



MOTIVATIONS AND PROFILES OF VIDEO GAME USERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW¹

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Abstract

The paper reviews the mainstream literature on what urges the engagement with videogames based on the motivations and profiles of videogame users. The review starts with an overview of theories on motivations and delves into the major categories of individual motivations. It comes to full circle by examining the demographic characteristics of players on grounds of which basic categories of their profiles are analyzed. In conclusion, each player is a unique individual that is influenced and mobilized in different ways, while the profile of each player often changes in congruence with its needs and the circumstances of the real world.

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JEL Classification: L8, L82, L63

Introduction

A video game is a means of entertainment which excites players because of the intensity that the graphics and emotions create. It also gives to players a sense of completion and the possibility to develop skills (Fang & Zhao, 2010; Ahmed et al. 2017:1-10; Bányai et al. 2018; Columb et al. 2019).

A video game is essentially a form of social interaction and bond developed in the virtual world. In this respect, it concerns and involves both other users and the player's avatar. A game, too, is a means of relaxation and a way out of daily routine (Fang & Zhao, 2010; Weiss & Schiele, 2013; Wei & Lu, 2014; Bányai et al. 2018; Columb et al. 2019; Shi et al. 2019).

The purpose of this study is to analytically review the literature relating to the main motivations and profiles of video gamers. The main argument is that, in addition to being a standard source of enjoyment, there exist other motivations, perhaps much stronger, that push users to engage with video games.

Motivation Theories

In this section we discuss three dominant theories regarding the motivation of those who play video games.

The Flow Theory

Games are considered fun when they give the user the feeling that he is making decisions, addressing challenges, and acquiring skills. This feeling creates a flow environment. In fact, video games are a welcoming environment to develop relevant experiences. Flow motivates users to enter so desirable an experiential state that they log in at regular intervals (Admiraal et al. 2011:1185-1194; Huang & Hsieh, 2011:581-598; Nacke, 2012; Dindar, 2018:1877-1886).

This is achieved when challenges and skills exceed the level of difficulty. Completing the game's challenges is a reward for the user, who acquires a sense of personal success. The user is immersed in the activity and has a pleasant experience. There are several prerequisites under which the flow experience works out and which do not need to coexist because each person is affected differently (Huang & Hsieh, 2011: 581-598; Nacke, 2012; Reid, 2012:70-81). Four prerequisites are regarded as the most important.

The first prerequisite points to the fragile balance between the level of challenges and the user's skills. Therefore, a satisfactory level of challenges maintains the user's motivation to participate in the game. The challenges must commensurate with skills. Users with good skills engage in an activity when challenges are equally high. Conversely, less demanding challenges cause boredom when they are inferior to a user's skills. They may cause feelings of anxiety when they are superior to his skills, or apathy when its challenges and skills are limited (Wan & Chiou, 2006:317-354; Huang & Hsieh, 2011; Admiraal et al. 2011:1185-1194; Dindar, 2018:1877-1886).

The second prerequisite relates to a player's feedback and the third to the existence of clear goals such as life achievements or collections of objects. These prerequisites facilitate the evaluation of the progress of players. Progress is captured when activities are direct and visible in the digital environment (Wan & Chiou 2006; Nacke 2012; Dindar, 2018).

The fourth prerequisite concerns the high concentration on the activity. When a player enters a state of flow, the sense of time is lost and a feeling that he is in control of the activity is created to the extent that the rewards are secondary. Another factor that makes it easier for a player to live out a flow experience is socialization; when the opponent in the game is controlled by another person (Wan & Chiou, 2006; Nacke, 2012; Dindar, 2018).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory

This theory originally refers to motivations for the consumption of media products. It also includes video games. Games are related to the Internet and, consequently, to the media. People consume products to meet personal needs. Understanding their needs, they choose the media they will use by connecting the needs and gratifications to the specific media. An access to the media that offers different goals enables individuals to choose among several sources of information (Kim & Ross 2006; Westwood & Griffiths 2010; Wu et al. 2010; Luo et al. 2011; Ifinedo, 2016; Huang & Zhou, 2018).

Human needs stem from psychosocial situations and create motivations that influence the use of media. Games are a source of meeting the needs for knowledge, entertainment, and social interaction. If needs are met, video game users repeat the experience as much as the interaction creates mental and emotional bonds (Kim & Ross, 2006:28-40; Huang & Hsieh 2011:581-598; Wei & Lu, 2014:313-331; Gallego et al. 2016).

In the case of the need for knowledge, users are more likely to continue the activity that meets this need. Each user is different and chooses to satisfy a wide range of needs. In fact, the extent of satisfaction is determined by various psychological and social factors (Wu et al. 2010; Gallego et al. 2016:81-93).

There are two types of satisfaction. The first is the satisfaction sought by the user and refers to its initial expectations associated with the media. This kind of satisfaction is constantly changing. The second is the satisfaction gained. It points to the user's satisfaction after completing an activity. This type sustains the search for future satisfaction (Gallego et al. 2016:81-93).

The theory of uses and gratifications is detailed into five categories. The first concerns the values that a player acquires by achieving a goal. The second relates to self-knowledge; the user discovers different aspects of itself through participating in groups. The third category refers to social benefits and contacts that users of digital networks maintain with each other. The fourth category concerns the enhancement of social interactions through the acceptance of a user by other users. Finally, the fifth category denotes the entertainment through social interaction in a digital environment (Ifinedo, 2016:192-206).

The Self-determination Theory

The theory of self-determination focuses on the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of motivation. It deals with factors that impel people to start an action and behave in a certain way (Deci & Ryan, 2015).

All motivation theories focus on finding the set of motivations for a user to perform an activity. The self-determination theory investigates the types of motivations that lead individuals to an activity. It distinguishes between two types, the controlled and the autonomous. When motivations are autonomous, a user is given the sense of choice, which is associated with positive experiences. When a user feels autonomous, it does an activity on its own, to the fullest, because it may find it interesting, enjoyable, and intertwined with its values. An example of autonomous motivation is the intrinsic motivation, where individuals engage in an activity because it is an interesting and fulfilling fun purpose. On the contrary, controlled motivations include activities that create a feeling of pressure and coercion. These forms of pressure are the rewards that create a sense of control. Both types of motivations result from the user's intentions, and thus its behavior is determined by the degree to which it feels autonomous or controlled (Gagné & Deci, 2005:331-362; Deci & Ryan, 2015:486-491).

Games are used to meet certain human needs. The experience becomes enjoyable for a player if the game satisfies most of the needs identified by the theory of self-determination. This theory claims that the most significant are a) the need for autonomy, namely the ability to make decisions, b) the need to demonstrate the capabilities which in turn presupposes that the player has some knowledge and c) the need to socialize and develop a sense of belonging (Rogers 2017; Mills et al. 2018).

However, Reid (2012:70-81) regards this theory as a sub-theory which is related to endogenous motivations and which he calls Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET). In this respect, it is overall argued that by meeting needs as those identified by the self-determination theory, the activity becomes enjoyable, and motivation is enhanced (Mills et al. 2018). The next section sheds light on the main categories of motivations and how they affect users to behave.

Primary Motivation Categories

Motivations are divided into two main categories (Chen et al. 2016:99-119): exogenous and endogenous.

Exogenous

Exogenous motivations or otherwise social motivations denote a behavior that leads to the fulfillment of goals or the acquisition of rewards. By challenging and rewarding, games keep players interested. Rewarding experience leads to a search for more challenges. Motivations vary, depending on how a user self-identifies and experiences feelings of guilt and selfishness (Sellar, 2004; Levesque et al. 2010; Reid, 2012; Chen et al. 2016; Gattig et al. 2017; Mitchell et al. 2020).

Exogenous motivations have many forms (Guay et al. 2000). Levesque et al. (2010) report these different types of exogenous motivations starting with the "External Regulation". This type is based on the logic that an individuals' behavior is reward-oriented while also trying to evade sanctions and external pressures. Thus, when they feel pressures, they may quit the activity, as the level of difficulty increases.

Another type of exogenous motivations is the "Introjected Regulation", where an individuals' behavior is motivated by pressure. It is internal to the individual and stems from feelings of guilt or the desire of an individuals to prove their worth. Another type is the "Identified Regulation". As a last resort, individuals are motivated by identifying themselves with their behavior. Still another type is the "Integrated Regulation" referring refers to self-disposition; an individual is committed to an activity because it is the reward.

Endogenous

Endogenous or otherwise voluptuous motivations refer to the pleasure and entertainment that is created by either performing a behavior or participating in an activity. These positive emotions, namely pleasure, interest, joy, and enjoyment, are the consequences of the activity (Guay et al. 2000; Levesque et al. 2010; Reid 2012; Chen et al. 2016; Gattig et al. 2017).

Endogenous motivations are not just about positive emotions, but as a means of managing negative emotions experienced through "immersion" and "escape". Being personal, they are shaped mainly by factors relating to a player's life conditions over time. Endogenous motivations result from the satisfaction of the psychological needs of users (Levesque et al. 2010; Reid, 2012; Chen et al. 2016:99-119). There are three main psychological needs.

The first need is autonomy, which points to the want of users to perform free-choice actions. The second is socialization. It concerns the need of users to create bonds with each other through interaction. The third need, finally, is adequacy, that is, the need to deal with a challenge that arises through controversy while providing a sense

of competence and effectiveness. The satisfaction of psychological needs is likely to maximize game participation (Levesque et al. 2010:618-623; Mitchell et al. 2020:323-330).

Alternative Motivations

In this section, we discuss individuals' alternative motivations, the most important of which are as follows.

Improvement

The motivation for improvement includes the concepts of "surprise", "learning", "realism" of the environment and "(over) victory". Fun is learning. Thus, a player motivation decreases or is lost when the game does not provide additional knowledge. At the same time, surprise is associated with the joy of learning. To provide a complete experience, the game's world must be realistic to appear more useful to the player (De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41).

Distinction

The motivation for distinction is related to social interaction. It includes concepts such as "competition", "reward", "comparison", and "discussion" about the game. Players who pursue rewards within the game seek to play with friends; the reward is stronger when someone is watching (De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41).

In this context, players discuss game issues with friends, comparatively demonstrating their skills in competitive pressure. Competition is a key motivator by challenging or surpassing other players and gaining strength. (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006:92; Fang & Zhao, 2010:343; Wei & Lu 2014:316; De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41; Bányai et al. 2018:353; Columb et al. 2019:2).

Immersion

The motivation for immersion includes the concepts of "fantasy", "search for power", "illusion of reality", "feeling of control" and, more generally, of "experiences characterized as impossible". The motivation is to give a player the opportunity to accomplish what would be impossible in an out-of-game environment (Fang & Zhao, 2010:343; De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41; Shi et al. 2019:292).

The game must be realistic and give an illusion of reality through its virtual design while providing a sense of power and control. Games with these characteristics

detract the player's complete concentration and commitment and are used as a means of relaxation and escape from reality (De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41; Columb et al. 2019:2).

Decoration

The motivation of decoration stimulates players because it offers a relaxing and aesthetic experience. A player spends time distracting himself in an aesthetically pleasing environment. Such games are usually simulations (De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:41).

Empathy

Empathy motivation includes the notions of "cooperation", "making friends", "kindness", "justice" and "beauty". It concerns social games, with a pleasing appearance and collaborative features, where players meet friends and interact with friends and supports their pursue of empathy (Fang & Zhao, 2010:343; De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:42; Bányai et al. 2018:35; Columb et al. 2019:2).

Grotesque

This motivation includes the concepts of "cruelty", "ugliness" and "evil". Players are motivated by the sense of danger and fear, in an artificial context (De Albuquerque & Fialho, 2015:42).

At this point, having completed the analysis of motivations, we turn, in the next section, to discuss the profiles of video game players and what sorts of such games they mostly prefer to play.

General Profiles

Each potential video game user fits in a specific profile made up, at least, of two key demographic characteristics, that is, age and gender:

Age

Games target different age groups. A significant percentage of the gaming audience consists of adults or even seniors who, when younger, had no contact with games and learned to use them after reaching adulthood with the help of persons of their social environment (Quandt et al. 2009:27-46; Brown, 2016:308-318).

These age groups start playing because they are familiar with electronic devices like computers and tablets because of their daily use. These age groups often show a preference for violent games. Scarcely surprising, they may also suffer health problems, which make it difficult for them to move around. Therefore, as they limit their outings, engaging in games is an alternative activity (Quandt et al. 2009:27-46; Brown, 2016).

Young people are the main users of video games. The so-called Generation Z were the first generation of young people with had access from their home to a wide range of digital technology media. Their birthdates range from the 1990s to the 2010s when computing and digitalization was on the rise worldwide due to the internet and the world wide web. As a result, they were easily familiarized with digital games and this became an important part of their way of living and life experience (Domahidi & Quandt, 2014:1154-1169; Bassiouni & Hackley, 2016:127-142).

Overall, each age group differs in the video games they prefer to play and the motivation to engage with them. For example, children develop a sense of power and superiority among family members because they know more than them. Adolescents on their part seek to play to socialize and create a shared identity with other users of their age. Of course, they spend less time playing not only due to lack of free time but also because they prefer other ways of socializing that involve more direct social interaction (Greenberg et al. 2008:238-253).

Males

Males form the majority of the game industry audience. Thus, it is not coincidental that most video games place more emphasis on male characters, who are most often at the core of the game plot. Most male players play hardcore video games, which represent the masculinity and experience of the individual (Rehbein et al. 2016:729-735; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016:286-304; Algan & Fortin, 2018:183-228).

They spend more time daily on such activities compared to other recreational activities. The reasons are attributed to the activity environment of the games. The game environment is designed to primarily attract a young, masculine, white and heterosexual audience (Phan, et al. 2012:1496-1500; Kapalo et al. 2015:878-881; Paaßen, et al. 2016:421-435; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016:286- 304; Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

The games preferred by males are strategy games, role-playing games, sports games, and "first person shooters" games. Most of them are characterized as violent and

competitive (Phan et al. 2012 pp. 1496-1500; Kapalo et al. 2015:878-881; Paaßen et al. 2016:421-435; Rehbein et al. 2016; Maher et al. 2017)

They require plenty of hours of engagement and dedication in as much as the player must perform complex activities and participate on a regular basis, in order to keep up with his opponents and teammates. At the same time, the main motivations for males are challenge and social interaction. Other motivations are the desire to become powerful within the virtual world by gaining power through the achievement of the goals (Meredith et al. 2009:3-26; Rehbein et al. 2016:729-735; Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

Males dominate the field of computers and games. They take on the role of technology and digital media expert cultivating a sense of confidence in their abilities. This sense of confidence combined with the general orientation of and the projected images the games create the feeling that digital entertainment is a privilege, a hobby and a kind of occupation aimed exclusively at males (Bryce & Rutter, 2003; Crawford, 2005; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016; Rehbein et al. 2016:729-735).

Females

Most research suggests that females prefer to play occasionally. They usually play casual video games, which point to femininity and easy fun. The games they prefer are puzzles, adventures, battles, educational and simulations. For females, the main motivations are provocation and arousal. In addition, they desire to interact with other players in a fantasy environment that unloads them from stress and pressing circumstances of everyday life (Meredith et al. 2009:3-26; Phan et al. 2012:1496-1500; Kapalo et al. 2015, pp. 878-881; Rehbein et al. 2016:729-735; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016:286-304; Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

There is a consensus in the literature that females' motivations differ from those of males. This, however, should not always be taken for granted as there are important similarities as well. For example, females are equally likely to engage in violent and non-violent games (Harrison et al. 2016:47-64; Kapalo et al. 2015:878-881).

In terms of the characteristic of competition, the anonymity of the virtual space allows females to compete with individuals of the opposite sex, regardless of their gender and the stereotypical images that follow it. Although females engage in gaming less hours than those of their male counterparts, such estimates are usually based on self-reports, which may underestimate the hours they are really devoted to the activity (Bryce & Rutter, 2003:1-15; Paaßen et al. 2016:421-435).

In addition to games, females prefer other types of recreational activities. More generally, however, access to entertainment is limited because of their gender. One reason that females are less engaged with games is the stereotypical image of female role models projected into the virtual environment (Bryce & Rutter, 2003:1-15; Phan et al. 2012:1496-1500; Algan & Fortin, 2018).

Female game characters are often under-represented or simply supporting or auxiliary. Also, they are presented as helpless and sexually provocative or are essentially the prize of the game (Bryce & Rutter, 2003:1-15; Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006:912; Paaßen et al. 2016:421-435; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016:286-304; Algan & Fortin, 2018:183-228).

The main result of this portrayal of female characters is that females are overall considered minor players. The stereotypical perception and imagery of the preferences and skills of females produces the belief that females are less capable and willing video game users (Paaßen et al. 2016:421-435; Vermeulen & Van Looy, 2016:286-304; Algan & Fortin, 2018:183-228). In the next section, we list the main categories of players and their key features per category.

Hardcore Gamers

This category involves highly competitive players who spend much of their free time in games. For these players, the game is not just a hobby. It's an end in itself. Its driving force is the never-ending eagerness for continual progress and improvement of skills. Hardcore players, who do not identify themselves as professionals, play video games regardless of what is their social background and how many other players participate in the same game (Jacobs and Ip 2003:959-967; Bosser & Nakatsu, 2006:374-377; Shaw, 2011:28-44; Scharkow et al. 2015:293-298; Maher et al. 2017:159-168). That is why, according to Jacobs and Ip (2003:959-967), these players are ready to overlook design flaws should the game meet their fun and need criteria.

In short, hardcore gamers are interested in violent video games or in those, like strategy games, with many levels and degrees of complexity and difficulty that require time to think to achieve the goal. They are more likely to stay in a game, no matter how high the level of difficulty is, to experience the agony and frustration until they achieve the goal. Competition is an important aspect as well. That is why hardcore video game users often choose to repeat some activities, to gain more familiarity and achieve better times or higher scores. In addition to playing a game for a long time, they also spend money without caring about discounts or special offers. They are constantly informed about the game and its supporting technology

devices through news media and by chatting with other players via online platforms and forums. (Jacobs & Ip, 2003:959-967).

Casual Gamers

Casual games aim at all categories of players, even those who do not identify themselves as players. They have simple rules and do not require of a player to participate constantly. They also provide users with feedback and rewards for every action, allow both for socialization and competition (Isbister & Schaffer, 2008:959-967; Juul, 2010:1-23; Lee, 2015:656-666; McGloin, et al. 2016:173-181; Molinillo et al. 2018:1766-1786).

By extension, casual gamers play occasionally and for a limited amount of time. They do not look for particular challenges and use the game as a means of fun and relaxation. Essentially, causal players are the opposite of their hardcore counterparts (Shaw, 2011:28-44; Scharkow et al. 2015:293-298; Lee, 2015:656-666; Bostan & Catak, 2016:137-153).

They have little to no gaming experience and prefer easy to difficult games. They are scarcely impressed by new technologies, even though they want to play well-designed games. They rarely repeat activities in a game to improve their skills. That is why, after all, that they are most often looking for free-of-charge games (Jacobs & Ip, 2003:959-967; Isbister & Schaffer 2008:143-158; Juul, 2010:1-23).

Casual gamers play video games to deal with the boredom and monotony of everyday life. The importance they attach to the activity depends on whether a game meets their needs. Of course, although they do not play intensively, some time they either engage heavily with a game to levels of addiction or abstain from gaming for long period. On other occasions, however, they might play games for hours per week to a point beyond what is normal engagement for a casual video game user (Juul, 2010:1-23; Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

Gamer Profiles

De Albuquerque and Fialho (2015:42-44) map out and analyze seven gamer profiles. Succinctly, they are as follows:

Enthusiastic

Players of this profile play highly competitive and rewarding games, mainly because they want their skills to be admired. While gaming, they seek to do all what they could not in the real world.

Selfish

These players are competitive and prefer games that are characterized by toughness. Gaming is a chance for them to do things what is otherwise forbidden in real life. Social interaction is important for them only in cases that it makes the game more difficult.

Competitive

Players of this sort prefer video games that include competition, challenges, and cooperation. Learning is crucial because these players usually want to learn improve their knowledge and skills.

Immersed in the Beauty

Players of this profile are looking for a beautiful virtual environment. Basically, they seek to experience a sense of reality within the virtual world.

Immersed and Selfish

These players seek to be absorbed in the virtual world by doing what is forbidden or impossible. They are not looking for games that involve competition or cooperation. For this reason, they are usually described as solitary players.

Uninterested

These players do not often play. When they do so, they prefer beautiful games in order to detach themselves from everyday life. Most of them are casual gamers.

Friendly

Players of this category want to interact with other users in virtual environments that resemble the real world.

Conclusions

After reviewing the literature, we infer that, drawing on the main motivations of people who play video games, three mainstream theories of motivations have been developed: "flow", "uses and gratifications" and "self-determination". Flow theory explores an individuals' psychology when challenges are part of his daily life. Through this lens, it explains how, a commitment is created with the activity and how all this turns into a source of enjoyment. The "uses and gratifications theory" emphasizes the different needs that each user tries to meet. It focuses on different values, self-knowledge, social benefits, and entertainment (Wan & Chiou, 2006:317-324; Wu et al. 2010; Gallego et al. 2016; Ifinedo, 2016:192-206; Dindar, 2018:1877-1886).

The self-determination theory claims that the game must have certain characteristics. For example, the need to interact with other players is met when the game points to characters and plots or offers the possibility of collaboration. At the same time, the feeling of ability and autonomy is achieved in cases where the game, on the one hand, is considered important and, on the other, exercises control over the player. Therefore, if these needs are met, players spend more time on playing the game (Rogers, 2017:446-450; Mills et al. 2018).

In terms of player motivations, the exogenous motivations are the result of user behavior. Players are motivated by rewards, and the effort to avoid the side effects of their activity such as punishment and social pressures. Exogenous motivations involve social aspects. They satisfy the needs for socialization, social superiority, and common identity (Levesque et al., 2010; Gattig et al. 2017:327-332; Dindar, 2018; Mitchell et al. 2020). Overall, regardless of whether players try to achieve rewards or avoid penalties, exogenous motivations create a sense of obligation through which players are made to behave in a certain way (Guay et al. 2000:175-213).

But endogenous motivations reinforce when the game constantly feeds and supports the player by satisfying the need for competence through the challenge of enjoyment and curiosity. The same is true in cases where the game offers a range of freedom such as the ability to select players. This allows self-expression and creates emotion. Thus, the player feels that it is developing skills while commanding the choice over

the type of activity. In contrast, games that do not meet such needs as the achievement of rewards, reduce endogenous motivations. This happens when rewards are given for activities that players find interesting anyway; and as a result, they feel that their autonomy is limited, and their behavior is subject to control (Levesque et al. 2010:618-623; Gattig et al. 2017; Dindar, 2018; Mitchell et al. 2020:323-330).

Most video game players are at the age of 21-35. The next age group is 36-65 and the youngest 10-20. Most players are males. Nevertheless, a significant number of players are females, with percentages ranging between 40% and 45% of the total. It is interesting that females over eighteen, who constitute one-third of the total, are the fastest growing group of video game users (Yates & Littleton, 1999:566-583; Fang & Zhao, 2010:342-349; Hey & Papay, 2014:174-191; Coppoc et al. 2014:151-157; Braun, 2016; Jenny et al, 2016:1-18; Harrison et al. 2016:47-64; McCarthy, 2019:1-5).

Both males and females share similar motivation, with that of challenge being the most common. The reasons why females are not so actively involved as males, is due to the content of the games. Most games portray females and gender roles in a negative or derogatory way, having elements of intense violence or fierce competition and overlooking social interaction. Therefore, females prefer non-competitive, role-playing games (Schott & Horrell, 2000; Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006:910-931; Colwell, 2007; Reid, 2012; Demirok et al. 2012; Harrison et al. 2016; Maher et al. 2017).

Essentially the profiles of video game players fall within two categories. The first contains the hardcore gamers, who being highly competitive spend much of their free time in gaming. The second contains the casual gamers who, having limited time, play occasionally. They use the game as a means of entertainment without looking for special challenges (Bossler & Nakatsu, 2006:374-377; Shaw, 2011:28-44; Scharkow et al. 2015:293-298; Bostan & Catak, 2016:137-153).

This two-fold categorization is relatively subjective. For example, the core gamers are most often classified somewhere in between the two categories. They are casual users who prefer puzzle and simulation games. Another group is the so-called social gamers, who have many in common with their casual counterparts. These players seek to spend time and interact with their friends or other players in the digital environment. For these reasons, they are likely to participate in tournaments (Scharkow et al. 2015:293-298; Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

Another group are the professional gamers, who have similar characteristics to hardcore gamers. They consider the game an end in itself and, thus, victory is the main motivation for them to continue playing. They perceive the game as a sport through which they compete other players at a professional level, for they spend a lot of time in this activity to improve their skills (Maher et al. 2017:159-168).

In conclusion, what the above synopsis recapitulates, no matter what the motivations and the profiles of video game users are and how gaming is engaging with their daily life, the mainstream literature seems to voice the view that each user is a unique individual that is affected and mobilized differently. Each player's gaming behavior reflects their personal temperament, traits, and preferences, that are constantly adjusted and possibly changed in line with its needs and the conditions and circumstances of reality. In this respect, the discussion about the subject-matter is never-ending and, therefore, the scope and prospects for further research are widely open. For example, issues that could be examined further in future research is how motivations and profiles of video game users change in relation to either different social science disciplines or several kinds of video games with which users are engaged.

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