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Research Paper

What Compels People to Play Games in India? A Study Comparing Gaming Motives across the Two Genders

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ABSTRACT

A video game is defined as a type of game played based on audio-visual apparatus and may or may not have a storyline in it. Previous Literature understands multiple elements are responsible for motivating an individual to play games, such as genre, situation, relatedness, and personality styles. Due to the lack of research in India on gaming motives, this descriptive-effects study explores gaming motives with the Indian population and observes gender differences. A total of 100 participants (67 males and 33 females) were taken for this study using snowball sampling and motives were obtained by using the Motives for Online Gaming Questionnaire (MOGQ). Results were computed using descriptive statistics, parametric (ANOVA) and non-parametric (Mann Whitney U Test) tests. Results show males have the highest gaming time for the skill development motive and females have the highest gaming time for the recreational motive. Furthermore, both males and females had the second-highest gaming times for the coping motive. Except for the recreation and escape motives, all other motives were observed to be significantly different across the two genders. When studying for interaction effects between gender and gaming motives, results showed gender had a significant effect on gaming time but gaming motives and the interaction of gender and motives did not.

Keywords: *India, effect, gender, motive, high, low*

A video game is defined as a type of game played based on audio-visual apparatus and may or may not have a storyline in it (Esposito, 2005). In India, video gaming is a leisure activity enjoyed by most of its citizens. The video gaming industry is rising to the point it has been foretold that it would become an important economic pillar for the country (*Is India's Gaming Industry Set to Take off and Create Jobs for Gen-Z?*, 2022). Currently, there are over 365 million online gamers recorded from the year 2020. This is expected to further increase to around 510 million gamers in the year 2022. With a boom in the Indian gaming industry, it has been ranked as the highest in terms of growth in online game downloads on app stores with a growth rate of 165% from the years of 2016 to 2018 (Statista, 2021a). One of the main contributors in recent times to this increase in gaming is due to the lockdowns imposed to control the COVID-19 Pandemic in India. The number of mobile game

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downloads touched 2.9 billion in the July-September period in the year 2020, establishing the country as the second largest base of online gamers in the world, preceded only by China. Furthermore, India is estimated to reach around 657 million gamers by the year 2025 and with the emergence of 5G and newer technologies, these numbers will only keep rising (Bureau, 2021). Statista (2022) reports India's gaming industry was worth 90 billion rupees (9000 crores) and will grow up to 143 billion rupees (14300 crores).

This constant rise in the Indian gaming Industry raises an interesting question: What compels Indians to play games? The ease of access to a smartphone or any other electronic gadget tied to gaming in the presence of low tariffs may be a factor, but it is not the only one. The researcher wants to understand, at a psychological level, what motivates individuals to play games. Unfortunately to the extent of the knowledge of the researcher, the presence of studies in India on gaming motives is little. Hence a majority of research done in this area exists outside of India. Hellström et al. (2012), conducted a study in Sweden to understand the influences of motives to play and time spent gaming, towards the negative consequences of adolescent computer gaming. His findings showed people played games such as MMORPG (massive multiplayer online role-playing games) for motives of escape, status, or due to peer pressure. Other motives found that influenced play were social and fun motives. Participants used this genre of gaming as a means of coping with real-world problems. Johnson et al., (2016) also found the genre to be a significant predictor of gaming time. In their study, they discovered an increase in gaming time in the MMORPG, RTS (real-time and turn-based games), and RPG genres in descending order. Furthermore, they explained that the three factors of the self-determination theory, that is, autonomy, competence, and relatedness were associated with gaming time. Relatedness was seen to contribute to having the highest gaming time among the three factors meaning the more relatable people felt about the game, the more they were motivated to play. Situational motives were also observed by Balhara et al. (2020), as the imposing of the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown in India led to a sharp increase in gaming behaviours. Stress management due to lockdowns and coping with exam-related fears were seen as prominent motivators to play games.

Other studies into motives used the personality style of their participants to understand their motives to play video games. Research using personality styles found highly extroverted individuals play more of casual, music, and party games. Due to these games containing a high level of social interaction and movement, it was found to be a motivating factor for extroverted individuals to play. Furthermore, individuals scoring high in conscientiousness played games from the sports, racing, and simulation genres. The task-oriented nature of these games motivated people to have high conscientiousness in playing them. Individuals scoring high on openness were motivated to play action-adventure and platform games as these games would enable them to encounter newer experiences. Escape, coping, and fantasy motives were found in individuals who scored high on neuroticism. Neurotic Individuals felt they could live their ideal lives in these gaming genres due to the feeling of lesser control of their lives in the real world (Peever et al., 2012; Braun et al., 2016; Wang, n.d.; Von der Heiden et al., 2019; de Hesselle et al., 2020; Akbari et al., 2021; Lopez- Fernandez at al., 2021).

When gender was included as a component to check for motives, Veltri et al., (2014) observed motives to be similar across gender. A study done by Lopez-Fernandez et al., (2019) showed females have higher gaming times for the achievement and social motives. Gaming was used as the main mechanism for coping amongst females who suffered from depression. Although females tend to play games, this may decrease due to how games portray gender, as Lopez-

Fernandez et al., (2019), mention the presence of hypersexualized and exaggerated female characteristics, which in turn make females compare themselves with these fantasy characters and this leads to low self-esteem and unhappiness with themselves.

Previous research identifies personality traits to be a major contributor to motive for gaming, for example, people scoring high in neuroticism have been seen to have higher levels of gaming for coping and escape purposes. Some situational factors such as stress due to lockdowns and other factors such as the genre have also contributed to gaming motives. Furthermore, gaming motives were found to be similar across gender. Due to the lack of studies done in India on gaming motives, this research aims to use the Motives for Online Gaming Questionnaire (MOGQ) (Demetrovics et al., 2011), to understand the motives that influence Indian gamers to play. This research will also add a "Gender" parameter to better understand any motive differences across the two genders in India. There is a major difference seen between genders in India concerning employment, education, other opportunities, and so on (Sumanjeet, 2016). Hence the researcher believes gender may have an adverse effect on any findings obtained in this study and it is included as a component. To conclude, from this study the researcher hopes to answer the following question: Based on the MOGQ, what are the motives that push Indians to play video games and are there any differences in these motivations to play between the two genders?

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To understand the effect of MOGQ-based motives on time spent in gaming and its influences across the two genders in India.

Objectives

- To understand the differences in motives for gaming across the two gender groups.
- To understand which motive would lead to the most time spent in gaming between the two genders.
- To understand which motive would lead to the least time spent in gaming between the two genders.

Variables

- Independent variables- The independent variables that are taken for this study include "Gaming Motives" and "Gender" i.e., Male/Female.
- Dependent variable- The dependent variable taken for this study is the "Time Spent in Gaming".

Operational Definition

Gaming Motive

Gaming Motivations are the factors that pull individuals towards playing video games. There are many motivations, and they can vary across studies. For example, Yee (2016) reports 6 motives i.e., Action, Social, Mastery, Achievement, Creativity, and Immersion.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between gaming motives and time spent in gaming.
- There is a significant interaction between gaming motives and gender on time spent in gaming.

- The competitive motive would have the highest time spent in gaming in the male gender category.
- The escape motive would have the highest time spent in gaming in the female gender category.
- Social motive would have the least time spent in gaming in the female gender category.
- Escape motive would have the least time spent in gaming in the male gender category.

Population

436 million individuals who play video games in India (Statista, 2021a).

Sample

A total of 118 responses were obtained through snowball sampling out of which 104 agreed to participate and 14 did not give their consent to participate in the study. This number further decreased to 100 as they fit into the inclusion criteria of age greater than 15 years while 4 responses were omitted due to not meeting the inclusion age (<15 years). Hence a total of 100 responses were included in the study out of which 67 responses were from the Male gender and 33 were from the Female gender.

Inclusion criteria

Four Requirements were chosen to participate in the study:

1. The first requirement was that the participant must play video games on any platform i.e., mobile, computer, or/and console.
2. The second requirement was that the age of the participant must fall between 15 to 50 years.
3. The third requirement was that the participant must be a resident of India.
4. The fourth and final requirement was that the participant must be able to read and understand the English language.

Tools

The Motives for Online Gaming Questionnaire (MOGQ)*:* The MOGQ was developed by Demetrovics et al. (2011) (Appendix C). It measures seven dimensions of gaming motives: Escape (escaping from reality), Coping (coping from stress), Fantasy (experiences and identities taken in-game), Skill Development (includes attention and motor coordination), Recreation (includes enjoyment and entertainment), Competing (includes competing with others), and Social (for discovering new relationships). It comprises of 27 questions, like "I play online games because I can get to know new people"; "I play online games because I enjoy competing with others"; and so on. Participants are asked to choose one option from five choices based on what they feel towards the question. The options are as follows: Almost never/ Never, Some of the time, Half of the time, Most of the time, Almost always/ Always. The Factor Reliabilities, Internal Consistencies, Means and Standard Deviations for the seven areas are given as: Escape(Det=0.94, α=0.87, M=1.91; SD=1.00); Coping(Det=0.94, α=84, M=2.49, SD=1.08) ; Fantasy(Det=0.92, α=0.82, M=2.33, SD=1.13); Skill Development(Det= 0.94, α=0.89, M=2.25, SD=1.13); Recreation(Det= 0.92, α=0.79, M=4.12, SD=0.93); Competition(Det=0.95, α=0.90, M=2.42, SD=1.19); and Social(Det= 0.94, α=0.90, M=3.03, SD=1.21).

Socio-Demographic Profile sheet (Appendix B)*:* This section was used to collect some demographical information from the participant and includes age, overall time spent in gaming, and time spent in gaming for each of the above-mentioned motives.

Research Design

This descriptive study is designed to show the relationship between gaming motives and time spent in gaming. Furthermore, this study will check to see the effect of gender on time spent in gaming. This study will also check the gender differences in motive for gaming and which motive has the highest time spent in gaming between the two genders.

Procedure

Participation in the study was done completely online. Participants had to fill in a google form consisting of four sections. The first section included the participant information sheet and the consent form. Once participants gave their consent, they were sent to the next section. The next section was called the "Age Check" section. Here participants had to consent that they were 15 years or older (The inclusion age is between 15 to 50 years). Those who fell into the inclusion age were sent to the next section. Those who did not fall into the inclusion age were sent to the end of the form and were briefed on why they could not continue.

The next section consisted of "Socio-Demographics" where participants had to enter a unique code to label their data. This code could also be used if the participants wished to withdraw their data later on. Once they entered their code, participants were then asked to enter their age and their gender. This was followed by questions on overall time spent in gaming in a week (in hours) and time spent for each motive of gaming in a week (also in hours). Once the socio-demographic section was filled, participants were sent to the "Motives for Online Gaming Questionnaire" section where they had to answer the MOGQ. After completely answering the MOGQ, participants were then sent to the debrief form and were asked to submit their responses.

After the required amount of data is collected in the MOGQ, the score to obtain the overall motive for gaming is obtained by first adding all the scores and dividing by three. To obtain the individual total scores for each of the areas, the questions that belong to each area are added and then divided by three. After this, the interpretation was made for the overall score and the total score in each area. The interpretation is: Low, Medium, and High. After scoring the questionnaire, all the data was then entered into SPSS and the required analysis was done. The results were then interpreted and discussed accordingly.

Ethical Considerations

Participation is voluntary in the research and the participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wish to do so. Informed consent (Appendix A) will be taken from the participants after fully explaining to the participants the implications of being a participant. The participant will be informed of the free will to participate and will not be pressured or coerced in any way to do so. The use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language will be avoided in the formulation of the Questionnaire. Privacy and anonymity of respondents are of paramount importance and the same will be informed to the participants and maintained. All works of other authors used in any part of the dissertation with the use of the Harvard/APA/Vancouver referencing system according to the Dissertation Handbook will be acknowledgement. The highest level of objectivity will be maintained in discussions and analyses throughout the research.

Statistical Analysis: This study will be a descriptive, and effect study. Through inferential statistics comprising of ANOVA, inferences/ predictions will be made from the data. Finally, with the results obtained from the analysis, generalization will be done across the population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gaming Motives and Gender

Table 1 Time spent in gaming for each motive between the two genders.

Gaming Motive	Time spent-Males	Time spent-Females
Social	M=3.07 SD= 1.37	M= 2.45 SD= 1.32
Escape	M= 2.89 SD= 1.40	M= 2.86 SD= 1.51
Competition	M= 3.08 SD= 1.48	M= 2.31 SD= 1.03
Coping	M= 3.72 SD= 1.55	M= 2.98 SD= 1.24
Skill Development	M= 3.75 SD= 1.64	M= 2.88 SD= 1.45
Fantasy	M= 2.95 SD= 1.46	M= 2.27 SD= 1.31
Recreation	M= 3.53 SD= 1.18	M= 3.06 SD= 1.12

Table 2 Mann Whitney U Test to check difference of gaming motives across gender.

	Gaming Motive	Z Score	P Value
Gender	Social	-2.38	0.17
	Escape	-2.32	.816
	Competition	-2.429	0.15
	Coping	-2.197	0.28
	Skill Development	-2.510	0.12
	Fantasy	-2.441	0.15
	Recreation	-1.917	0.55

Descriptive statistics show Males have highest time spent in gaming for the Skill Development Motive (M=3.75 SD=1.64), followed by the second highest time spent for the Coping Motive (M=3.72, SD= 1.55), and third highest time spent is for the Recreation Motive (M=3.53, SD=1.18). The motive which has the fourth highest time spent is seen to be the Competition

motive (M=3.08 SD= 1.48) followed by fifth highest being the Social Motive (M=3.07 SD= 1.37), followed by the sixth highest time spent being the Fantasy motive (M= 2.95 SD= 1.46). The motive which has the least time spent in Males is the Escape Motive (M=2.89 SD= 1.40).

Descriptive statistics show Females have highest time spent in gaming for the Recreational Motive (M=3.06 SD=1.12), followed by the second highest time spent for the Coping Motive (M=2.98, SD= 1.24), and third highest time spent is for the Skill Development Motive (M=2.88, SD= 1.45). The motive which has the fourth highest time spent is seen to be the Escape motive (M=2.86 SD= 1.51) followed by fifth highest being the Social Motive (M=2.45 SD= 1.32), followed by the sixth highest time spent being the Competition motive (M= 2.31 SD= 1.03). The motive which has the least time spent in Females is the Fantasy Motive (M=2.27 SD= 1.31).

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to test the difference in time spent in gaming across gender for the social motive. Results show a significant difference in time spent for social motive, competition motive, coping motive, skill development motive, and fantasy motive across gender (U= 782.5 P=0.17, U=776 P=0.15, U=807 P=0.28, U= 765 P= 0.12, U=776 P=0.15). This implies the null hypothesis is rejected and concludes that time spent in gaming for social motive, competition motive, coping motive, skill development motive, and fantasy motive across gender is significantly different across gender. Results also show a non-significant difference in time spent for the escape motive and recreation motive (U= 1074 P=.816, U= 846 P=.055). this implies the null hypothesis is retained and conclude that time spent in gaming for the escape and recreation motives are not different across gender.

From the above table, it is seen that Skill Development is the motive that ranks the highest in playing games for Males. Similarly, the Recreational Motive ranks the highest in playing games for Females. These results contradict previous literature (Veltri et al., 2014) which mentioned that motives across genders were similar but this study observes a major difference in motives for gaming across the two genders. Furthermore, the study done by Lopez-Fernandez et al., (2019) showed females have higher gaming times for the achievement and social motives but on the contrary, this study shows that females have seen to have high gaming times for the recreational, coping, and skill development motives. An explanation for this may be that motives for gaming may vary from country to country and may also depend on the livelihood of the individuals. To further support this, India is a developing country with a lower standard of living compared to some of the other countries mentioned in this study (Perumal, 2020). Hence it is only natural that the term “survival of the fittest” would be more applicable to India. For males, the motive of skill development is observed to have the highest time spent implying that men may use gaming as a means to develop skills which would in turn help them in their environmental circumstances. Previous studies have shown that gaming can be a valuable means to improve and build skills (Nuyens, 2018), hence the high time for skill development motives in males and even in females (third highest time spent) suggest this can be a possibility.

High gaming times for the recreational motive in females can be due to how females spend their leisure time. Females may engage in leisure as more of an overlapping activity than an exclusive activity (Winn & Heeter, 2009). Hence females may overlap gaming with other activities to make the best use of the limited time they have for leisure. A similarity observed in descriptive results between males and females is that both have the second-highest game

time for the coping motive. This shows that both males and females may equally approach gaming as a means to help them deal with their worldly issues.

When observing differences between gaming motives, the analysis showed most gaming motives had significant differences except the escape and recreation motives. One can say that difference in scores could be mainly due to a preference for playing. The above results have already shown that the highest gaming times for males were in the skill development motive whereas for females it was in the recreation motive. Hence males choose to spend more time in gaming to develop skills compared to females and this can explain the difference in scores. Furthermore, another reason may simply be due to the availability of time and other socio-economic factors.

Gaming Motives, Gender, and Gaming Time

Table 3 Two-way ANOVA results for the effect of gender and gaming motive on time spent in gaming.

Variable	DF	F	P Value
Gender	1	7.429	.011
GM_Overall	57	1.415	.16
Gender*GM_Overall	13	.984	.490
Error	28		

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to check if gender and overall gaming motive had any effect on overall game time. Results show a significant effect of gender on overall gaming time F (1,28) = 7.429, p= .11. Furthermore, results show that overall gaming motives has a non-significant effect on overall gaming time F (57,28) = 1.415, P= .15. Finally, the interaction of gender and overall gaming time was also seen to have no significant effect on overall gaming time F (13,28) = .98, P= .49.

The result showing that gaming motive and the interaction with gender had no effect on time spent in gaming was rather unexpected. Looking at the social demographic sheet that participants had to answer first, it can be observed that many participants have given rough timings when asked how much time they spent per motive. Furthermore, upon interviewing some of the participants about this, they explained that in general, other than for competition, social, or recreational motive, most of the time, they do not really think about why they play but simply do so. Participants reported that during data collection, when they were asked for gaming time for each specific motive, they were unable to give any exact input as they themselves never really considered this in the first place. To further support this, for most participants, the overall time spent in a week and the sum of individual time spent for each motive do not match, meaning when asked to be specific, participants were not able to give proper estimates. In other words, participants know for which motive they generally play but are unable to provide an exact estimate of this time spent. Another explanation can be taken from Johnson et al. (2016) study, which says the gaming genre was a significant contributor to motivation. This may hold true as more than thinking about deeper motivations like competition, escape, and so on, individuals may choose to play simply based on the type of game or even in terms of the popularity of that game. For example, an RPG game such as

"Elden Ring" which was recently released was met with great reception (Dinsdale, 2022). People may play the game because of its RPG elements or may simply choose to play it due to its popularity or the popularity of its producer "From Software".

Conclusions

Implications

The results of this study show how game developers can cater to the population needs to increase revenue. From the study on motives and gender, it was discovered that males play games to improve skills and females play for leisure. Keeping this in mind developers can design games to suit motive needs that may increase player turnout.

In this study, it was found that both males and females had the second-highest gaming time for the coping motive. Hence gaming is seen as one of the major means of coping, but as previous research has indicated, people who scored high in neuroticism were the ones who developed gaming addiction (de Hesselle et al., 2020; Akbari et al., 2021). Hence mental health professionals can help individuals develop more appropriate coping mechanisms rather than using gaming, to prevent the probable outcome of gaming addiction, because from correlational research it has been found that the coping motive has a positive association with gaming time, meaning if the need to cope using gaming increases, so does the time spent in playing games which may eventually lead to gaming addiction.

In both males and females, the social motive had less time spent in gaming compared to most other motives. While this may be due to the toxicity of gaming communities and so on, as mentioned above, developers can improve the standard of the gaming community by introducing rules and regulations that better filter toxic individuals and provide a better experience for players. Furthermore, policies can also be introduced by respective governments in India that can help protect individuals from such toxicity.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study was that participants entered their time spent in gaming very roughly. To obtain more precise times for gaming, participants could be asked to keep a journal where they enter the time spent and their motive after each gaming session.

Assumption

It was assumed that the gaming time entered by the participants was as precise as possible.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, in males highest gaming times were observed for the skill development motive whereas, for females, the highest gaming times were observed for the recreation motive. When checking for effects and interaction effects, no significant effect was found from gaming motives as well as between the interaction of gaming motives and gender on gaming time, despite gender having a significant effect on gaming time.

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Conflict of Interest

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