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

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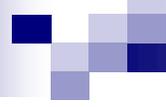Supervisor: Dr. Bonnie Kirsh

Advisory Committee: Dr. Rebecca Renwick & Dr. Nigel E. Turner

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)

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

https://goo.gl/z9aThv

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

Personal Influences

Amount of Gaming *

Environmental Influences
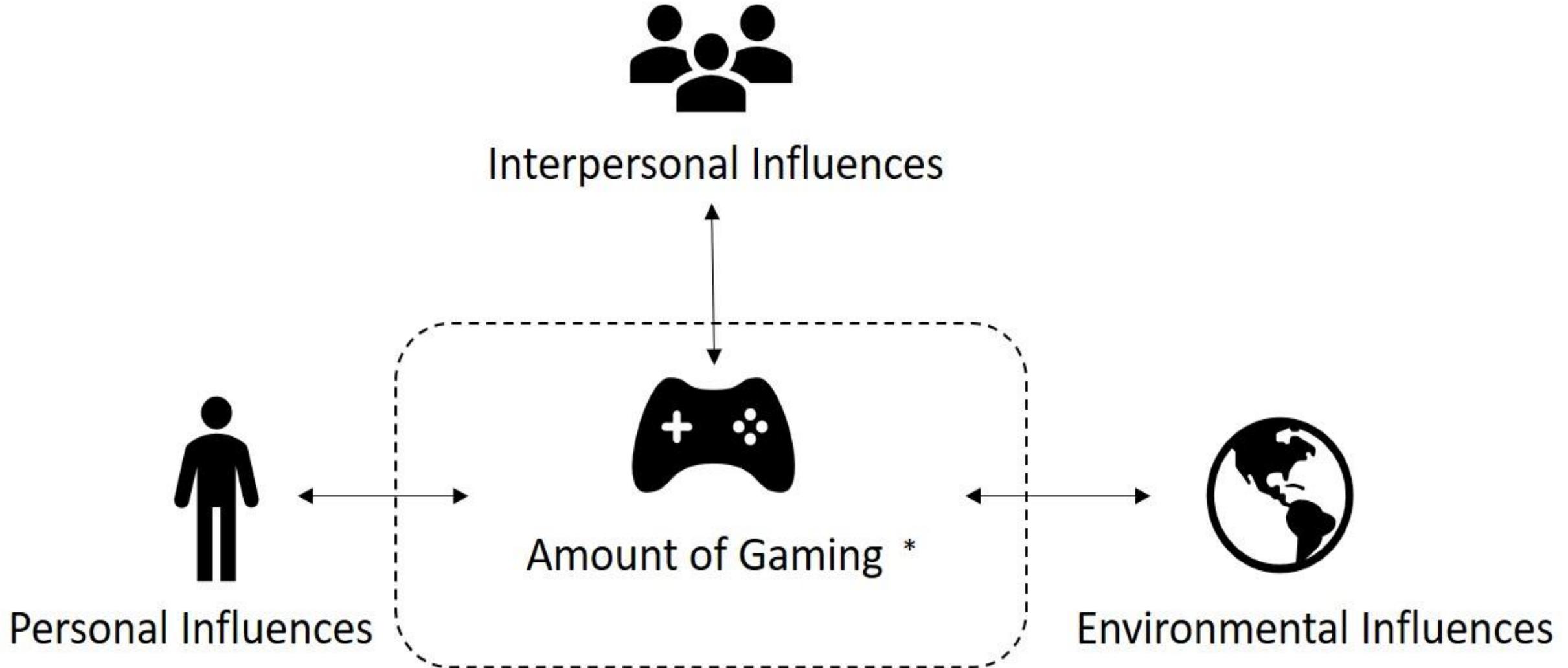
Theme 2: Push-Pull Influences on Gaming

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

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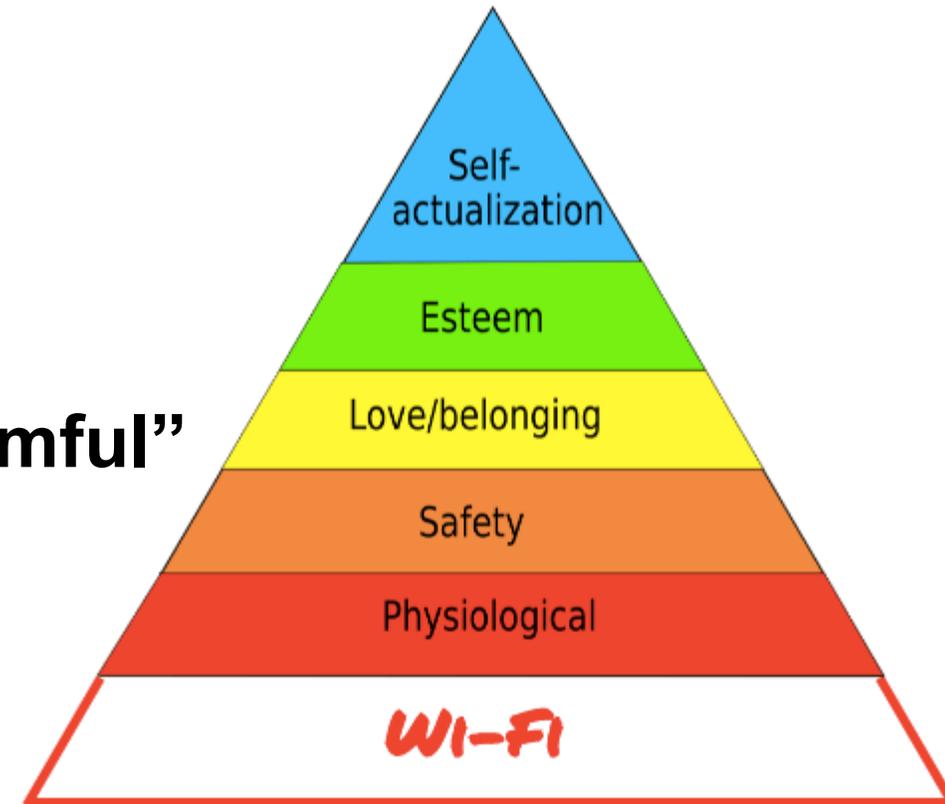
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PVP Scale (Tejeiro Salguero & Moran, 2002)

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

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
12AM							
1AM							
2AM							
3AM							
4AM							
5AM							
6AM							
7AM							
8AM							
9AM							

Activity Log

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
12AM	Heroes of the Storm	Shower	Spectating game	Sleep	Persona 5	Overwatch	Watching Sense8
		Internet			Shower	Break	
1AM	Sleep	Spectating game	Reading		Persona 5	Check OW fan content	
		Reading	Sleep				Shower
2AM		Sleep			Spectating game	Spectating game	Reading
3AM						Reading	
4-7AM							
8AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast			Breakfast
	Transit	Transit and Reading	Transit	Transit and Reading			Transit
9AM	Work Start	Work Start	Work Start	Work Start			Work Start

6PM	Fire Emblem	Fire Emblem	Taiko DS	Fire Emblem		Watch Sense8	Reading	Fire Emblem
	Cleaning	Research Heroes of the Storm		Browse Overwatch content	Walking			Shower
7PM		Heroes of the Storm		Heroes of the Storm	Spectating game		Watch Sense8	Overwatch
								Dinner / Overwatch
8PM	Cooking +		Dinner			Dinner		
	Dinner	Dinner	Shower			Dinner	Watch Sense8	
9PM	Game research	Heroes of the Storm	Sleep		Overwatch			
	Heroes of the			Dinner			Overwatch	
10PM				Browse OW content online				
				Persona 5			Watch Sense8	
11PM	Persona Made some tea to be more awake	Chores						
		Spectating game						Spectate game