Understanding the lives of problem gamers: The meaning, purpose, and influences of video gaming

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Background

- **1.8 billion** people worldwide play video games (Skaugen, 2015)

- **Benefits:** reduce stress, improve visual-spatial cognition, gain leadership skills, etc. (Ferguson, 2010)

- **Problem:** “addiction” or problem video gaming (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

http://addictionblog.org/tag/video-game-addiction/
Research Aim

- To gain a **deep understanding** of the occupations in the daily lives of people who experience problem video gaming
  
  - what is important to them
  
  - what motivates gaming
  
  - what supports/constraints to engagement they experience in other life activities.
Social Ecological Model
Methods

- Male and Female Problem Video Gamers, Worldwide, Aged 16+

- 24hr Activity Logs for 1 week prior to the interviews AND Semi-structured Interviews

- Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Results: Participant Characteristics

- 16 participants: 11 males and 5 females
- Age: 16 to 35 years old
- Mean PVP Scale score: 7 out of 9
- Mean hours of video game play per week: 31 hrs.
Theme 1: Gaming as Meaningful and Purposeful

1. Gaming as a part of life

I’m always going to love video games…they’re so big a part of my life that I’m a completely different person because of them.

2. Gaming community as a sub-culture

My current relationship is [under] strain already. Gaming kind of puts a strain on it…not everybody is as open-minded to gaming. People look at it as, it’s only for kids. But people don’t understand gaming is not only for children.

3. Gaming as a purposeful activity

You can improve yourself in a sense of the game…And that feeling of being able to be faster than them and more clever than them, you know, that’s really, really enticing.
Theme 2: Push-Pull Influences on Gaming

Interpersonal Influences

Amount of Gaming *

Personal Influences

Environmental Influences
Theme 2: Push-Pull Influences on Gaming

1. Personal Influences

Games kind of fill this space where I felt my failures were kind of tearing at me. Not satisfyingly…it was just kind of like a false feeling of happiness

2. Interpersonal Influences

My boyfriend and I try to hold each other accountable…It’s half trying to help each other, half like enabling each other.

3. Environmental Influences

I freaking hate first person shooters…Everything feels a little awful even though I’m trying to enjoy the game. It’s weird…[Overwatch] is really pretty and the developers did a really good job on it. So even someone like me can enjoy it.
Implications

- Video gaming is a **meaningful occupation** to some and it needs to be treated as such.

- Promote balanced and **purposeful occupations**

- Teach **alternative coping strategies** for personal issues & **education surrounding push-pull influences** on gaming behaviours.
Conclusion

- More qualitative methods for **future research**
- An emphasis on **policy & regulation**
- Consider personal experiences vs. “harmful” behaviour

https://goo.gl/q5jTN3
Thank you!

This research was supported by:

[Logos and names of institutions]

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THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II
Patty Rigby and John Wedge Graduate Scholarships in Science and Technology
References

PVP Scale (Tejeiro Salguero & Moran, 2002)

1. When I am not playing with the video games, I keep thinking about them, i.e. remembering games, planning the next game, etc.
2. I spend an increasing amount of time playing video games.
3. I have tried to control, cut back or stop playing, or I usually play with the video games over a longer period than I intended.
4. When I lose a game or I have not obtained the desired results, I need to play again to achieve my target.
5. When I can't use the video games I get restless or irritable.
6. When I feel bad, e.g. nervous, sad, or angry, or when I have problems, I use the video games more often.
7. Sometimes I conceal my video game playing to the others, this is, my parents, spouse, friends, teacher, co-workers, etc.
8. In order to play video games I have skipped classes or work, or lied, or stolen, or had an argument or a fight with someone.
9. Because of the video game playing I have reduced my schoolwork or job demands, or I have not eaten, or I have gone to bed late, or I spent less time with my friends and family.
# Activity Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
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## Activity Log

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<td>Spectating game</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Persona 5</td>
<td>Overwatch</td>
<td>Watching Sense8</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Check OW fan content</td>
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</table>

### Time Blocks

- **6PM**
  - Fire Emblem: Cleaning
  - Fire Emblem: Heroes of the Storm
  - Taiko DS: Walking
  - Fire Emblem: Watch Sense8
- **7PM**
  - Heroes of the Storm
  - Heroes of the Storm
  - Spectating game
  - Overwatch
- **8PM**
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
- **9PM**
  - Game research
  - Heroes of the Storm
  - Sleep
  - Overwatch
- **10PM**
  - Browse OW content online
  - Persona 5
  - Watch Sense8
- **11PM**
  - Persona 5
  - Chores
  - Spectating game

- **6AM**
  - Shower
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
- **7AM**
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
  - Dinner
- **8AM**
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  - Dinner
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- **9AM**
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