PLAYING FORTNITE FOR A FORTNIGHT? PARTNER PERCEPTIONS OF VIDEO GAME USE AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND ATTACHMENT

Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences of the

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of

Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology

By

Keaton Allen Teal, B.S.

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

Dayton, Ohio

August 2019

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Name: Teal, Keaton Allen

APPROVED BY:

_____
Lee J. Dixon, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor

_____
Catherine Lutz-Zois, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Erin O'Mara Kunz, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Lee J. Dixon, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Psychology

ABSTRACT

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Name: Teal, Keaton Allen
University of Dayton

Advisor: Dr. Lee J. Dixon

Previous research suggests video game use may be detrimental to individuals in many facets of their lives (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Starcevic, 2013; Kim, Namkoong, Ku, & Kim, 2008; Young, 1999). One such facet is an individual's romantic relationship. However, most research conducted on video game use has compared its effects to gambling addiction or alcohol addiction. This study investigates the partner of those who engage in video game use, specifically how their attachment and sensitivity to rejection may influence how they perceive their partner's engagement in video games, as well as their satisfaction in the relationship. Moderation analyses suggested that attachment and rejection sensitivity do not influence the relationship between an individual's perception of their partner's video game use and their relationship satisfaction.

Keywords: video game use, relationship satisfaction, partner perception, rejection sensitivity, attachment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tremendous praise goes to my friends and family for supporting my journey through this study. My parents, Troy and Carrie, have provided shelter, food, and internet access while I finished this and I will always be grateful for that. I would also like to thank Dr. Lee Dixon for his continued support and incredible intuition this past year—especially so in the last months during what I like to refer to as, *crunch-time*. Additionally, my committee members, Dr. Catherine Lutz-Zois and Dr. O'Mara Kunz for providing helpful and insightful contributions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the fastest growing industries in the world today is the video game industry—an $18 billion industry just in the United States (Anderson, 2018). This industry is more than just video game publishers creating video games and consumers purchasing video games, it has created sub-industries, such as eSports (e.g., competitive video game playing). The eSports industry is expected to reach $1.9 billion by the end of 2018 (Superdata, 2017). Additionally, streaming services such as Twitch.TV and YouTube Gaming offer 24/7 access to content creators for anyone with an internet connection to watch another person play video games. Advertisers pay these content creators (known as "streamers") to promote their products, not unlike advertisements found on television or radio.

In 2015, 49% of American adults reported playing a video game at least once in their lifetime (Fuller, 2016). 67% of households in the United States own a device that can play video games, with 97% owning a personal computer, 81% owning a smartphone, 61% owning a wireless device (e.g., handheld), and 48% owning a dedicated home console (e.g., PlayStation, Xbox) (Entertainment Software Association, 2017). Within those who own a device, 65% of these US households have one person who plays at least three hours per week (Entertainment Software Association, 2017). The average age of video game players is 35-years-old, with 18% of video game players being under the age of 18 (Entertainment Software Association, 2017).

Additionally, 55% of video game players report that video games facilitate social connectivity, and 46% report that it facilitates family bonding. These statistics suggest that video game use may largely be utilized for social reasons, rather than a stereotypical preference for isolation (Kowert, Festl, & Quandt, 2014).

The term "video game" can refer to the entire industry, a single item, or a social structure. Given the broad reach of video game use, it is important to have an understanding how an individual's video game use is associated with other personal and interpersonal constructs within a committed relationship, as engaging in any behavior is likely to be associated with both costs and benefits.

Video Game Use

Defining video game use as a construct has proven to be difficult. In the current literature, little has been discussed purely on video game usage. Instead, researchers focus on associating the construct to other behaviors such as internet use, alcohol use, or gambling. Aggregation of these similar constructs will be vital to further understand how video game use is associated with romantic relationships.

Certain genres of video games receive more attention than others due to popularity or prevalence in society, as well as the potential negative effects it may have on a population. One such genre is the massive multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), illustrated in one of the largest video games in the US to date, World of Warcraft, released by Blizzard Entertainment in 2004. This genre of games led researchers to begin examining "online game addiction" due to some people's extreme use (Kim, Namkoong, Ku, & Kim, 2008).

MMORPGs are distinguished from other genres due to their vast, complex, and detailed worlds where players spend hours a day involved (Griffiths, Davies, & Chappell, 2003; Whang & Chang, 2004). As the popularity of these games increase, concerns for their use also increases. At the time of Kim and colleagues' (2008) study, the term "online game addiction" had spread due to the influx of clinical evidence supporting the diagnosis—a concern that still presents itself a decade later. Their study showed evidence that aggression and narcissistic personality traits were positively correlated with online game addiction, and self-control was negatively correlated with online game addiction. General addictive behaviors have been shown to be associated with poor self-control and poor planning when studying alcoholic patients as well (Baumeister 2003; Trimmel, & Kopke, 2000).

As previously mentioned, the diagnosis of online game addiction is still being considered today. It is officially included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM–5*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) under the name of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), however it is classified as a "Condition for Further Study"; presented with proposed criteria for upcoming editions of the *DSM-5*. Essentially, this means that the construct of internet gaming has gained enough awareness and is recognized as a potential disorder but is not intended for clinical purposes—there is not an official diagnosis.

Brand and colleagues (2016) assert that although internet, gaming, and other online addiction research has shown similarities, it is important to distinguish the features of addictive usage because the individual is not addicted to the actual medium, but the content in which they engage in. Substance addiction presents with physical symptoms

(e.g., cirrhosis of the liver), however the physical symptomology of internet related disorders is more difficult to pinpoint (Young, 1999). Physical symptoms may include carpal tunnel syndrome, eyestrain, or back pain, due to an increase in sedentism (Young, 1999).

In light of video game use, time is not the definitive way to measure excessive use of the internet (Young, 1999). However, generally speaking, those who are candidates for the disorder have been examined to be using the internet for approximately forty-to-eighty hours per week with single sessions sometimes lasting twenty hours (Young, 1999). Not surprising, sleep patterns are disturbed, with the individual staying up well past normal bedtime hours (i.e., 3:00am, 4:00am) despite having work or school the next morning (Young, 1999). The increase in sedentism may be mild when compared to chemical or substance dependency symptoms, but an addictive use of the internet has been shown to have similar impairment in both personal and interpersonal constructs (e.g., familial, occupational, academic) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, Young, 1999).

Like gambling addiction, internet addiction has been considered to be a behavioral addiction (Brand et al., 2016; Starcevic, 2013). Starcevic (2013) summarized a collection of studies (Blaszczynski, 2008; Block, 2008; Charlton and Danforth, 2007; Hussain and Griffiths, 2009; Kuss and Griffiths, 2012; Sim et al., 2012) and indicated five criteria for a behavior to be considered behavioral addiction: salience, loss of control, tolerance, withdrawal, negative consequences. However, Starcevic (2013) argues that only gambling addiction fits these criteria, and that behavioral addiction itself is becoming too broad, encompassing more than there are actual pathological examples.

The consensus does appear to indicate that individuals who engage in these activities at higher rates than others, tend to have negative consequences in many areas of their lives (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Starcevic, 2013; Young, 1999)

Perception of Partner's Use

An essential component of any committed relationship is the influence each partner has on the other (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). For example, a study conducted by Rodriguez, Øverup, and Neighbors (2013) stated alcohol use in a committed relationship can either be a source of enjoyment or give rise to conflict. Additionally, everyone has their own definition of what qualifies as problematic alcohol use. The distinction between perceiving one's partner's problematic use and non-problematic use is made from one's own perception and evaluation of the quantity and frequency of their partner's alcohol use (Rodriguez et al., 2013). To my knowledge there are no studies that examine video game use in the same way.

In general, positive perceptions of one's partner are associated with an increase in relationship satisfaction and an increase in commitment (Cobb, Davila, & Bradbury, 2001; Molden, Lucas, Finkel, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2009; Murray, Holmes & Grifjfin, 1996; Neff & Karney, 2005; Ruvolo & Fabin, 1999; Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000). Similarly, when one indicates it is important for their partner's interests and attitudes to be similar to their own, and they perceive their partner's interests and attitudes to be similar, there is a positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and relationship longevity (Lutz-Zois, Bradley, Mihalik, & Moorman-Eavers, 2006). Contrariwise, when one perceives his or her partner to not meet his or her ideals, it may lead to a decrease in

relationship satisfaction and possibly end in relationship dissolution (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999; Murray et al., 1996).

Results such as these suggest that subjective perception is more important when determining interpersonal constructs, such as relationship satisfaction, than objective evaluations of one's attitudes or interests. Additionally, when concerning video game use in a romantic relationship, these results may suggest video game use could lead to an increase or decrease in relationship satisfaction, contingent upon one's perception of their partner's video game use. Rodriguez and colleagues (2013) indicated the threshold of what is considered to be excessive is conditional from person to person. For instance, two hours per day may be considered acceptable by one partner, but a partner in a different relationship may find two hours per day excessive.

Relationship Satisfaction

To reiterate, in the literature, video game use has been discussed in light of internet use, alcohol use, and gambling. The literature has repeatedly demonstrated an association with alcohol abuse and poorer relationship outcomes (e.g., Dawson, Grant, Chou, & Stinson, 2007; Leonard & Eiden, 2007; Leonard & Rothbard, 1999; Marshal, 2003). Furthermore, common reasons provided for divorce have been shown to be alcohol use and substance use (Amato & Previti, 2003; Levinger, 1966). Likewise, video games are not unfamiliar with divorce hearings. A quick search online will yield many results of articles shedding light on video games "ruining marriages" as early as 2008 (Ciabai, 2008). More recently, the extremely popular Battle Royale game, Fortnite, has been in the spotlight for similar reasons. As of September 2018, over 200 couples in the

United Kingdom cited Fortnite and other online video games as reasons for divorce (Jr., 2018).

Despite the provided reasoning, it is not wise to assume that video game use is the sole culprit for these 200 couples' divorce in the UK. For alcohol use, research has demonstrated a reciprocal association between drinking and dyadic adjustment; drinking has the potential to affect and be affected by events within the relationship (Bamford, Barrowclough, & Booth, 2007; Fe Caces, Harford, Williams, & Hannah, 1999; Leonard & Homish, 2008; Levitt & Cooper, 2010; Marchal, 2003). Similarly, familial disruptions, financial concerns, and other stressors unrelated to alcohol may be the precursor to relationship problems and lead to an increase in alcohol consumption (Duncan, 1978; Krueger, 1981; Noone, Dua, & Markham, 1999). This may suggest that video game use, too, may affect and be affected by events within a relationship. The reciprocal nature of problematic behavior may create a negative feedback loop. As life stressors increase, problematic behaviors may increase, which may lead to a decrease in relationship satisfaction. A decrease in relationship satisfaction may bolster the problematic behavior, likely dependent on how the person perceives the problematic behavior. One personal characteristic that can contribute to one's perception of their partner's behaviors has been found to be their attachment style (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005).

Attachment

Determining how an individual may perceive an event within their romantic relationship may be described by Hazan and Shaver's (1987) expansion of Bowlby's (1969) original attachment theory: a hypothesis that a child attaches to its caregiver.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) suggest that this type of attachment continues into adulthood and that partners are attached to one another.

Securely attached couples typically have higher rates of relationship satisfaction and provide more security and social support than those who are insecurely attached (Ainsworth, 1991; Banse, 2004; Senchak & Lenoard, 1992; Butzer & Campbell, 2008). Secure attachment is associated with higher rates of responsiveness to a partner's needs, and with higher accessibility to their partner (Bowbly, 1973; Johnson, 2004).

Insecure attachment can be described in two dimensions, anxious attachment and avoidant attachment. Anxious attachment refers to the anxiety or distress an individual may exhibit as a result from fear their partner will abandon them (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Avoidant attachment refers to the avoidance of closeness, sometimes both emotionally and physically (Allen & Baucom, 2004). In addition to lower rates of relationship satisfaction, insecurely attached couples tend to be more associated with mental health concerns, such as depression or anxiety (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010). These couples may also be more susceptible to alcohol and other substance disorders (McWilliams & Bailey, 2010). Insecurely attached individuals may also have motivation for engaging in extradyadic behavior, or infidelity, due to their discomfort within the relationship and a decrease in commitment (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Feeney, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993; Levy & Davis, 1988). According to Downey & Feldman (1996) an insecure model develops when the caretaker is unable to satisfactorily meet the needs of the individual, which may lead to uncertainties and anxieties about acceptance and support from others. The insecure model then applies to their romantic relationships later in adulthood. Their definition of an insecure model is

closely related to that of attachment, but it is actually a term they refer to as rejection sensitivity.

Rejection Sensitivity

Everyone differs in their readiness to perceive and react to rejection, however, the yearning for acceptance and the avoidance of rejection is widely recognized as an essential component of being human (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Horney, 1937; Maslow, 1987; McClelland, 1987; Rogers, 2013). Some individuals can remain calm and interpret negative events easily, while others may overreact in ways that negatively affect their relationships and well-being (Downey & Feldman, 1996). For the latter, Downey and Feldman (1996) referred to these individuals as *rejection sensitive.*

The term rejection sensitive is derived from studies that theorize individuals who have anxiety about abandonment, a mistrust of others, or generalized expectations of others as corrective, disapproving, or discarding may be more sensitive to rejection (Horney, 1937; Erikson, 1950; Sullivan, 1953). Similar to the core component of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), an individual expects that a significant other will either satisfy their needs or reject their needs (Downey & Feldman, 1996). This expectation is carried over from the individual's reliance upon their caretaker in early childhood (Downey & Feldman, 1996).

Additionally, Nowland, Talbot, and Qualter, (2018) suggest that those who are rejection sensitive and consider themselves to be lonely may be hypersensitive to threats within their relationship. Being threat sensitive refers to an increase in anxiety about the relationship, and an association with a fixation on negative events or interactions (Nowland et al., 2018).

Present Study

The present study will examine the moderating role of personal characteristics (i.e., anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, rejection sensitivity) in the relationship between perceptions of amount of partner video game use and relationship satisfaction.

Research has demonstrated a decrease in relationship satisfaction regarding perceived problematic or frequent alcohol and internet use. Yet, to my knowledge, video game use has not been examined in the same way. Attachment may be associated with one's perception of their partner, specifically one's level of anxious attachment. Moreover, those higher in levels of anxious attachment may fear that their partner is abandoning or replacing them (Brennen et al., 1998). Similarly, those who are rejection sensitive also have anxiety regarding abandonment, along with a mistrust of others, and may be hypersensitive to threats within a committed relationship (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Nowland et al., 2018).

As previously stated, excessive use of the internet is linked to impairment in familial, occupational, and academic areas (Young, 1999). Therefore, it can be assumed that if one perceives their partner to be spending an excessive amount of time on an activity to have poorer perceptions of their partner, and ultimately poorer relationship satisfaction.

Hypotheses

Given the existing literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: An individual's anxious attachment will moderate the degree to which their perception their partner's video game use is associated with relationship

satisfaction. Specifically, the higher one is in anxious attachment, the greater the negative association between perceived time spent and relationship satisfaction. See Figure 1a.

Hypothesis 2: An individual's avoidant attachment will have no effect on the relationship between their perception of their partner's video game use and relationship satisfaction. See Figure 1b.

Hypothesis 3: An individual's rejection sensitivity will moderate the degree to which their perception of their partner's video game use is associated with relationship satisfaction. Specifically, the higher one is in rejection sensitivity, the greater the negative association between perceived time spent and relationship satisfaction. See Figure 1c.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

The study surveyed 400 participants recruited from Prolific.ac and were monetarily compensated an equivalent of $6.50/hr USD for their participation. Participants were required to have been in a committed romantic relationship for at least three months and were English speaking US citizens. Of those 400, 262 participants (173 females, 85 males, 3 other, 1 missing) were recruited again to respond to the battery of measures. Participant age ranged from 18 to 64 (M = 32.49, SD = 9.97). Relationship length ranged from 0.25 years to 45 years (M = 7.61, SD = 7.52). Participants were racially diverse, but prominently Caucasian (194 Caucasian, 20 Asian, 12 African-American, 11 Hispanic or Latino/a/x, and 25 multi-racial). This study was approved by the appropriate IRB at the University of Dayton.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through Prolific.ac. This study was longitudinal design in order to comply with Prolific.ac's method of screening for participants. Participants were notified of the available study and were redirected to a Google Form containing a single-item question assessing whether their partner plays video games. This approximately took participants one-minute to complete and were compensated $0.11 on average. Upon completion, participants were immediately debriefed. Those who responded yes to the question were invited for the second study.

Three measures were administered to the participants including the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Revised (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan 2000) to measure the participant's attachment level, the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) to determine the level of satisfaction in their relationship, and the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey & Feldman, 1996) to determine how sensitive they are to rejection. Following the measures, participants completed a measure assessing their perception of their partner's video game use, their own video game use, their time spent playing video games together, their satisfaction with their partner's video game use, and how their partner's video game use impacts their relationship. Lastly, participants completed a brief demographics measure and were immediately debriefed following the study. The second study took approximately seven minutes to complete and participants were compensated $0.76 on average.

For both studies, participants who did not consent for participation were provided a separate debriefing form.

Measures

Cronbach's alphas, means, and standard deviations were computed for each measure and are reported in Table 1.

Screening Question. A single-item question that assessed whether their partner plays video games. See Appendix A.

Experiences in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form. The Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Short Form (ECR-S; Wei, Russel, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel, 2007), a 12-item Likert scale shortened from Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale to assess individual differences with respect to

anxious or avoidant attachment (e.g., “I am afraid that I will lose the love of my partner”, “I rarely worry about my partner leaving me”). Participants rated the items on a seven-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). See Appendix B.

Relationship Assessment Scale. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), a seven-item Likert scale was used to examine generic relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, 1988). It was based on the Marriage Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ, Hendrick, 1981), however they substituted the word “mate” for the word “partner”, and the word “marriage” for the word “relationship” (Hendrick, 1988). Additionally, two-items that were previously excluded from the original MAQ were included in the RAS (Hendrick, 1988). As a generic relationship satisfaction measure, the items allow for the potential for a broader application than a standard marital satisfaction measure as it is able to examine multiple specific relationship dimensions (e.g., love, problems, expectations), while maintaining the ability to provide general measurements of satisfaction across diverse relationships (married couples, couples living together, dating couples, gay couples, etc.; Hendrick, 1988). Participants rated the seven items from 1 (indicating low levels of satisfaction) to 5 (indicating high levels of satisfaction) (e.g., “How well does your partner meet your needs?”; Hendrick, 1988). See Appendix C.

Rejection Sensitivity RS-Adult Questionnaire. The Rejection Sensitivity RS-Adult Questionnaire (A-RSQ), a 9-item Likert scale was used to examine rejection sensitivity (Berenson et al., 2013) modified from the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire developed by Downey & Feldman (1996). Each item asked the participants to answer two questions for two subscales (rejection concern: “How concerned or anxious would you be about how the other person would respond?” and acceptance expectancy: “How do you

think the other person would be likely to respond?") on a six-point scale (1=very unconcerned, 6=very concerned; 1=very unlikely, 6=very likely, respectively). See Appendix D.

Perception of Video Game Use. A five-item measure in which the participants answered various questions regarding video game use within their relationship. The first item asked how many hours their partner plays video games each week (this is the only item from this measure that will be used in analyses). The second asked how many hours the participant plays per week. The third asked how many hours the participant spends playing video games with their partner per week. Item four is a Likert scale in which participants rated their satisfaction of their partner's video game use (1=I wish my partner spent much less time playing video games, 5=I wish my partner spent much more time playing video games). Item five is also a Likert scale in which participants rated how video game playing impacts their relationship (1=it very much worsens our relationship, 5=it very much improves our relationship). See Appendix E.

Demographic Information. A demographic questionnaire containing items assessed participants' age, sex (e.g., male, female, other), race, living situation (e.g., cohabitating/not married, married) and relationship length. See Appendix F.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

The means and standard deviations were calculated for the following variables: anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, rejection sensitivity, relationship satisfaction, and perception of partner video game playing (in minutes), presented in Table 1. Additionally, bivariate correlations of the continuous variables were computed and are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alphas and Descriptive Statistics

Measure	α	*M*	*SD*	Range
Anxious Attachment	.75	3.62	1.19	1.00-7.00
Avoidant Attachment	.79	2.13	.97	1.00-5.67
Rejection Sensitivity	.83	9.73	4.53	1.22-25.22
Relationship Satisfaction	.91	4.14	.78	1.28-5.00
Perception of Partner Video Game Use*	--	771.18	756.29	0-5100
Self-Reported Video Game Use*	--	605.03	804.66	0-7560
Dyadic Video Game Use*	--	162.41	320.50	0-2400
Satisfaction with Partner Video Game Use	--	2.82	.74	1.00-5.00
Relx Improvement from Video Game Use	--	3.25	.90	1.00-5.00
Age	--	32.49	9.97	18-64

Note: *Variables are presented in minutes

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations of the Continuous Variables

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Anxious Attachment	--			
2. Avoidant Attachment	.28**	--		
3. Rejection Sensitivity	.56**	.34**	--	
4. Relationship Satisfaction	-.28**	-.53**	-.30**	--
5. Partner VG	.02	.03	.08	-.10

Note: Partner VG = perceived amount of partner video game use per week, in minutes; *$^{**}p < .01$*

Primary Analyses

Moderation Models. The interaction of perceived amount of partner video game use and anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and rejection sensitivity in predicting relationship satisfaction outcomes was analyzed through a series of multiple regressions. To reduce multicollinearity, the interacting variables were mean centered before creating the interaction variables. If a significant result is observed between the outcome variable and the interaction of the moderating variables and perception of partner video game use, then the interaction was decomposed by testing the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables at high and low levels of the pertinent moderating variables (i.e., one standard deviation above and below the mean; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

Three multiple regression equations were computed using Preacher & Hayes (2008) bootstrapping method with the confidence interval at .95 with 5000 resamples. This method was selected due to its suggestion for small sample sizes and that it does not assume normality of the distribution of the indirect effects and reduces the chance of Type II error when compared to other methods, such as the Sobel test (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

For hypothesis one, anxious attachment was examined as a moderator for the relationship between perception of partner video game use and relationship satisfaction. The main effect of anxious attachment was significant, B = -.181, $t(258) = -4.60$, $p < .001$; and the main effect of perceived partner video game use was not significant, B = -.0001, $t(258) = -1.68$, $p = .093$. Overall, hypothesis one was not supported, as there was not a significant interaction between perception of partner video game use and anxious attachment in predicting relationship satisfaction, B = .000, $t(258) = -.24$, $p = .812$.

For hypothesis two, avoidant attachment was examined as a moderator for the relationship between perception of partner video game use and relationship satisfaction. The main effect of avoidant attachment was significant, B = -.426, $t(258) = -10.07$, $p < .001$; and the main effect of perceived partner video game use was not significant, B = -.0001, $t(258) = -1.44$, $p = .152$. Overall, hypothesis two was not supported, as there was not a significant interaction between perception of partner video game use and avoidant attachment in predicting relationship satisfaction, B = .000, $t(258) = -.74$, $p = .461$.

Lastly, for hypothesis three, rejection sensitivity was examined as a moderator for the relationship between perception of partner video game use and relationship satisfaction. The main effect of rejection sensitivity was significant, B = -.051, $t(258) = -4.91$, $p < .001$; and the main effect of perceived partner video game use was not significant, B = -.0001, $t(258) = -1.42$, $p = .157$. Overall, hypothesis three was not supported, as there was not a significant interaction between perception of partner video game use and rejection sensitivity in predicting relationship satisfaction, B = .000, $t(258) = .62$, $p = .574$.

For all three hypotheses, additional analyses were computed controlling for self-reported time spent playing video games and self-reported time spent playing video games with their partner. When controlling for these variables, the analyses produced no differences in the pattern of results.

Exploratory Analyses

Additional analyses were computed to examine potential interactions that were not included in my hypotheses, and I also computed additional analyses that controlled for the participant's self-reported time spent playing video games and self-reported time

spent playing video games with their partner. The following were analyzed thrice (first for moderation interaction, and the next two analyzed with the aforementioned covariates), and no significant results were found:

First, the moderating effects of each moderating variable (anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and rejection sensitivity) were examined on the relationship between how well participants believed video game use improved their relationship and relationship satisfaction. Second, the moderating effects of each moderating variable (anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and rejection sensitivity) were examined on how satisfied participants were with their partner's video game use and relationship satisfaction.

Additionally, three-way interactions were examined between perceived partner video game use and relationship satisfaction with participant's satisfaction of their partner's video game use as the moderator, with anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and rejection sensitivity as the additional moderators. Further, the same three-way interactions were controlled for both self-reported video game use and self-reported time spent playing video games with their partner. For all nine analyses, no significant results were found.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of an individual's anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and rejection sensitivity on the relationship between their perception of their partner's video game use and their relationship satisfaction by testing the moderating effects of attachment and rejection sensitivity. The study involved three hypotheses that predicted the moderating effects of attachment and rejection sensitivity. Specifically, the higher one is in anxious attachment and rejection sensitivity, the greater the negative association between partner perception of video game use and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, I predicted that avoidant attachment would have no effect on the relationship.

The first hypothesis, an individual's anxious attachment will predict the relationship between partner perception of video game use and relationship satisfaction, was not supported. This outcome is inconsistent with research suggesting that those who are anxiously attached to their partners fear that their partner is abandoning them (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). A possible explanation for this inconsistency is that a very small percentage (6.4%) of our sample reported they "…wish [their] partner spent much less time playing" video games. The measure that utilized this self-report answer and should be interpreted with caution, though it may provide some insight into participant responses. Referring to literature that assessed partner perceptions of events or actions within their relationship, those who perceive their partner not meeting their ideals tend to have lower relationship satisfaction than those who perceive their partner

positively (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999; Murray et al., 1996). With a low percentage of participants not describing their partner's use as problematic, one may conclude that participants were generally indifferent about their partner's video game use. Furthermore, this notion is supported by the lack of a significant correlation between partner perception of video game use and relationship satisfaction (See Table 2).

The second hypothesis, an individual's avoidant attachment will have no effect on the relationship between partner perception of video game use and relationship satisfaction was supported. This outcome is consistent with literature, noting that those high in avoidant attachment prefer to avoid their partner physically, emotionally, or both (Allen & Baucom, 2004). However, it is important to note that although this hypothesis was supported, there was not a relationship between perception of partner video game use and relationship satisfaction to begin with and may be a spurious conclusion. Further research will need to be conducted to confidently conclude that avoidant attachment does not influence the relationship between perception of partner's video game use and relationship satisfaction.

The third hypothesis, an individual's rejection sensitivity will predict the relationship between perception of partner's video game use and relationship satisfaction, was also not supported. Like the first hypothesis, this outcome is also inconsistent with the literature. Specifically, the idea that an individual expects that a significant other will either satisfy their needs or reject their needs (Downey and Feldman, 1996). The rationale for the hypothesis was that individuals who are sensitive to rejection may feel as if their partner is rejecting their needs by engaging in video game use. There was also an assumption that the participant's self-reported perception of their partner's video game

use may be exacerbated by their sensitivity to rejection—this same assumption applied to anxious attachment.

Although the results of this study indicate that one's perception of their partner's video game use does not influence relationship satisfaction, it may be worth dedicating an entire study to establish sound methodology to either gain confidence with that statement or to refute it. As previously mentioned, an essential component to any relationship is the influence each partner has on the other (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Individuals engaging in video game use have the potential to influence their partner positively or negatively, based upon their partner's evaluation of the quantity and frequency of their video game use. Additionally, the way in which video game use is either a dyadic activity or used by only one partner can influence how the activity is perceived. This process is believed to be more complex than our study had attempted to measure. Potential ways to conduct future research would include: measuring actual video game use, measuring impairment from video game use, distinguishing whether video game playing is an occupation (i.e., streamer), type/genre of video game played, system used to play video games, sex differences, and same-sex couples.

This study is limited by using self-report measures for attachment as the Adult Attachment Interview has been shown to have higher validity than self-report (Bartholomew & Moretti, 2010). Additionally, the study consisted of English-speaking US citizens (most of which were Caucasian) and cannot generalize to other ethnicities or cultures. Lastly, participants were recruited online rather than in person, which may

In summary, this study served as an introduction examining the influence of attachment and rejection sensitivity on the association between perception of partner

video game use and relationship satisfaction. Although the results are not consistent with current research, this study may serve as a reference for future research aimed at understanding other facets of video games within romantic relationships.

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APPENDIX A

Single-Item Questionnaire

Does your romantic partner play video games?

Yes No

APPENDIX B

Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Short Form (ECR-S)

The statements below concern how you feel in your relationships with your romantic partner. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

2. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

3. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back .

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

4. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

5. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

6. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

7. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

8. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

9. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

10. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

11. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

12. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them .

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Please mark the number for each item which best answers that item for you.

How well does your partner meet your needs?

1	2	3	4	5
Poorly		Average		Extremely well

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely satisfied

How good is your relationship compared to most?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor		Average		Excellent

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Average		Very often

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:

1	2	3	4	5
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

How much do you love your partner?

1	2	3	4	5
Not much		Average		Very much

How many problems are there in your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Very few		Average		Very many

APPENDIX D

Rejection Sensitivity RS-Adult Questionnaire (A-RSQ)

The items below describe situations in which people sometimes ask things of others.
For each item, **imagine that you are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it.**

1. You ask your parents or another family member for a loan to help you through a difficult financial time.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your family would help you out?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that they would agree to help me as much as they can.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

2. You approach a close friend to talk after doing or saying something that seriously upset him/her.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to talk with you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me to try to work things out.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

3. You bring up the issue of sexual protection with your significant other and tell him/her how important you think it is.

How concerned or anxious would you be over his/her reaction?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she would be willing to discuss our possible options without getting defensive.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

4. You ask your supervisor for help with a problem you have been having at work.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to help you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that they would want to try to help me out.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

5. After a bitter argument, you call your significant other because you want to make up.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your significant other would want to make up with you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she would be at least as eager to make up as I would be.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

6. You ask your parents to come to an occasion important to you.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your parents would want to come?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that my parents would want to come.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

7. At a party, you notice someone on the other side of the room that you'd like to get to know, and you approach him or her to try to start a conversation.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to talk to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

8. Lately, you've been noticing some distance between yourself and your significant other, and you ask him/her if there is something wrong.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not he/she still loves you and wants to be with you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she will show sincere love and commitment to our relationship no matter what else may be going on.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

9.You call a friend when there is something on your mind that you feel you really need to talk about.

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to listen?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unconcerned					Very Concerned

I would expect that he/she would listen and support me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unlikely					Very Likely

APPENDIX E

Perception of Video Game Use

1. How much time do you feel your partner spends playing video games per week(in hours)? This should be your own estimation – don't ask your partner.
2. How much time do you feel *you* spend playing video games each week (in hours)?
3. Of the time you spend playing video games each week, if any, how much time do you spend playing video games *with* your partner?
4. Regarding the amount of time your partner spends playing video games, which statement best describes how you feel?
    1. I wish my partner spent much less time playing.
    2. I wish my partner spent somewhat less time playing.
    3. I am satisfied with the amount of time my partner spends playing.
    4. I wish my partner spent somewhat more time playing.
    5. I wish my partner spent much more time playing.
5. Regarding the amount of time your partner spends playing video games, which statement best describes how you feel?
    1. It very much worsens our relationship.
    2. It somewhat worsens our relationship.
    3. It neither improves or worsens our relationship.
    4. It somewhat improves our relationship.
    5. It very much improves our relationship.

APPENDIX F

Demographic Questionnaire

Biographical Data

1. What is your sex? M F Other

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your racial group? Check all that apply.

    a. Asian

    b. African-American

    c. Hispanic or Latino/a/x

    d. Native American

    e. Caucasian (White)

    f. Other_____

4. How long have you been in your current romantic relationship?

    _____