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Beginning, persisting, and ceasing to play: A Stage uses and gratifications approach to multiplayer video games

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The Rochester Institute of Technology

Department of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Beginning, Persisting, and Ceasing to Play:

A Stage Uses and Gratifications Approach to Multiplayer Video Games

by

Matthew Shand

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in Communication & Media Technologies

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BEGINNING, PERSISTING, AND CEASING TO PLAY: A STAGE USES AND
GRATIFICATIONS APPROACH TO MULTIPLAYER VIDEO GAMES

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Abstract

Scholars maintain the key to understanding media effects lies in understanding why people use media. Uses and gratifications research regarding video game use assumes player motivations are constant variables, as researchers have not measured player motivations over time. The present study investigated differences between multiplayer video game user motivations across three stages of game play – beginning, persisting and ceasing to play. Data from surveys distributed via Internet forums showed statistically significant changes in motivations from both the beginning and persisting stages of play as compared to the ceasing stage. The present study confirmed motivations for video game use change over time, and thus takes an innovative step that can be replicated to better understand our relationship with other media.

Keywords: Uses and Gratifications Theory, Stages of Game play, Video Games

Table of Contents

Abstract.....3
Introduction.....5
Review of Literature.....8
Methods.....15
Results and Discussion.....18
Conclusion.....22
References.....23

Beginning, Persisting, and Ceasing to Play: A Stage Uses and Gratifications Approach to Multiplayer Video Games

Media use is purposeful and the key to understanding media effects lies in understanding the reasons people use media (Sherry & Lucas, 2006). Mass communication researchers have applied uses and gratifications theory to understand user motivations for engaging with media (Cantril & Allport, 1935; Herzog, 1940, 1944; Waples, Berelson, & Bradshaw, 1940; Berelson, 1949; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961; Katz & Foulkes, 1962; Bijvank, Konijn, & Bushman, 2007; Limperos, 2007; Reinhard & Dervin, 2007; Sherry & Lucas, 2006; Vorderer, Klimmt & Kuhrcke, 2006; Yee, 2007). Uses and gratifications theory posits people perceive their own needs or desires, and from these perceptions, develop different motivations (uses) for their media consumption (Reinhard & Dervin, 2007). However, most such studies assume user motivations remain constant, at least insofar as the researchers do not attempt to measure differences in user motivations over time. Each study is a snapshot, a still image of user motivations at one moment in time. But is that how motivations for media use exist - as constant, unchanging variables? It is intuitive that media use occurs in stages over time, as we begin to use media, persist in that use, and in some instances, cease our use. As a result, we might expect to see variations in motivations for media use over these stages. The present study investigates this possibility in the context of video game use.

The video game industry has become a powerful force in culture and entertainment over the past three decades (Reinhard & Dervin, 2007). A 2004 study revealed young children through college-aged adults spent more time playing video games than watching television. (Reinhard & Dervin, 2007). In recent years, advances in video game technology coupled with the proliferation

of the Internet has ushered in a new era of multiplayer video gaming – large numbers of players are interacting with one another inside digital video game worlds. *World of Warcraft* (WoW), a massively multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG), boasts 11.5 million active subscribers, making it the most widely played online computer game to date (Blizzard Entertainment, 2008). *Halo 3* (H3), a popular first-person shooter (FPS) for the Xbox 360, averages 675,000 unique players a day, which makes it the current most played multiplayer console video game (Bungie, 2009). Because these two games are the most widely played for their respective platform – PC or computer in the case of WoW, and console (a system that is plugged into a television set, such as Nintendo, PlayStation, or Xbox) for H3 – they provide a cross-section of the current multiplayer video game player population.

Multiplayer video games are an ideal medium to examine when considering changes in motivations for use of media over time. These games are readily available, though require a greater investment of resources from users (namely time and money), than other, more ubiquitous media, such as television, radio, and the internet. Further, individuals can encounter these ubiquitous media and others (print, music, and film) through the course of everyday activities, while working or shopping at the mall, while multiplayer video games must be acquired or actively sought out. In conjunction with these characteristics, multiplayer games require a monthly subscription fee to play, further setting the medium apart from more ubiquitous mass media. As a result, the use of multiplayer video games is arguably more selective than that of other media, and thus the examination of motivations for beginning, persisting, and ceasing to engage with multiplayer video games affords an more useful opportunity to see if distinct changes occur over time.

The present study seeks to identify motivational changes for multiplayer video game use over three intuitive stages: beginning to play a game (by playing a video game for the first time), persisting to play a game (playing a specific game over a period of time), and for some, ceasing to play a game. The present study investigates differences among player motivations for WoW, as well as for H3, over the three stages of long-term game play. In addition, the present study compares player motivations for WoW and H3 at each of the three stages to identify the differences in motivations for each game at each stage.

The present study poses the following research questions:

RQ1) What differences are there among self-reported player motivations for each stage of long-term game play (beginning, persisting, and ceasing to play) for Halo 3 online?

RQ2) What differences are there among self-reported player motivations for each stage of long-term game play (beginning, persisting, and ceasing to play) for World of Warcraft?

RQ3) What differences are there between self-reported player motivations for beginning to play Halo 3 online versus self-reported motivations for beginning to play World of Warcraft?

RQ4) What differences are there between self-reported player motivations for persisting to play Halo 3 online versus self-reported motivations for persisting to play World of Warcraft?

RQ5) What differences are there between self-reported player motivations for ceasing to play Halo 3 online versus self-reported motivations for ceasing to play World of Warcraft?

Testing the notion that motivation for media use changes over time has been lacking in uses and gratifications research. By answering these research questions, the present study stands

to identify changes and stability in the motivations of multiplayer video game use over time, in terms of the three stages of long-term play. The approach taken here can easily be adapted to any other form of media. As such, the present study is an innovative and valuable addition to the body of scholarly research regarding motivations for media use. Understanding how motivations for media use change over time, we take another step towards appreciating the dynamic relationship between people and their media use.

In addition, this information is of value to all consumers of media, as well as media designers and producers. For example, knowledge of what motivates consumers to begin and persist their engagement with media provides a clearer understanding to the producers of media about which features or aspects of their product most directly satisfy consumer motivations. As a result, more attention will be paid to developing these features, which will in turn create a product which is more satisfying to consumers. Through a broader societal understanding of *why* we begin, persist, and cease to engage with media, we will be equipped to make educated decisions on *how* we begin, persist, and cease to engage with media.

Literature Review

The uses and gratifications approach dates back to the 1930s and 40s (Ruggiero, 2000). Researchers were interested in exploring the gratifications which motivated individuals to engage with the new forms of mass media content, such as radio quiz programs and soap operas (Cantril & Allport, 1935; Herzog, 1940, 1944), as well as older media, including books and newspapers (Waples, et al., 1940; Berelson, 1949). Early uses and gratifications studies were mainly descriptive, classifying respondents into categories based on their reported motivations (Ruggiero, 2000). For example, radio listeners who sought advice and support from soap operas

were placed into a different category than those who listened to quiz programs for entertainment and information (Herzog, 1944).

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the rise of television became the main subject of mass media research – the uses and gratifications approach was one of the tools used to understand our new relationship with this media phenomenon (Ruggiero, 2000). Researchers began identifying and operationalizing variables which could predict patterns or behaviors of media engagement (Ruggiero, 2000). Schramm, et al. (1961), concluded a child's motivations for the use of television could be predicted by their mental ability, as well as relationships with their parents and peers. In addition, Katz and Foulkes (1962) conceptualized one use of television and mass media as an escape, which could be predicted based on the self-reported levels of stress resulting from an individual's daily life.

The proliferation of the internet provides another frontier for mass media research, and the continued technological advances since have further fragmented our media experiences through the convergence of media technologies. Meanwhile, the uses and gratifications approach persists as a means to investigate the relationship between user motivations for media consumption and the user gratifications obtained through consumption. However, throughout the history of the uses and gratifications approach, there has been little to no attention paid to how these motivations change over time as individuals begin, persist, and cease to engage with media.

As a basis for understanding the uses and gratifications approach, in addition to obtaining a consideration for the present study's selection of motivational categories for video game use, a number of research reports were reviewed. Vorderer, et al. (2006) along with Limperos' (2007) research, were concerned primarily with relationships between player motivations, player

aggression, and preferences for violent games. In contrast, Reinhard and Dervin's (2007) research, as well as Yee's (2007), focused on player demographics, and how these variables related to player motivations for video game use. Lastly, Sherry and Lucas (2006), in addition to Bijvank, Konijn, and Bushman (2007), explored relationships between the amount of time spent playing video games, an individual's preference for video game types, as well as their motivations for playing.

Vorderer, et al. (2006) sought to identify individual motivations that predicted player preference for violent video games. Their hypotheses predicted a preference for violent games would be stronger among individuals with motivations for power and success. The researchers defined power as control over others, and success as competency with a video game (p. 10-11). An online survey was distributed by posting a link in the news section of four popular video gaming websites. The researchers adapted scales from psychological literature to measure motivations for power and success by putting the items into a video game context. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with 23 items on a five point scale, including such statements as "I enjoy controlling the fate of the other characters in video games" (p. 10) and "failure in a video game always makes me try harder" (p. 11). The study results supported the hypotheses: desire for self-enhancement through power and success is a predictor of preference for violent video games. In suggestions for future research, the authors proposed a longitudinal approach to the study of motivations for video game use to ascertain how motivations change over time – an approach which the present study has addressed by considering the stages of long-term game play.

Limperos (2007) also explored the subject of violence in video games and player aggression. However, where other scholars examined relationships between player motivations and preference for violent games, Limperos examined whether motivations for gameplay predicted player aggression. A survey instrument was distributed to a convenience sample of college students. To measure motivations for video game play, a television viewing motives scale was adapted to yield a 33 item index including relaxation, habit, passing of time, entertainment, social interaction, arousal, escape, achievement, competition, control and inclusion as categories, for which no definitions were provided. Respondents were asked to report how much each statement reflected their own motivation for use on a five point scale. The results showed competition and social inclusion motivations predicted aggression: individuals who played for competition were more likely to become verbally aggressive, while those who played for social inclusion were more likely to behave hostile (p. 23).

Unlike the studies which focused on violent games and aggression, Reinhard and Dervin (2007) explored the relationships between gender, situational differences, and game player motivations. The researchers devised three game play situations: playing a game one likes, playing a game one doesn't like, and imagining a game one would like created so they could play it. Using previous research, the authors adapted seven game play motivations, including fantasy (desire to experience a world), competition (desire to be better than someone else), challenge (desire to defeat something perceived as difficult), socializing (desire to spend time with others), mood management (desire to balance one's moods), diversion (desire to displace one's responsibilities), and solitude (desire to enjoy one's time alone). A survey was distributed to a convenience sample of college students, respondents were asked to name a game for each game playing situation (playing a game you like, playing a game you dislike, and an imaginary game

you would like to play), and then for each playing situation, respond to 40 items on a seven point scale as to how they thought each situation satisfied their reasons for playing video games. The data revealed males consistently evaluated games as providing gratification for their motivations, regardless of game play situation, which suggests males are generally more engaged with video games than females. The notion of game play situation was adapted for the present study, though significantly altered – where Reinhard and Dervin looked at player motivations for three different games in three unrelated situations, the present study analyzes player motivations for a game across three stages of long-term play. Further, twice in the article, Reinhard and Dervin (2007) pose the questions: “why do people play digital games? Why do they start? Why do they stop?” (p. 3) and “what compels people to engage with digital games; what are the underlying elements that influence starting, continuing, or stopping this engagement?” (p. 19). The present study is designed to address those questions.

Yee's (2007) study incorporated some of the demographic considerations from Reinhard and Dervin's (2007) study and extended them. Yee focused solely on the uses and gratifications of MMORPG players – a segment of the gaming community which, according to Yee, has been left out of video game research due to the recency of the MMORPG phenomenon. For this reason, MMORPG players were included in the present study. Yee's previous research revealed MMORPG players are on average 26 years old, and typically spend 22 hours a week playing said games. Yee's objective was to explore whether different sections of the player demographic are motivated differently. A survey instrument was distributed via MMORPG online message boards. Based upon previous qualitative MMORPG research that he does not cite, Yee adapted a 40 item survey which asked respondents to answer statements relating to gameplay motivations on a five point scale. Using factor analysis, three main motivation components were generated

(achievement, social, and immersion), each with their own set of subcomponents: **achievement** – advancement (progress), mechanics (optimizing character performance), competition (challenge and compete with others), **social** – socializing (helping and chatting with others), relationship (desire to form long-term relationships with others), teamwork (deriving satisfaction from being part of a group effort), **immersion** – discovery (finding and knowing things most other players don't know about), role-playing (creating a persona with a background story and interacting with other players to create an improvised story), customization (customizing the appearance of a character), escapism (using the online environment to avoid thinking about real life problems). The results showed male players scored significantly higher on all the achievement subcomponents than female players; female players scored significantly higher than males on the relationship subcomponent. Yee points out that while there was a difference in the relationship subcomponent, there was not a difference by sex in the socializing subcomponent. Thus, males and females did not differ in their motivations *to* socialize within the game, but differed in their motivations *for* socializing. Yee's study provided some motivational categories for the present study.

Sherry and Lucas' (2007) study was cited in all other studies under review. They examined the relationship between motivations for video game use and the amount of time spent playing video games. The researchers organized focus groups to determine the motivations for video game use, and from these focus groups, identified six motivational categories: competition (to be the best player of the game), challenge (to push yourself to beat the game), social interaction (to play as a social experience with friends), diversion (to pass time), arousal (stimulating emotions through fast action and high quality graphics), and fantasy (allowing players to do things they normally would not be able to do like fly or drive race cars). A survey

was distributed to a convenience sample of college students. Respondents were asked to report the number of hours they played video games during the typical week, and respond to 22 motivation items based on categories derived from their focus group. Respondents were asked to report the amount of time they spend playing video games during a typical week in the school year, and whether or not they consider themselves to be game players or non-game players, for which the authors provided no definition. The data showed game players rated significantly higher than non-game players across all motivational categories. The most frequently reported video game play motivations were challenge, arousal, and diversion; these categories were included in the present study.

Bijvank, et al. (2007) explored the relationship between player motivations and preference for different video game types - stand-alone games, local and wide area network games (LAWNs), and MMORPGs. Stand-alone games are single player oriented games; LAWN games involve linking computers or game consoles via the Internet so that players can interact with one another in games, typically for tactical combat or sport games; MMORPGs are large-scale role playing games for many players over a computer network – the game form is a fully developed multiplayer universe with an advanced and detailed world that is persistent, meaning it continues to exist whether or not a player is logged into the game. A survey instrument was distributed to a convenience sample of school children. Respondents rated their agreement to 22 items on a seven point scale, based on motivations identified from previous research (diversion, challenge, unwind, arousal, fantasy, competition, social interaction), for which no definitions were provided. Respondents were also asked to name their three favorite games, and how much time they spent playing them last week. Researchers were then able to identify the type of each game (whether it be stand-alone, LAWN, or MMORPG) given the game names, and thus

revealed the more an individual was motivated for social interaction, the more likely they were to prefer MMORPGs and LAWN-type games. The present study examines player motivations for an MMORPG (WoW) and a LAWN-type game (H3), although the latter are more commonly (and more simply) referred to as online games.

Methods

Two survey instruments were devised for the present study: one administered to *World of Warcraft* players and one to *Halo 3* players. The surveys are identical so that only the titles of the games were changed. The motivational categories for the present study were gleaned from the literature review (Yee, 2007; Sherry & Lucas, 2006; Limperos, 2007) and were arranged to be cover a broad spectrum of motivations while remaining parsimonious. The categories include:

Relationship/Socializing: Desire to form new relationships and/or chat with others.

Competition: Desire to compete with other players.

Fantasy/Escape: Desire to experience that which cannot normally be experienced.

Arousal: Desire to excite emotions.

Relaxation/Diversion: Desire to attain a sense of calm and/or pass the time.

Cooperative Play: Desire to join friends in playing the game.

Challenge: Desire to accomplish in-game tasks.

Advancement: Desire to gain power, progress rapidly, and accumulate in-game symbols of wealth and status.

Mechanics: Desire to analyze underlying rules and systems in order to optimize character performance.

Teamwork: Desire to be part of a group effort.

Roleplaying: Desire to create a background story for a character and interact with others.

The present study identifies three distinct stages of long-term game play: beginning, persisting, and ceasing to play. Beginning to play a game was defined as the period of time from when one decides to acquire a game, to when one has finished playing it for the first time. Persisting to play a game was defined as continuing to play a game after the first time an individual has played it. Ceasing to play a game was defined as an individual deciding to quit playing a game altogether

For each stage, the motivational categories were operationalized by creating a statement based on the motivational definition. For example, in the beginning to play section, “My initial reason to play Halo 3 online was to socialize and make new friends”, represents the relationship/socializing motivational category. Respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement with each statement on a six point interval-level scale, with only the polar ends being labeled (strongly agree and strongly disagree).

For the purpose of reliability, each survey was pre-tested by a group of 10 college students. Pre-testers were tasked with identifying any part of the surveys which were unclear. No concerns were raised, and it took fewer than 10 minutes for most pre-testers to complete the surveys. The surveys were then formatted for Clipboard, an online surveying program.

The surveys were distributed using various online message boards. Google.com was used as a search engine, and the following keywords were input – video game message board, video game forum, video game community, television message board, movie message board, and sport message board. The video game communities were intended to provide a diverse population of gamers, while non-video game themed message boards were included to reach more casual gamers, as these individuals might not visit video gaming forums. The top three hits from each search were used. Moderators for each message board were contacted for permission to post a thread advertising the surveys with links to the survey instruments on Clipboard. Advertisements were posed to individuals that have played World of Warcraft, and a separate advertisement was posed to individuals who have played Halo 3 online.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to three statements specifically worded to represent each stage of game play (“My initial reason to play [game title] was...”, etc.). Each statement was followed by the same 11 motivational categories (“to kick back and relax”, etc.). By rating their motivations for each stage of game play, respondents provided data to answer RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5 – motivations for play across the three stages will be compared both internally for WoW and H3, as well as externally, by comparing motivations for play across the three stages between the two games.

Results and Discussion

The data from the H3 survey (n=51) and the WoW survey (n= 58) were analyzed using Minitab. To answer RQ1 and RQ2 (what differences are there among self-reported player motivations for each stage of long-term game play [beginning, persisting, and ceasing to play] for Halo 3 online/World of Warcraft?), separate ANOVA tests compared responses for each of

the eleven motivational categories across the three stages of long-term game play for H3 and for WoW. The results can be viewed in the following table.

<u>Motivational Category</u>	<u>H3</u>	<u>WoW</u>
Relationship/Socializing	NSD	F(2)=3.95, p<.022 (2&3)
Competition	F(2)=29.99, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)	NSD
Fantasy/Escape	F(2)=3.14, p<.047 (1&3)	NSD
Arousal	F(2)=4.96, p<.009 (1&3, 2&3)	NSD
Relaxation/Diversion	F(2)=19.31, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)	F(2)=21.59, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)
Cooperative Play	F(2)=18.82, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)	F(2)=13.35, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)
Challenge	NSD	F(2)=10.52, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)
Advancement	F(2)=3.70, p<.028 (2&3)	F(2)=6.17, p<.003 (1&3, 2&3)
Mechanics	NSD	NSD
Teamwork	F(2)=11.29, p<.000 (1&3, 2&3)	F(2)=7.08, p<.001 (1&3, 2&3)
Roleplaying	NSD	NSD

The data for H3 show the sample population reported statistically significant differences in the majority (seven of 11) of motivational categories for playing H3 over the three stages of long-term game play. There were no statistically significant differences between any of the motivational categories from the beginning stage to the persisting stage (1 & 2) – all of the statistically significant differences occurred either between the beginning stage to the ceasing stage, or from the persisting stage to the ceasing stage, or both in most cases. Therefore, for the sample population, it can be inferred motivations for beginning to play H3 were the same as motivations for persisting to play the game, and that these motivations changed over time, resulting in lower levels of reported agreement with the motivational categories as individuals decided to cease playing the game.

Similar trends can be seen in the data analyzed to answer RQ2. The sample population reported statistically significant changes in the majority of motivational categories (six of 11) for playing WoW over the three stages of long term game play. Again, there were no statistically significant differences between any of the motivational categories from the beginning stage to the persisting stage – and all of the statistically significant differences occurred either between the persisting and ceasing stage, or between both the persisting to ceasing stage and the beginning to ceasing stage. Again, motivations for beginning to play were similar to motivations for persisting to play, and these motivations changed over time, resulting in lower levels of reported agreement for the motivational categories as individuals decided to cease playing the game.

In comparing the results from RQ1 and RQ2, a number of the motivational categories which changed significantly overlapped, while some categories which showed significant changes were unique to one game or the other. Relaxation/diversion, cooperative play, advancement, and teamwork are the four motives where statistically significant differences were found for both games. This suggests these four categories represent some of the more genre-neutral motivations individuals have for playing multiplayer video games in general, so the overlap is not surprising. Differences in motivation by stage for competition, fantasy/escape, and arousal were exclusive to the H3 population. These results are explained by H3's nature as a combat-oriented, sci-fi shoot-'em-up game. Differences in motivation by stage for relationship/socializing and challenge were exclusive to the WoW population, which is explained by WoW's quest-based game system which requires player-to-player social interaction.

To answer RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5 (what differences are there between self-reported player motivations for beginning/persisting/ceasing to play Halo 3 online versus self-reported motivations for beginning/persisting/ceasing to play World of Warcraft?), t-tests compared the results for each of the 11 motivational categories from the beginning, persisting, and ceasing stage of play sections on the H3 survey against their respective counterparts on the WoW survey. RQ3 and RQ4 yielded statistically significant results, which can be viewed on the following table. There were no statistically significant results for differences in self-reported motivations for ceasing to play H3 versus WoW.

<u>Motivational Categories</u>	<u>RQ3</u>	<u>RQ4</u>
Competition	t(104)= -4.57, p<.000 Means: (2.20, 3.66) -1.46	t(97)= -4.52, p<.000 Means: (1.84, 3.18) -1.34
Challenge	t(96)= 2.95, p<.004 Means: (3.28, 2.26) 1.02	t(79)= 4.30, p<.000 Means: (3.29, 1.95) 1.34
Roleplaying	t(105)= 2.99, p<.004 Means: (4.86, 3.93) 0.93	t(103)= 2.18, p<.031 Means: (4.78, 4.05) 0.73

In answering RQ3 and RQ4, we find the motivational category response sets for H3 and WoW for beginning and persisting to play differed significantly for three of the categories – competition, challenge, and roleplaying. The mean scores for competition were lower for H3 in both stages, which translates to individuals who played H3 rated stronger levels of agreement for competition being a motivation for beginning and persisting to play their game as compared to those who played WoW. Again, this variance can be explained given H3's nature as a combat-oriented shooting game – players are pitted directly against one another in armed combat, whereas player versus player (PVP), though prevalent in WoW, is not the focal point of the game.

The mean scores for challenge and roleplaying were lower for WoW in both stages, which infers individuals who played WoW rated stronger levels of agreement for challenge and roleplaying being motivations for beginning and persisting to play their game as compared to those who played H3. WoW is a quest-oriented game, where players must complete objectives to advance the game's narrative, which explains why players would be more motivated for task-completion than those who play H3. The roleplaying motivation is more user-centric in nature - as a game, WoW does not require an individual to roleplay to advance the narrative, though individuals are free to roleplay if they are motivated to do so (just as they are free to do so in H3 if they so desire). Therefore, individuals who do roleplay do so out of pure personal enjoyment, as it has no functional impact on their performance within the game. This is perhaps the only motivational category, for which significant differences were found between the games, that cannot be directly attributed to a gameplay feature (such as competition being tied to PVP or challenge to quest-based gameplay).

There were no statistically significant differences between reported motivations for ceasing to play H3 versus WoW. This suggests that either individuals from both groups had similar reasons for ceasing to play, such as no longer wishing to compete against other individuals or, having achieved the highest rank possible in the game, having no desire to keep playing, or conversely, that individuals has reasons for quitting that were not covered by the response set, such as no longer wishing to pay monthly subscription fees, or not having enough free time to actually play the game.

Conclusion

While the present study does not answer all questions regarding motivations for playing video games, it takes an innovative step towards identifying differences in why individuals begin, persist, and cease playing. The present study has shown the sample population's self-reported motivations for engaging with media changed over time, which is a unique contribution to the body of research comprising the uses and gratifications approach.

The present study has limitations. The data were gathered by self-report surveys and the results are based upon what individuals said they did, and not necessarily what they actually did. Further, the present study used a convenience sample; the results pertain only to those surveyed, and cannot be expanded to a larger audience. Moreover, there were very few individuals who reported no longer playing either H3 or WoW. The H3 survey had a sample size of 52 and the WoW survey had 58 respondents, though they each had only 10 and 17 individuals respond to the ceasing to play motivations, which accounts for roughly 20% and 30% of each population, respectively. In the future, more consideration should be put to recruiting larger numbers of beginners, persisters, and quitters.

In addition, while the motivational categories utilized were intended to be exhaustive, there always remains the chance individual motivations were not amongst those being measured. Future research might employ focus groups for gathering additional motivational categories. The inclusion of open-ended, qualitative response options in each section of the surveys for the present study was meant to account for the lack of any motivational categories. The intent was to evaluate the responses for consideration in future research. However, there was very little useful information gleaned from these response banks. In the future, more consideration should be put

to prompting for the open-ended questions so respondents may be more likely to positively contribute their thoughts.

Future research on the uses and gratifications approach to media should incorporate longitudinal and experiment-oriented research designs. While self-report data can infer relationships between conditions, only experiments can infer causality. Further, longitudinal considerations are of paramount import, as previous uses and gratifications studies wrongly suggest motivations do not change over time. Acknowledging and identifying shifts in motivations for media use amongst populations over time could serve as a valuable step towards understanding humanity's relationship with media.

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