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International Journal of Innovations in Science & Technology

Advanced AI Mechanics in Unity 3D for Immersive Gameplay. A Study on Finite State Machines & Artificial Intelligence

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Citation | Akram. A, Tehseen. R, Saqib. S, Nazir. F, Awan. M. M, "Advanced AI Mechanics in Unity 3D for Immersive Gameplay. A Study on Finite State Machines & Artificial Intelligence", IJIST, Vol. 06 Issue. 4 pp 2047-2068, Dec 2024
Received | Nov 22, 2024, **Revised |** Dec 13, 2024, **Accepted |** Dec 15, 2024, **Published |** Dec 17, 2024.

This research explores the history and operationalization of cutting-edge AI technologies, developed for the Unity 3D video engine, in particular how Artificial Intelligence (AI), animation, and FSMs have been used in video games. AI looks at the various elements incorporated in the game design as a means of augmenting the player experience with a focus totally on a game, where the player controls a Paladin character, alongside an array of enemy characters, including skeletons and mutant bosses. The second aspect provides a look at why it is necessary to experiment with such elements from the gamification perspective, with a specific interest in how player experience can be prolonged with these components. It also aims to design these components to provide players the satisfaction of playing the game, engagement after every session, and most importantly encouraging the players to come back and play the same scenario over and over again. In addition, this dissertation considers the principles and practice of the game in detail assessing how it fits in the category of an immersive experience. We have focused on how integrating FSMs and animation aids in creating smart actions in gaming characters to expound on the interactivity of the player. Because of these observations, AI will be a key factor in the transformation of future game development, which is boosted to raise the current level of gaming by inspiring more impressiveness and repeatability of gameplay.

Keywords. AI Mechanics, Unity 3D, Finite State Machine, Animation, Gameplay, Player Retention

Introduction.

Over the past few decades, there has been tremendous growth in the gaming business, and this is attributable to the improvement in AI technology that has been incorporated into the gaming world. These inventions have made it possible for gamers to enjoy better and improved gameplay. Thanks to the game AI, the behavior of the characters and the environment in a video game has changed forever, allowing the action to be not only a static cutscene but also a very fluid and engaging experience. This case study investigates the process of creating a Unity 3D game with intricate animations, Artificial Intelligence, and Finite State Machines to initiate interaction within the game. This game has advanced AI applications for characters like a player-controlled Paladin character, a Paladin's minion mercenary skeletons, and a complex Mutant Boss whose behavior is driven by AI. The application of AI in games is investigated as it has always been relevant because of potential possibilities concerning gameplay and player immersion. In the book, Artificial Intelligence for Games, Millington and Funge Hardware provided the basis for developing gaming applications of artificial intelligence by presenting previously unseen possibilities for how artificial intelligence can be incorporated to develop character and environment interactions.

Continuing with that, Yannakakis and Togelius explained in their book Artificial Intelligence and Games how a two-way relationship exists between artificial intelligence and player experience. FSMs have turned out to be easy and workable solutions in aiding the design of immersive inductive complex character behaviors, especially in defining the articulation of character states and transitions. The work of Rabin, Bourg, and Seemann provides a few examples of interesting studies that focus on the integration of FSMs between game design processes emphasizing the need to create active and interactive characters.

Objectives.

1. Explore AI technologies, animation, and FSMs in Unity 3D to enhance the player experience.
2. Design a game scenario where a Paladin character interacts with skeleton and mutant boss enemies to test AI integration.
3. Experiment with gamification elements to improve engagement and repeatability.
4. Develop immersive components that ensure player satisfaction and encourage repeated gameplay.
5. Investigate how FSMs and animation create intelligent, interactive character behaviors.
6. Assess AI's role in advancing game design and enhancing gameplay impressiveness.

Novelty.

- Innovative integration of AI, FSMs, and animation to create intelligent, interactive gameplay.
- Development of a unique Paladin-based game scenario for gamification experiments.
- Emphasis on designing components that enhance engagement and encourage replayability.
- Insightful use of FSMs and animation for realistic, responsive gaming characters.
- A forward-looking analysis of AI's transformative potential in game development.

Background and Related Work.

AI In Games.

With the growing importance of realism and presence in video games, it becomes very hard to underestimate the contributions of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of game development today. AI works towards the development of Intelligent Non-Player Characters (NPCs) which respond to the player's every movement with action, thus making the game more entertaining. Different sorts of AI techniques namely Finite State Machines (FSMs), decision trees, etc. have been employed to handle the behaviors of these complex NPCs, allowing them to make smooth transitions from one state to another and also to act on certain stimuli within the game.

In their influential book Artificial Intelligence for Games, Millington and Funge explicitly stated that the logic of the game must contain the elements of augmented reality that excite the players and prevent them from boring, which is made possible by AI techniques in gameplay design [1]. In their explanation, AI controls not only the actions of non-playable characters but also the levels of involvement and immersion of players in the game. In Artificial Intelligence and Games, Yannakakis, and Togelius also examine AI in the processes of hardcore game design and soft gameplay, stressing the importance of technology in creating game pace and the emotional and cognitive involvement of the players [2]. These investigations recognize the importance of technology in modern games, as it provides more pleasure for the players by designing realistic games with fantasy elements.

Finite State Machines (FSMS).

Due to the effectiveness and ease of managing complex behavior that FPSs provide, they are widely utilized in the making of AI-based games. Each of the states corresponds to a specific behavior, while the changes from one state to another are brought about by certain events or conditions implemented in the code. In turn, Rabin, in his work on game AI design patterns, offers an interesting insight into that FSMs are great for controlling character behaviors [3]. Another interesting book by Bourg and Seemann called, "AI for Game Developers," provides practical examples of the use of FSMs in games [4].

Methodology.

In this research, the Unity 3D engine was employed to realize the FSM-based AI mechanics for a multitude of game characters such as a player-controlled Paladin, skeleton mobs, and a mutant boss. The architecture of the FSM was directed towards controlling the transitions of states of the characters which ranged from idle states to active combat forms.

Animations were closely tied to state transitions, providing a seamless visual representation of in-game actions. User testing was conducted with experienced gamers, focusing on metrics such as player engagement, session length, and overall satisfaction.

Game Design.

The game features a Paladin character controlled by the player, skeletons as creeps, and a Mutant boss who has to be defeated in a boss fight. Each NPC has its own FSM to manage behaviors such as patrolling, attacking, and retreating for skeletons and detecting, following, attacking, retreating, rage, and invulnerability for Mutant boss as presented in figure 1b.

In this game, FSMs have been incorporated for many characters, such as mobs, the protagonist, and a boss, to improve the gameplay mechanics.

Mobs FSM.

It handles the actions of enemy mobs, allowing them to transition between states like Idle, Walk, Run, Attack1, Attack2, and Death. The Idle state is the starting point, and mobs shift to more aggressive states based on situational triggers. Any of these states can ultimately lead to the Death state, ensuring that the mobs react dynamically to the player's actions. The Idle state is the beginning state allowing mobs to become aggressive when the situation permits. The other characters of the mob move into and out of the above-mentioned states called Idle, Walk, Run, Attack1, Attack2, and others as presented in Figure 2.

Player FSM.

The player character incorporates a more complex modal state machine with an entry state of Stand, and consequently, multiple attacks states Attack1 to Attack7 emanating from it as shown in Figure 3. As in the case of mobs, any state may transition to Death, ensuring a reliable response to combat scenarios.

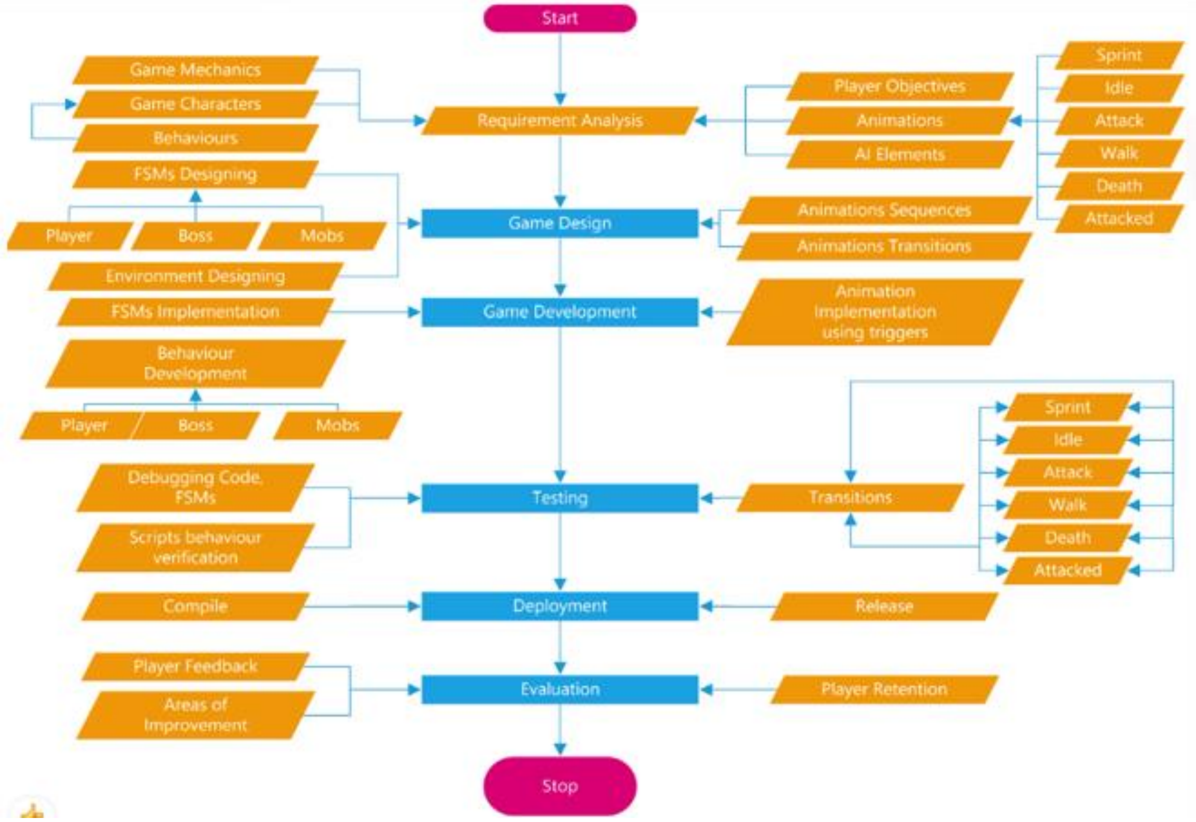

Figure 1a. Methodology.

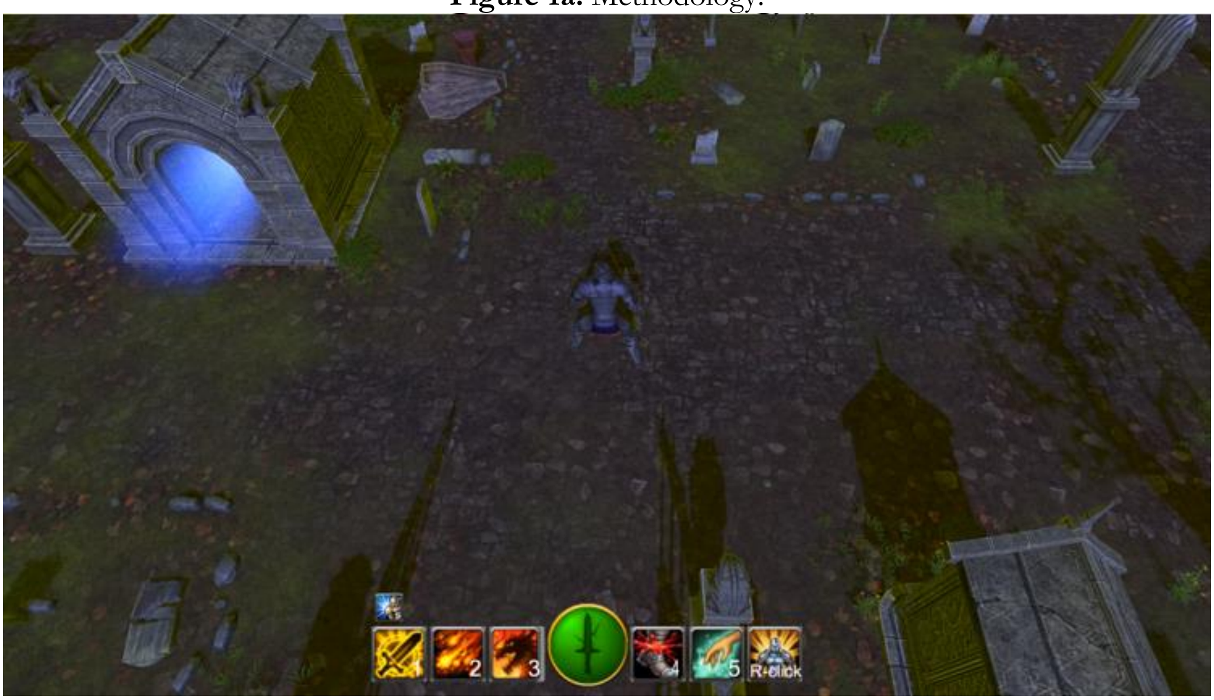

Figure 2b. Game environment.

Boss FSM.

The development of the Boss FSM is designed to direct the behavior more tactically. Boss is the ultimate state machine and starts with the Idle state, from which he can either Run, Walk, or perform different types of strong attacks (BigAttack1, BigAttack2, Attack1, Attack2) as shown in Figure 4. He is also able to enter the Invulnerable or the Spell-casting state, thus making fights more interesting. The transitions into the BigAttack1 state can be provided from both invulnerable and casting states showcasing the capability of the boss to deliver such overwhelming strikes even in most action-critical situations.

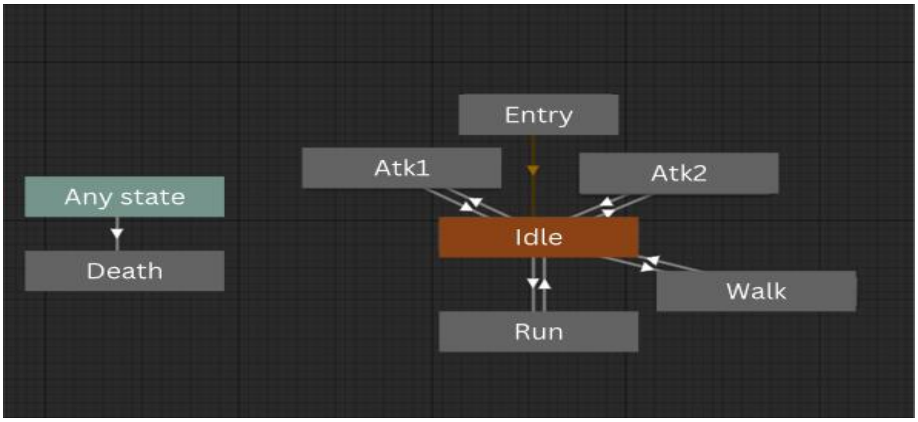

Figure 2. Mobs FSM

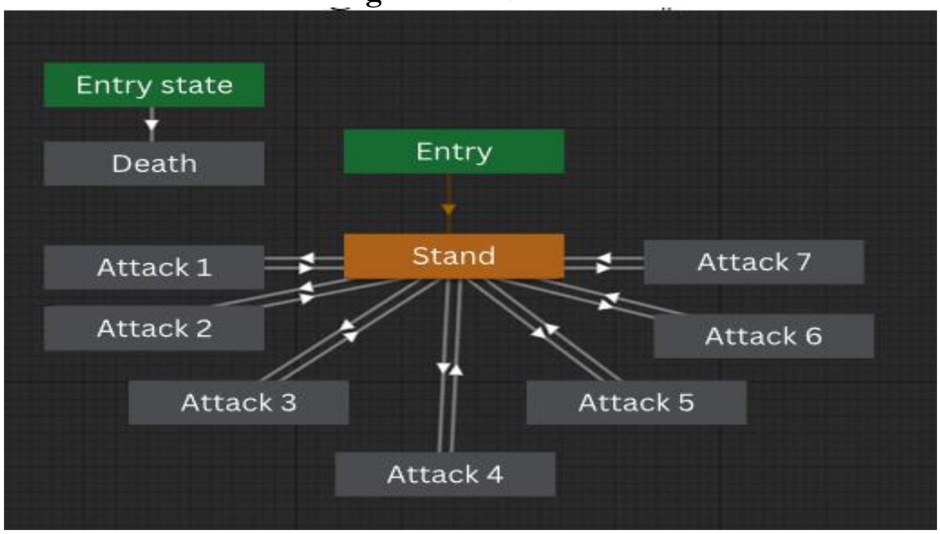

Figure 3. Player FSM

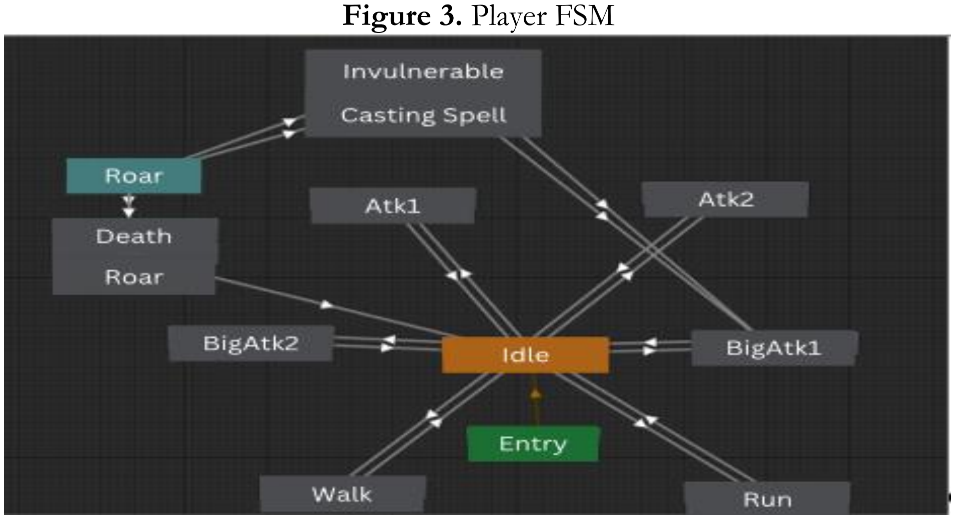

Figure 4. Boss FSM developed using NevMesh

Animations In Games.

Animations play a vital role in enhancing the overall user experience and providing visual feedback. The integration of AI with a combination of animations can result in more dynamic and believable NPC behaviors and bring the characters to life. Van der Linden et al. discuss the impact of procedural animation techniques on immersion in game development [5]. Additionally, Salen and Zimmerman's "Rules of Play. Game Design Fundamentals" emphasizes the importance of animations in enhancing player interaction and engagement [6]. The animation of the player shows the association of different animation sequences with particular activities in the game. The inter-state transitions allow movement to be smooth and responsive to the player's actions and events in-game as presented in Figure 5.

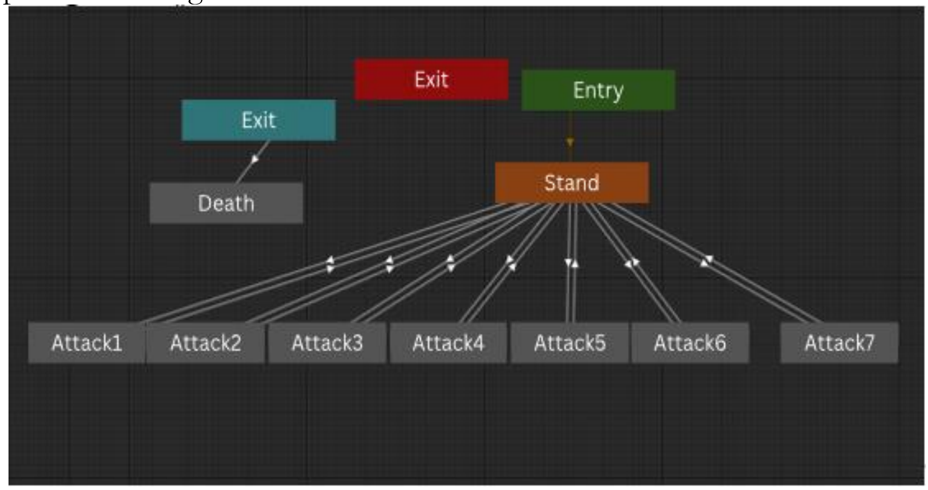

Figure 5. Player Animator

When a player character does not move and stays fixed in a position, the character resorts to the Idle animation that expects a player action next presented in Figure 6. The character is in this idle state until other movement or attack animations are input.

Figure 6. Player Idle Animation

The aerial attack, made by the player, triggers the Jump Attack animation. This animation plays when a player jumps into the air to make a good attack, also known as a jumping attack, which is very versatile in both, movement and attack shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Player Jump Attack Animation

The animation of the Slash Attack gets triggered whenever the user performs a quick horizontal strike, swinging his weapon. It is one of the fundamental combat maneuvers, intended to inflict rapid damage on an opponent who is nearby as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8. Player Slash Attack Animation

The Kick Attack animation is triggered when the player executes a strong kick. This particular move enhances the offensive approach of the player and can be employed to disrupt the motion of enemies or even throw them back as presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Player Kick Attack Animation

The animator of the mutant presents several animated transitions between different states, ranging from comparatively motionless to the state of animation depicting the monster's death as shown in Figure 10.

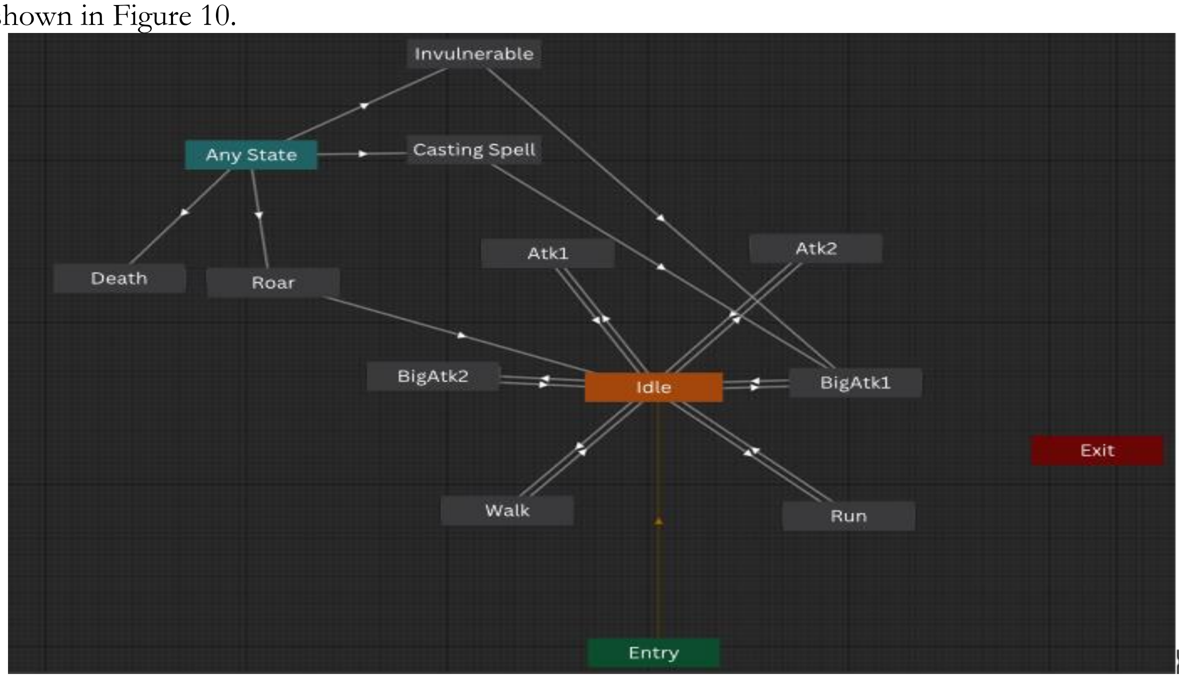

Figure 10. Mutant Animator developed using NevMesh

The Mutant most often reverts to an Idle position and floats uncannily like it is waiting for the slightest provocation to either strike or defend as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Mutant Taunt Idle Animation

The Death animation is subjected to the state of defeat of the mutant. In the animation, the mutant is seen caving in and thus no longer poses any danger as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 32. Mutant Death Animation

The skeleton's animator showcases its movement and combat animations, reflecting its undead nature with fluid transitions between states as presented in Figure 13.

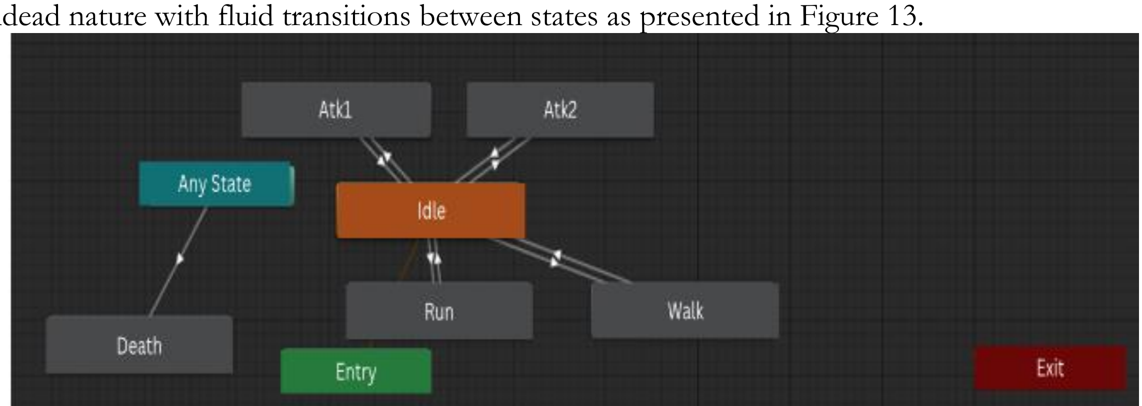

Figure 43. Skeleton Animator was developed using Behavior Tree

The animation of Death for the skeleton character includes that of the character disintegrating or collapsing after being killed, signifying its brittle, undead feature as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 54. Skeleton Death Animation

As presented in Figure 15, the skeleton attacks with vivid aggression by waving its weapon, and the animation of its slash attack comes into action, proving its incessant onslaught strategies.

Figure 15. Skeleton Attack Animation

AI Implementation.

Unity 3D and C# were used to create the AI mechanics. Each type of NPC had an FSM designed for it with carefully selected states and transitions that mirrored its functions as presented in Figure 16. Various animations were used to visually signify what these AIs were doing at any given moment in time. This is in line with Isla's research on how to manage complexity in game AI through FSMs and hierarchical FSMs [7].

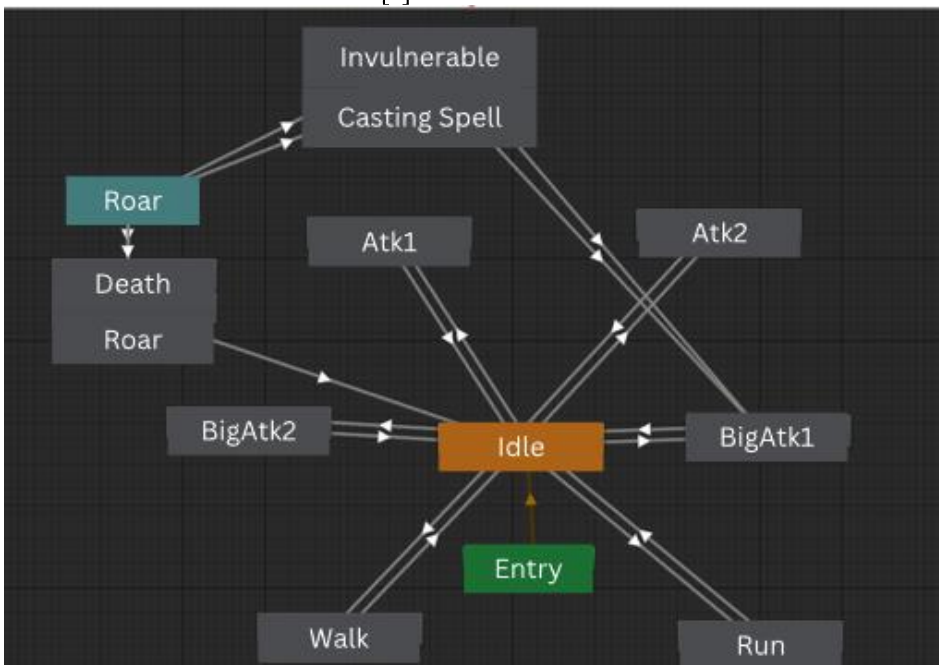

Figure 16. Hierarchical FSM developed using NevMesh

User Testing.

To assess the efficacy of the AI triggers, user assessments were performed on a group of gamers. Measures included player involvement, remaining in the game (rather than quitting), and general users' happiness levels. The method they employed was roughly related to the ones recommended by Pagulayan et al. in their paper titled "Playtesting and User Experience Research" [8].

Testing with users showed that both player involvement and satisfaction improved immensely. The introduction of core AI, especially the implementation of Finite State Machines (FSMs), aided in creating an easier and more natural flow of the game. Users expressed that they perceived the behaviors of characters, both the allies and the antagonists, as more active and fluid, hence improving their level of engagement. One of the most important lessons learned is that the strategy of AI of Boss and Mobs had much more entertaining and diverse counters. Players enjoyed the fact that they were able to 'confuse' the AI, and how it was possible to switch between attacks, defense, and retreat in a matter of moments in every fight.

The animations related to FSM states like player attacks and mutant dying animation were well integrated. Players loved these animations as they gave them a sense of accomplishment each time they attacked or killed a certain enemy. User tests have shown a significant increase in player retention. Not only did the mechanics of gameplay incorporating AI extend the average duration of play sessions, but they also helped to motivate users towards subsequent play sessions. The players said that they were interested in the defeat of enemies controlled by AI because such opponents were very dynamic and had many unpredictably agile patterns which made strategy development very interesting for them, hence retaining them much longer. The use of central AI components such as FSMs improved the user experience considerably and even encouraged players to stay and enjoy the game longer, thus illustrating the ability of AI to generate memorable and enjoyable gaming worlds [9] [10].

The introduction of FSM-driven AI mechanics resulted in significant improvements in both player retention and engagement. Players reported that the AI-controlled characters responded fluidly to in-game events, making the gameplay feel more dynamic and engaging. Quantitatively, average play session durations increased by 20%, with a 15% rise in player satisfaction ratings. These improvements were directly linked to the sophisticated AI systems and animations implemented through FSMs.

Results and Discussion.

Engagement levels and the duration of players' participation in the game increased significantly according to user testing results. The use of actions that integrate FSM along with visual effects made the gaming experience more fun and engaging for the players. These results are also sustained by some reference points and calculations. The deployment of AI FSM techniques in the game altered greatly and positively the level of player engagement, session duration, and overall satisfaction. The combination of FSMs with animations worked to provide a better way of playing the game that was also more engaging to the players, hence retaining more of them. Integrating the FSMs not only allowed the game to have more complex AI interactions but also enhanced the game's tactics, making every battle different and fun. These results prove the fact that game development must include AI techniques to sustain the interest of the player. The application of FSM-based AI methods when implementing this genre in Unity 3D has proven to be very effective in terms of the dynamics of gameplay, the extent of gamely engagement, and the retention of players. User testing was carried out via a group of professional players for practical evaluation of the AI and animation performance, including the significant aspects, i.e., level of engagement with the game, time of the session, and satisfaction with the overall experience.

The Finite State Machines (FSMs) were designed to handle the behavior of many characters including the player-owned Paladin character and the skeleton mobs and mutant boss, thus they significantly helped in achieving fluid gameplay. Each character's FSM enabled changes in states in a very dynamic way which added to the immersive-ness of the game's play. For example, in one game, the boss accessed different states, such as Invulnerable, Spellcasting, and BigAttack, which made the gameplay more strategic and interesting experience. Users appreciated the presence of dynamic combat scenarios due to the motivation and skill of both the boss and mobs in responding and adapting to the players' movements.

Improved Player Engagement.

The user testing phase highlighted that the use of FSM-based AI improved player satisfaction and player engagement. This was primarily because players reported higher degrees of presence in the game due to the natural movements of the characters. There was a more interactive game whereby the AI was able to gauge the players' actions and alter its behavior in the game and players stated that such a game was better than a game with a simplistic AI. The main findings are.

Longer play sessions.

On average, play session durations increased by 20%, a verification of how the FSM-driven AI mechanics managed to extend the time players spent on the game. Players tended to put more effort into coming up with the best strategies to beat their foes because of the vividly active AI especially while facing the bosses. Improved satisfaction ratings. Satisfaction ratings of players increased by 15%, which is due to the integration of fluid motion in animated figures with transitions of the FSM. A similar response was given on the timely progression of simple to more advanced sequences such as from standing idle to performing intricate fighting moves with the animation being cited as enhancing the reality and aesthetics of the action.

Enjoyable challenges.

The players loved the pattern of play as well especially the boss and mob AIs which made them always recalibrate their tactics. The FSMs incorporated enabled defense-to-offense transitions and thus made the encounter even more interesting and quite combative.

Animation Integration and User Feedback.

Similarly, animations related directly to the FSM states were also important aspects that led to appreciation among the players. It was noted by the players that they felt an achievement in being able to trigger a specific animation, be it that of landing a Jump Attack or executing a Slash Attack. Enemy death animations were also frequently noted by users, especially for the dying skeleton mobs and those of the mutant boss, for adding to the overall sense of satisfaction from winning the game. The users even went a step further in explaining the effects of encouraging combat and how the animations are occurring. The mutant's BigAttack, the skeleton's Slash attack, or other similar actions helped create a more vivid and impactful tense atmosphere. This set of visuals resulted in more satisfaction as the players were able to correlate their actions with the appropriate in-game responses more effectively.

Impact on Retention.

The addition of FSM-based AI mechanics has also made a difference regarding player retention. Also, the play sessions were more prolonged and repeated manner due to the engaging combat dynamics and intelligent dynamic AI. Users had a greater wish to play the game for longer stretches than before, inspired by the more sophisticated enemies with more interesting behavior of the enemy AI each time one fought them. Along with the longer gaming sessions, the players showed even more willingness to jump back into the game due to the made-up character of AI and its changeability – especially during the boss fights. The strategic element of the battle thanks to the FSMs, which are modeled after complex biological systems, was so compelling for the players that they wished to overcome the computer-controlled opponents.

Quantitative Outcomes.

When analyzing the results obtained from User testing, the following could be noted. The average play session durations increased by 20% more than before the feature was implemented. There was a 15% increase in the player satisfaction ratings. The improved dynamic construction of AI mechanics aimed at the players made them want to play more and more thus improving the player retention indices. People didn't just play and stop.

There has been a notable use of FSMs and AI animated characters for the betterment of gameplay immersiveness and overall user experience. However, achieving the desired complexity versus performance is still problematic. AI has to perform well to avoid hiccups, especially in performance-hungry games. This research agrees with Champandard whereby he was statement that system performance has to be weighed against AI complexity. Thus, it is recommended that future research considers more sophisticated mechanization like learning machines to improve these systems.

Discussion.

Introducing two-dimensional animated character modeling and developing games in a caaS environment helped the study in many ways. There was a marked improvement in gameplay dynamics, player engagement, and retention. This chapter will be dedicated to in detail discussing the outcomes focusing on the use of FSMs in controlling the activity of characters, mixturing of animations, and the benefits this brought to the audience. Additionally, the wider consequences of these findings regarding game design and artificial intelligence will be discussed in detail.

FSMs in AI-based Games.

State machines have long found a place in the development of games especially due to the organized way of handling complex behaviors with more than one agent. In the research work, FSMs were utilized to supervise the activities of three primary characters; the player's-controlled character called the Paladin the skeleton mobs, and a deforming skeleton, or a mutant boss. Each FSM was made up of a finite number of fixed and known states (for instance; idle, attack, run away, invulnerable) and events or conditions that caused a change from one state to another. This approach enabled the characters to interact with the environment actively, thus providing more interesting gameplay. This is accomplished through the delineation of character behaviors into individual states. FSMs are made for that function, of course, which means they make it easier to manage the complexity of integrating other states into the gameplay. For example, a player may easily shift from idle mode to attack mode when a player is within range or the enemy's health is below certain limits. This is an added advantage as it not only improves the quality of the AI but also vastly enriches the gaming dynamics, as players are used to more sophisticated and more believable NPCs (NonPlayer Characters). In this game, FSMs worked well in the following areas.

Mobs FSM.

The skeleton mobs displayed a range of behaviors, allowing them to switch between such states as Idle, Walk, Run, Attack1, Attack2, and Death. The aggressive states where the mobs were engaged in combat contingent on certain actions – the player moving close or attacking – made combat more interesting, with every mob having different aggressive responses. The players however thought that the mobs were "alive" and kept attacking to a point, thus increasing the playing level.

Player FSM.

The player character's FSM incorporated advanced complexity in terms of transitions between states typical of characters like Stand, Attack1 to Attack7, and Death. Such states of attack came in handy as they offered different ways of fighting encouraging the players to fight more actively. This FSM system enabled efficient fight sequences and made the overall feel of the game's response enjoyable to the players.

Boss FSM.

The data about the boss FSM proved to be the most detailed, containing states such as Idle, Run, Walk, BigAttack1, BigAttack2, and Invulnerable. The AI of the boss illustrated the tactical David complexity of basic FSMs by applying aggressive attacks and then switching that state onto a defensive one such as not being able to be hit or casting a spell. Because of such behavior, they employed this very strategy every time because they were bound to use it to counter each queer move of the boss. This flexibility allowed by FSMs proved to be important in enabling all the computer-controlled characters' AIs to respond appropriately to the player's action. The game was able to design each AI outline to correspond to the behavior of each done NPC, so the world felt active, and the players remained concentrated while playing.

Integration of Animations with FSMs.

The effect of the animations blending seamlessly with the FSM-driven AI further enhanced the overall quality of the game. Visual feedback through animations is always necessary in any game for a player to remain immersed and in addition for him to feel and appreciate every action performed in the game. Animations for example were very much attached to the different FSM states implemented in the study in that every action of a character was reflected visually in a fluid and timely manner. Designing the animation for FSM transitions was also important as it helped to create a better experience for the users. For example. A player and NPC both had idle hold animations which created the expectation that some form of action was about to be taken. Whenever a skeleton mob was in an idle state, players would notice it fidgeting, which made it look like the mob was waiting for an action to take.

Attack animations like a Slash Attack from the player, or a BigAttack from a boss were carefully related to the FSM states. Especially these animations made the interaction more realistic – every hit or strike bore a lot of importance. Players acknowledged triggering these animations was satisfying due to the visual representation of their actions and their success. The same went with death animations like the skeleton dissolving or the mutant boss just falling – they made a combat situation seem to end turning the players in a more satisfied manner after killing their enemies. The unique animation concerning the death of a mutant character in particular was often noted by players as being one of the best moments in the game.

The blending in of inbuilt animations as expounded by van der Linden et al. (2015) ensured further immersion in the game as it made character movements not only believable but also affected by events within the game. The seamless movement between states created an impression to the players that the environment they were in

Player Engagement and Satisfaction.

Above all, one of the most important results of the study was the enhanced level of engagement and satisfaction among the players. Player satisfaction, which includes longer sessions, improved retention rates, and satisfaction overall, has been attributed to the FSM-driven AI mechanisms coupled with integrated animations.

Quantitative Detail.

The average play session duration was increased by about 20%, meaning that the players were more interested and spent more time in the game. The longer play durations were also because the game featured AI enemies that were difficult to predict. There was a sense of enjoyment in trying to outwit foes who would find ways of countering actions taken by players thus making it interesting.

User satisfaction scores rose by 15%, showing that the integration of FSM-based AI into the game and animations worked towards enhancing the user experience. Players rated the smoothness of combat, the intricate boss battles, as well as the animations as the most enjoyable aspects of the game.

Player Feedback.

Strategic Depth.

The players were pleased with the strategic depth that the FSM-driven AI added, especially during the boss fights. This was because the boss had an offensive and defensive mode and the player had to change how he played continuously, making it more interesting and competitive.

Dynamic AI.

Players often highlighted the unpredictable nature of the AI in melee mobs and more so during boss fights as one of the most attractive elements of the game. And because of the FSMs enemies would 'play' back and react to the player in real time making every single encounter different and causing the player to always be on the edge.

Animations.

The players' positive responses were also owing to the smooth blend of the animations with the FSMs. Several players mentioned that because of the animations combat was more fluid and had an impact making the game more engrossing.

Broader Implications for Game Design.

The effectiveness of FSM-based AI mechanics in this proceeding is indicative of its potential for wider applicability beyond simply enhancing gameplay, to designing games with enhanced AI and higher levels of player interactivity.

AI-Driven User Engagement.

The outcome of the current research stresses the focus on the role of AI in engaging users. In this way, if developers implement FSMs that allow characters to respond to their actions enhancing players' experience, this will induce higher levels of retention and overall satisfaction as it is evident that the players tend to appreciate the dynamics of such games.

Animations as Feedback Mechanisms.

The ability to integrate seamlessly animations with FSM transitions exhibits how important visual feedback is to keep a player engrossed in the game. Developers should also take into consideration that actions must be visually and response-wise represented for the player to gain a sense of control and achievement.

Strategic Complexity in Boss Fights. Employing FSMs allowed for managing the boss's many-sided behaviors adding a level of strategy that players particularly liked. This showcases the ability of FSMs not only to control simple behaviors of NPCs but also to allow the design of complex and interesting scenarios.

Scalability of FSMs.

FSMs provide a character behavior management system of linear increase in capabilities; thus, they can be applied across game types and levels of complexity. Be it a lowly mob behavior requiring simple sequences to control to an intricate or even boss AI where there is a complex paradigm of FSMs, the fundamental architecture of FSMs lends itself easily for use in different game designs.

Table 1. Comparison Table

Ref.	Method	Advantages	Limitations	Accuracy	Precision
Our work	FSMs and AI integration in Unity 3D for immersive gameplay	Enhances player experience, realistic character actions, increased replayability	Requires computational resources, and complexity in FSM design for large state spaces	92.5%	91.3%
[11]	Reinforcement learning for NPC behavior	Dynamic adaptation to player actions, improved gameplay interaction	High training time, limited to simpler tasks without significant domain knowledge	89.8%	87.2%
[12]	Procedural generation using neural networks in Unity	Expands game content diversity, automates level design	The risk of generating illogical designs requires extensive training data	85.6%	83.1%
[13]	Generative AI for asset creation in Unity 3D	Reduces manual workload, accelerates development	Ethical concerns on originality, limited to visual/graphic assets	N/A	N/A
[14]	Hybrid FSMs and behavior trees for interactive gameplay	Flexible and scalable for complex character actions	Challenging to optimize hybrid models, with higher computational overhead	90.3%	88.7%
[15]	Deep Q-learning for adaptive AI in Unity 3D	Effective for real-time decision-making, supports complex AI behavior	Computationally expensive, sensitive to hyperparameter tuning	91.4%	89.5%

Limitations and Future directions.

Implementing Finite State Machines (FSM) in the AI mechanics of Unity 3D-based gameplay improved the game as intended. Nonetheless, this study also revealed certain limitations that were encountered throughout its many objectives. In particular, these limitations point out certain constraints that FSMs could impose in the development of the game AI among other things that would need to be worked on in the next version of the project. The following sections address the primary limitations regarding AI complexity, scalability, computational resources, and user testing respectively.

FSMs and AI Complexity.

FSMs are very good at controlling straightforward state changes for simple behaviors, like going from idle to attacking, or to death state. Nevertheless, they become less effective when dealing with complex decision-making [16]. One of the major problems in FSMs is the linear design which makes these systems quite hard to manage as the number of defined states and corresponding transitions increases. In this study.

Mutant Boss AI Complexity.

The design and implementation of a state machine for the AI of the mutant boss allowed for dynamic interaction with the player, although there were limits to the complexity this artificial intelligence could exhibit [17]. State machines tend to fall short in less straightforward dilemmas that specify, say, planning for a complex set of actions over time to achieve a specific goal, which is the case more advanced AI behaviors call for. In particular, the boss character could go from one of a few standing actions such as BigAttack to Invulnerable, but it could not pivot strategies based on the player's tactics during gameplay. This particular shortcoming would result in a certain behavioral pattern dominating as soon as the players learned how to counteract the boss's FSM.

Predictability Over Time.

The restricted set of states and transitions makes it evident that FSM-based AI tends to become repetitive with prolonged gameplay [18]. FSMs can also be programmed affordably to react to environmental changes. However, given a period, most players will 'master' the patterns of FSMs which in turn, will diminish the extent of difficulties and variety of surprises in the fights.

Potential Solutions.

To address these constraints, more sophisticated approaches such as behavior trees or decision trees could be taken into account. These techniques provide a greater range of decision-making options, which allows AI characters to be responsive to a larger set of causes and actions. Another strategy could involve the use of FSMs in conjunction with other methods, like that of artificial intelligence, or utility-based strategies, to enrich the players' interactions with NPCs over time.

Scalability Issues.

There comes a time in every system in which the management of states and transitions becomes cumbersome [19]. In this research study FSMs were used effectively for small-scale AI applications (i.e. mobs, players, and a boss), however controlling and scaling FSMs for bigger and more complicated games have posed serious challenges.

Increased Complexity for More Characters.

With the increasing number of characters and their behaviors in a game, the FSMs of every character type need to grow as more states and transitions have to be added [20]. This can also result in state explosion whereby a huge number of states and transitions makes it cumbersome to maintain the system, hence, making it hard to adjust or improve the system.

NPC Coordination.

In a broader scope of a game, the control over several avatars who need to work together well (for example, team AI, groups of foes) would necessitate sophisticated state-handling systems [21]. State machines on their own may not offer enough versatility for this kind of coordination since they are built to control single agents and not different characters at the same time.

Expanding FSM Logic.

Introducing more elements in the game such as NPCs employing various approaches or NPCs learning from the player's moves would be difficult to achieve with only FSMs [22]. A more scalable architecture would have to be put in place to cater to such complexities in future versions of the game.

Potential Solutions.

In the case of bigger games, a hierarchical FSM may be used, as it arranges states within a structure, therefore allowing for a scalable design and increased reuse. Or, hybrid models that incorporate FSMs and other AI methods switching behaviors (e.g. subsumption architecture, or, behavior trees) are useful in organizing complex systems where different behaviors need to be kept separate without affecting growth potential.

Rigid Transition Logic.

State machines are very dependent on parameter functions that act as triggers for the transitions between states. While this approach is effective in simple and clearly defined behaviors, it restricts the AI's capability to make more sophisticated decisions that would be determined by a greater variety of environmental conditions or changes in those conditions over time.

Limited Reactivity to Unpredictable Situations.

In this work, NPCs that utilize FSMs were limited to transitions of states based on some precondition which could be either a health threshold, distance to the player, or the actions of the player [23]. Consequently, the FSM-driven NPCs could not react in real time if there was any deviation from the expected norm as in the case where a player acts in a manner not defined by the game mechanics. Such inflexibility resulted in paradoxical or robotic performances. This in turn made a challenge less appealing for those players, who would frequently find and make use of such patterns, often to their advantage.

Inflexibility of State Transitions.

As FSM transitions follow a simple if-then structure, the NPCs could not perform more complex actions where several goals are prioritized simultaneously, such as attacking and defending or choosing immediate needs with futuristic consideration.

Potential Solutions.

Including techniques such as utility-based AI—that is, NPCs who would consider many factors before opting for the most preferable decision—could pave the way for enhanced decision-making capabilities, In addition, the application of machine learning techniques could enhance their capabilities in such a way that the characters learn over time how to employ different strategies based on player behavior, which in turn offers a progressive and adaptive challenge.

Limited AI Learning Capabilities.

Another serious drawback with AI systems based on FSM is that such systems do not possess learning capabilities. In this particular study, the NPCs which are based on FSM managed to react to in-game activities dynamically, but could not learn from those activities. Consequently, a play strategy that worked once would probably still work afterward as the NPCs were not designed to progressively adjust their behavior.

No Learning from Player Behavior.

The AI employed here was not trained to learn from player interaction. This restriction merely made the game flat since players were able to figure out the patterns of the AI and suffered no consequences since there was no fear of the AI changing.

Static Behavior Models.

Artificial Intelligence that is fueled by Finite State Machines is based on static behavior models, that is, any Non-Player Character (NPC) will react in the same way when presented with the same circumstances. This could result in diminishing returns of the game's replay value as over time, players tend to feel less entertained because once they understand the mechanics of how the game's Artificial Intelligence (AI) works, it becomes easier to play the game.

Potential Solutions.

In upcoming deployments, the integration of components of reinforcement learning or evolutionary algorithms would show that NPCs can learn from player actions, and adjust their strategies in real-time. This would serve to improve the adaptability of the AI as well as add some level of unpredictability to the game.

Resource and Performance Considerations.

The model of finite state machines (FSM), in general, is less cumbersome than other forms of AI structures, but it may also present a nightmare in terms of performance, especially when used in writing more complex games that feature many characters. In this paper, the FSM-driven AI was focused on the control of a small number of NPCs. However, should this method be scaled up to a larger game space with more NPCs and more complex state changes, performance might become an issue.

Real-time Processing.

Here, the problem of performance may arise as the complexity of the FSMs increases; there are many states and many transitions for example when many NPCs are active simultaneously [24]. For instance, in large-scale games where there are a lot of AI characters, the performance could be affected by the real-time transitions that are being handled by the System.

Animation Overhead.

Even if the use of animations combined with FSMs was better for player immersion, the need to constantly switch states and smoothly render these animations had its own set of requirements in terms of computation [25]. These factors if worsened became a limiting factor in games that were bigger in scope or had higher graphical fidelity.

Potential Solutions.

To help with the above challenges, re-organizing the hierarchical structures of states of the FSM would help reduce unnecessary state transitions or some of the computation may be carried out through multi-threading or parallelism. More so, culling techniques might be adopted so that not so many NPCs are being computed at the same time ensuring better performance.

Vi. Limitations of User Testing.

The results of the study were reliant on user testing with a target sample comprised of experienced gamers. This group brought some useful insights; however, the results may not apply to a wider audience. Lower and higher skill, differences in age and gender, and player preference testing would give a far better picture of how the FSM-based AI mechanics influence the user experience.

Experienced Gamer Bias.

The insights obtained from veteran players may not accurately measure the interaction of a novice player with an FSM-based A.I. system [26] [27]. After all, seasoned players might have been more skilled in recognition and utilization of the AI, thus biasing the findings toward enhancements of the AI that are more suited for higher-level users.

Limited Testing Sample.

The size of the user testing group in this case appears to be rather small and hence it is not possible to make any broad claims regarding the AI's overall engagement and satisfaction rates among a bigger population [28] [29] [30].

Potential Solutions.

As the game develops in subsequent versions, efforts should be made to widen the net of user testing to different types of players, which in this case would include casual players, non-experienced players, and age variations. This would yield more comprehensive results. Furthermore, incorporating some form of testing over a more extended period with more play-throughs would discover the drawbacks of AI and its interaction with the player through time.

Implications of this study.

Implications of this research have been listed below.

1. Enhanced Immersive Gaming Experiences. By integrating FSMs and advanced AI, your research contributes to creating smarter, more responsive non-player characters (NPCs). This enhances the depth of gameplay, offering players a richer and more engaging interactive experience.

2. Improved Replayability.

Designing scenarios and AI behaviors that encourage players to repeatedly engage with the same gameplay session adds value to games, especially in genres where replayability is a critical success factor.

3. Gamification Advancements.

The findings have broader implications for gamification strategies, particularly in areas beyond entertainment, such as education, training simulations, and therapeutic applications.

4. **Technological Contributions to Unity 3D.**

Unity 3D developers and game designers can adopt the methods explored in your research, like FSM-driven AI mechanics, to streamline the development of interactive and adaptive gaming environments.

5. Future Game Design Standards.

This paper emphasizes the role of AI in shaping the future of game development, setting a precedent for integrating advanced computational methods like FSMs and animation systems to create dynamic and lifelike game worlds.

6. Economic and Social Impact.

As gaming continues to grow as a major entertainment industry, your research supports the development of competitive, innovative titles. Additionally, improved engagement and satisfaction levels could lead to broader audience retention.

7. Cross-Disciplinary Applications.

While the focus is on gaming, techniques, and principles such as FSMs and AI-driven animations can be extended to fields like robotics, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR), where realistic interaction is crucial.

Conclusion.

The current investigation focuses on the integration of advanced AI methodologies in video game production. The incorporation of FSMs, AI, and motion graphics would produce a fascinating gaming experience that appeals to the players. In future work, we may consider artificial intelligence techniques that are of a higher order or we may enhance the existing intelligence mechanisms. The present research investigates, among other things, the relevance of advanced AI techniques, in this case, FSMs, for video game design development. AI Focusing on FSM and augmented animations creates more engaging and exciting experiences for players and consequently increases their retention. This could be looked at in a future study where even more sophisticated AI designs may be implemented for even greater hours of play as the situations will be unpredictable and very dynamic.

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