wongyarit, A. (2010). *Legal measures to control and supervise computer business.* (Master of Law's Thesis ,graduate school, Dhurakij Pundit University.) (In Thai)

Workpoint Today. (2021, 16 February). *The game industry continues to grow, 'depa' expects this year to spread 3.3 billion baht to support the digital economy of Thailand.* Retrieved from https://workpointtoday.com/depa-game-industry/ (In Thai)