**RESEARCH AREA: COMMUNICATION**

**Gamer Girl vs. Girl Gamer: Stereotypical Gamer Traits Increases Men’s Play Intention**

**Keywords:** gaming; gender; female gamer; male gamer; gamer identity; play intention; common ingroup identity model; expectation states theory

**Background**

Sexism has long been an issue within the gamer community (Fox & Tang, 2014). Female gamers tend to be evaluated as less competent than their male counterpart and are perceived as only capable of playing casual video games (Kafai et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2016). There are incidents where male gamers openly discriminate against female gamers (e.g., derogative language; harassment; Kuznekoff & Rose, 2013; Tang & Fox, 2016; Tang et al., 2020), while in other cases male gamers are simply reluctant to play video games with women (Delamere & Shaw, 2008). The present study sought to address sexism in the gaming context by examining the processes that influence male gamers’ intention to play video games with a woman.

**Aim**

The primary aim of the study is to understand the mechanisms of male gamers’ interaction intention with a female player. We situated our research within the common ingroup identity model and expectation states theory.

**Study Design**

A 2 (actor profile: gamer traits vs. female gamer traits) × 2 (type of video game: competitive vs. casual) between-subjects factorial design will be used with participants randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The actor profile is manipulated using an Xbox profile that represents her either with gamers’ stereotypic traits or with female gamers’ stereotypic traits. There are three versions of actor profile for each condition, all of which will be pilot tested. Type of video game is manipulated by asking male gamers about their intention to play a *Call-of-Duty*-like video game or a *Sims*-like video game with the actor. Overall, each participant will be randomly exposed to one of the four conditions: (1) an actor profile that represents her with gamer traits and the possibility of playing a hypothetical *Call-of-Duty*-like video game with her; (2) an actor profile that represents her with gamer traits and the possibility of playing a hypothetical *Sims*-like video game with her; (3) an actor profile that represents her with female gamer traits and the possibility of playing a hypothetical *Call-of-Duty*-like video game with her; (4) an actor profile that represents her with female gamer traits and the possibility of playing a hypothetical *Sims*-like video game with her.

**Data Source**

Participants will be recruited from Qualtrics Panels and include male participants that self-identify as male gamer for the question “Which of the following category would you identify yourself with?” (other options included “female gamer”, “female non-gamer”, “male non-gamer”, and “none of the above”).

**Inclusion Criteria**

Male sex and ages 18 and older.

**Exclusion Criteria**

To maintain data quality, several attention check questions will be utilized and participants who start the survey but fail at the attention check questions will be excluded.

**Statistical methods**

The play intention on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = dislike a great deal; 7 = like a great deal) will be analyzed using a two-way ANOVA model. The actor profile variable is recoded as (-.5) for the female gamer traits condition and (+.5) for the gamer traits condition. The type of game variable is recoded as (-.5) for the casual video game condition and (+.5) for the competitive video game condition. Linear regression models will be used for the path analysis and 95% confidence intervals will be calculated using 5,000 bootstrap samples. These analyses will be performed using SPSS PROCESS (Version 3.5; Hayes, 2018).

**Sample size**

This is an adult sample consisting of 440 volunteers. The sample size was not pre-specified.

**Strengths and Limitations**

A strength of the study is the use of an adult sample with a large age range which has stronger external validity compared to a college student sample (commonly used in social science research). However, data quality can be a limitation for online behavioral research.

**Data management**

Data with no identification are stored in a password-protected local drive which only the principal investigator has access to. Upon acceptance of the paper reporting this research, these data are shared to Open Science Framework in the spirit of open science practices (https://osf.io/m9zwp/?view\_only=51bd6f67e6b542bca735524a9f31f356).

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