AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO FULFILLMENT OF CHOICE THEORY'S FOUR BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS THROUGH CONSOLE VIDEO GAME ENGAGEMENT

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College and Graduate School of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This study sought to understand how people satisfy needs by engaging in console-based video games and ultimately help counselors understand clients' need fulfillment by video games. Data has been collected on the players' experiences and thoughts on how console-based video games meet the four basic psychological needs of choice theory. After reviewing the participants' data, patterns and themes have been generated and reported from the dialog of the participants. These patterns and themes were used to inform professional counselor readers how to assist video game playing clients understand their basic psychological needs more efficiently.

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mother sees the world as a place to display your ideas and passions. This type of attitude was needed to propose an idea such as this. I am forever grateful to have a mother with the will and spirit she possesses. My father imprinted a sense of persistence that carried me through the writing process that is sorely needed for a dissertation. He has always instilled support with motivation in order to help me complete whatever I started in my career.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I would be lying if I said *Oblivion* [a video game] did not, in some ways, aggravate my depression, but it also gave me something with which to fill my days other than piranhic self-hatred. It was an extra life; I am grateful to have had it. (Bissell, 2011, p. 5)

Part of entering the clients' and students' quality world is helping them realize that no matter how difficult the situation, they are best served if they retain hope in the future. This hope springs from the simple fact that they have choices. (Wubbolding, 2000, pp.171)

The following study examined the potential phenomena between choice theory, a counseling theory created by William Glasser, and console-based video game players (Glasser, 1998, 2000). Choice theory is comprised of four basic psychological needs: (a) love/belonging, (b) power, (c) freedom, and (d) fun/pleasure, which function as primary needs of each human being (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Glasser had a fifth basic need, survival, which he described as an instinctual desire to procreate and stay alive. However, he suggested that because of the existence of self-harm, survival cannot be the sole need for humans. Thus he proposed that the four basic psychological needs were inexorably connected to survival for total wellness. Glasser explained that for people to live well rather than just survive, they must

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understand and meet their basic psychological needs, in addition to their survival need (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Glasser felt that without the basic psychological needs being fulfilled, people could be in need of counseling to help reconnect them to the deficient basic need (Glasser, 1965, 1980, 1998, 2000). Glasser (1965, 1998, 2000) proposed that while the basic needs are present for each human being, the ability and process to fulfill those needs varies from person to person. These needs may go unnoticed or be dismissed by others because they do not understand how it applies to another person (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000).

Video games have occupied this role for game players by meeting needs for people that they felt they could not get from other sources (McGonigal, 2011; Newman, 2004; Parkin, 2013). This study's goal was to understand the phenomenon of satisfying choice theory's basic psychological needs through console-based video game engagement. However, for the purposes of the study, the survival basic need will not be evaluated due to the lack of gamers relying on video games for it (Glasser, 1998; LeJacq, 2013). Therefore, the four psychological basic needs were used: (a) love/belonging, (b) power, (c) freedom, and (d) fun/pleasure (Glasser, 1998).

Glasser (1965, 1976, 1980, 1998, 2000) stated that human beings can control their behavior and thus their mental health, by reframing their thoughts with the knowledge that they have a choice to do so. When people realize they have control over their choices, Glasser believed that they can create an effective and enjoyable life, filled with positive relationships with others (Glasser, 1998, 2000). While entertainment media has offered a glimpse into characters' lives and decisions by way of watching movies, reading a book, or viewing a play, for most people, engaging in these activities means it is done from a third-party perspective. A person cannot participate in the activity but just take in the stimuli passively without being a part of the storyline, action, or decision-making. Console-based video games, along with other types of video games (including computer games and mobile-based video games), offer a different experience.

Video games and choice theory share an inherent core aspect, the ability and requirement of the people to use their free will and choices to take responsibility for their actions (Bissell, 2011; Glasser, 1998; Holmes, 2012; McGonigal, 2011; Newman, 2004; Nitsche, 2008). In choice theory and the techniques of reality therapy, the path to wellness is seen through the intrinsic nature of decision making and obtainment of an enjoyable quality world. When clients understand their quality worlds, they are able to make better choices and ultimately achieve their goals in counseling (Applegate, 1980; Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000; Wubbolding & Brickell, 2008).

A quality world is produced through pictures people create in their mind that function as staples in what they consider to be a fulfilling life. Glasser (1998) proposed that people choose these pictures (personal relationships) because they believe the connections will meet their basic needs and will do so until they feel that relationship no longer fulfills them. Peoples' quality worlds change due to their perceived wants and needs throughout their lives. Glasser (1998) noted that the path towards an effective and satisfying quality world is filled with obstacles and decisions that continue throughout peoples' lives. People are tasked with constantly deciding who to include in their quality world, making choices on particular relationships, and whether they will be helpful in meeting certain needs. Glasser supposed that people's ability to adapt to the effects of their choices thusly affected their quality world (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Video games function under the same basic rule set as the quality world. A player chooses to engage obstacles and make decisions to complete the goal of the game in satisfactory fashion. The players must make choices, overcome challenges, and adjust their decision making to complete tasks and objectives. Players must be able to figure out the puzzle or challenge set before them in the course of the objective. This problem solving aspect of video games is embedded in every struggle or decision that people make within their real lives (Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011; Newman, 2004; Nitsche, 2008).

This study sought to understand how people satisfy needs by engaging in console-based video games and ultimately helps counselors understand clients' need fulfillment by video games. Data have been collected on the players' experiences and thoughts on how console-based video games meet the four basic psychological needs of choice theory. After reviewing the participants' data, patterns and themes have been discovered and reported from dialog of the participants. These patterns and themes were used to inform professional counselor readers how to assist video game playing clients understand their basic psychological needs more efficiently. This study's results will hopefully aide counselors working with video game playing clients and assist in bridging the concept of need fulfillment in video games to real life quality world obtainment (Glasser, 1965, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

Definition of Terms

Augmented reality (AR)—Augmented reality relates to the direct or indirect perspective of the physical, real-world where experiences are changed by computer-generated sensory output such as video images, sound effects, or graphics (Graham, Zook & Boulton, 2013; Kee, 2012).

Avatar—An avatar is the video game user's on-screen character being controlled by the user (Salen, 2008).

Clan—A clan is a group of video game players who choose to join together and engage as a team within a particular video game (Wagner, 2007).

Console—A video game console is a system that is designed for video game functionality. Due to advancements in technology, consoles have expanded into television, music, and other entertainment media. A primary advantage to producing video games on consoles is that they are uniform in production and game software companies can expect that their software will perform similarly on each console (Holmes, 2012).

Console-Based Video Game—A console-based video game is software that is produced by game publishers to play on specific video game hardware systems (Bissell, 2011; Holmes, 2012).

Fiero—Fiero is a visceral feeling comprised of increased level of endorphins, which create an extreme positive emotion in a person and is frequently accompanied with an intense feeling of competitiveness (Lazzaro, 2004).

Flow—Flow is the concept of a person experiencing a complete immersion of pleasure and focus within a dedicated activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Game—A game is a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable (Juul, 2003).

Gamer—A gamer in the context of video games is a person who engages in video game lifestyle, which includes but is not limited to playing, watching, and reading about video games (Bissell, 2011; *Merriam-Webster*, n.d.).

Ludonarrative—The ludonarrative is the actions of a player-controlled avatar, as opposed to the fixed narrative created by the game designers (Bissell, 2011; Mateas & Stern, 2006).

Naches—A Yiddish word that describes pride that a person develops from mentoring others and seeing them be successful in the instructed task (Ekman, 2007).

Narrative—The narrative is the over-arching story, theme, or ideas that the video game designers, script writers, or authors intend to inform to the game player (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith & Tosca, 2008; Journet, 2007).

Quality World—A quality world is a personal space a person creates through pictures in his or her mind, which embodies an enjoyable and fulfilling life (Glasser, 1998).

Synchronous Console-Based Video Game Voice Chat—Synchronous console video game chat is a live voice chat between video game users, conducted through the Xbox Live® or PlayStation Network® service (Microsoft, 2013; Sony, 2013). The voice is transmitted through a headset or other voice communication device (Ledbetter & Kuznekoff, 2012).

Purpose Statement

William Glasser offered the notion that human beings are motivated by four psychological, internal, and universal needs: (a) love/belonging, (b) power, (c) freedom, and (d) fun/pleasure (Glasser, 1998). These basic needs would be a foundation of choice theory. The purpose of this study was to understand how the four basic psychological needs of choice theory are being met by console-based video game players.

Glasser (1998, 2000) stated that within the choice theory paradigm, individuals have a choice in nearly all matters of their mental health. In console-based video games, players have a choice in nearly all matters of their in-game character. The four psychological choice theory basic needs, love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun/pleasure, can be found within the digital reality of the game (Atkins, 2006; Bissell, 2011; Corliss, 2011; Glasser, 1998; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Parkin, 2013). This study attempted to understand how console-based video games fulfill these four basic psychological needs for gamers around the world. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) qualitative methodology was used to understand how players of console-based video games make meaning out of engaging in the digital and real-world video game culture. The researcher in this study searched for the meaning and perception of the participants, regulating his perspective on the potential phenomena. A researcher who uses IPA assumes that all types of social phenomena deserve to be studied without an implanted view and are open to interpretation (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Smith and Osborn further explained that a study of this nature should work towards finding new understandings of meaning from the point of view of the participants rather than to search for "true statements" above what can be understood from each person's life story.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand how the four basic psychological needs of choice theory (love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun) are possibly being met by console-based video game players.

Research Question #1: What are the experiences of console-based video game players relative to choice theory's four basic psychological needs?

Research Question #2: How do console-based video game players make meaning of choice theory's four basic psychological needs while engaging in video game experience?

Research Question #3: What are console-based video games players' perspectives on video game culture in context of the four basic psychological needs?

Review of the Literature

Glasser (1965) created reality therapy, the actionable counseling component of choice theory, with the goal to make responsibility of the client a key component of therapy. Glasser initially suggested two basic needs every human strives for: (a) to feel loved or to belong, and (b) the need to feel worthwhile to himself or herself and by others (Glasser, 1965). Glasser expanded these basic needs by generating choice theory comprised of five basic needs: (a) survival, (b) love/belonging (c) power, (d) freedom, and (e) fun/pleasure (Glasser, 1998).

For this study, four of the five basic needs in choice theory were examined in regards to the players' experiences in video game culture (Glasser, 1998; Hatch, 2002; Shaw, 2010). Although a limited amount of professional gamers make a career out of video games (LeJacq, 2013), the majority of gamers do not engage in video games to satisfy the survival basic need. For this reason, the survival basic need was not examined in this study.

This review of literature starts with an explanation of the core elements of choice theory. Next, a briefly detailed evolution of console-based video game history is outlined, describing how console video games progressed from limited options, simple story telling, and basic digital images, to a vast amount of goals, complex character development, and impeccably detailed digital visuals (Bissell, 2011; Donovan, 2010; Kent, 2001).

Video games have progressed in their ability to convey emotions and relationships, which can provide choices to players as they engage in games. Literature concerning video games and their impact on humans has expanded as researchers continue to tease out possible effects of the engagement. What the literature lacks is an understanding of the meaning behind and entrenched within console-based video game media (Bissell, 2011; Ledbetter & Kuznekoff, 2012; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011).

This review of literature then focuses on the purposes of game play and key aspects of video games that weave into the identity of a gamer (Journet, 2007; Langlois 2013; Pelletier, 2008). Nitsche (2008) explained that video game players function with the media differently than a person who engages filmed movies because the player occupies and moves in a digital space. Within this space, an inherent choice is involved because the player chooses where to move throughout the environment, ultimately changing the viewing and experience for the player. The autonomy and responsibility aspects of player engagement within video games produce an interesting culture to study with choice theory in mind. Throughout the sections related to personal involvement with video games, the basic needs of choice theory connections are pointed out to the reader (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Video game concepts are then explored in relation to how they affect gamers and mental status. The first area of this section covers goals and rules that happen within video games and how they produce pleasure but also challenges for players. The use of feedback loops are explained and why they are integral to keeping gamers interested in playing by instilling a sense of task accomplishment and reward (Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011; Nitsche, 2008). In the next segment, the phenomenon of voluntary participation in challenges is explored, attempting to answer why a person may engage in video games,

as they are inherently created as media with obstacles and problems (Bissell, 2011; Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011).

McGonigal (2011) and Langlois (2013) explained that video game experiences have effects outside of the digital realm, as detailed by different concepts that explain how human emotions intertwine with video game spaces. A sampling of these concepts includes Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), Fiero (Lazzaro, 2004), and Naches (Ekman, 2007). These concepts are fleshed out regarding their role within video game culture and the effects in the real world mental health aspects of game players. This section concludes by focusing on the mental health implications of video game play for players.

The topic of video game effects on mental health is a burgeoning field of science that is constantly evolving as new techniques and more time is allowed to researchers (Wilkinson, Ang, & Goh, 2008). This is written to expand on the positive (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010; Keating & Sunakawa, 2010; Kühn, Gleich, Lorenz, Lindenberger, & Gallinat, 2013; Sanders, 2012; Schoene, Lord, Verhoef, & Smith, 2011) aspects that video games could provide game players. This review of literature subsequently notes studies that conclude that video games have negative (Elliott, Ream, McGinsky, & Dunlap, 2012; Gentile et al., 2011; Lemmens, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2011; Weaver et al., 2009) consequences for players.

To conclude this review of literature, a summary explains how the elements of choice theory were connected to topics of video game interactivity, personal identity in video games, and mental health aspects of gamers who engage in console-based video games.

Elements of Choice Theory

Glasser (1965) stated that there should be a change in psychiatry and clinical psychology. Glasser believed that the clinician should be invested in the client and connected to the lack of his or her basic needs. Glasser (1965) suggested that through choice theory and reality therapy people had more control over their lives than other types of therapy. And whereas he did not fully admonish his colleagues for their beliefs in psychiatry, he was stubborn in the notion that patients who showed even a little insight or ability to control their behavior were able, at some level, to obtain autonomy and agency in their decisions (Glasser, 1965, 1989, 1998; Robey, 2011; Wubbolding & Brickell, 2008).

Along with responsibility and autonomy in therapy, Glasser (1998) developed a set of basic human needs and how to meet them to achieve wellness. Glasser felt that each human was born with five internal and universal needs: (a) survival, (b) love/belonging, (c) power, (d) freedom, and (e) fun/pleasure. He suggested that for a person to live well psychologically and enjoy a pleasurable life, that person had to fulfill each need as appropriate for him or her.

Currently, the elements of choice theory continue to evolve in people's lives by adapting to different areas of human interest, lifestyles, and how people can achieve psychological wellness. The following segment expands on each basic need and how they interconnect with each other.

Five Basic Needs of Choice Theory

Evolution of the four basic psychological needs from survival. Glasser (1998) wrote that survival is a basic need in all living creatures. While also true in people, the human race has gone far beyond that of sustaining survival. As a species, the human race has become good at reproduction and even, as Glasser suggested, accomplished one of the greatest feats of having your cake and eating it too, the development of sexual pleasure and not procreation, birth control. Glasser proposed that humans are vastly creative and ingenious in our ability to meet our basic needs (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Survival is the most primal and dedicated basic need and at the beginning of the human race, it was likely the only basic need (Glasser, 1998). However, Glasser suggested that it was our evolution that eventually led to the other basic needs. Humans' ability to understand the value of love and belonging led to groups and togetherness over the need to simply survive. People understood the inherent benefit of power and how it could be used to survive and keep those that they loved safe. From this, freedom from overreaching and possessing power became an established need and thus worked its way into our psyches as a basic need. Finally, fun and pleasure was established as a function that, while mostly unrelated to survival, was a conduit for gaining more belonging, power, and freedom. It is this progression of events that has led us to the five basic needs of humans (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Robey, 2011).

Love/belonging. Despite the five basic needs, Glasser (1998, 2000) pointed out that humans are social beings that function best when they can work together and feel loved. Glasser (1965, 1989, 1998, 2000) felt that positive relationships were the most

important aspect of a person's mental wellbeing. He contended that in nearly all cases, people come to counseling because they are in an unsatisfying present relationship. He illustrated that to meet the need for love and belonging, the personal relationships have to match the pictures in each person's quality world. If there is a mismatch or the link between relationships and quality world's disintegrates, relationships will cease to meet the need for love and belonging. Glasser suggested that while everyone's quality world evolves throughout their life, communicating this change within the relationship will keep the connection healthy and thus, basic needs will continue to be satisfied (Glasser, 1965, 1989, 1998, 2000; Strohl, 1989).

Despite peoples' attempt to continually create optimal quality worlds, they do not always understand their basic needs properly and choose bad relationships. Baumeister and Leary (1995) reported that humans form and maintain social bonds under extreme circumstances, regardless of the ramifications, as long as there are connections. Baumeister and Leary explained that social networks develop even when they may not even be helpful to people and in some cases maladaptive to overall relationships. Furthermore, people will hold onto social connections even if it is painful to the parties, just for the sake of holding onto the bond in spite of rational or apparent need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Glasser, 2000).

Glasser did not find the humans' social irrationality surprising nor disheartening in regards to choice theory (Glasser, 1998). He commented that humans are consistently looking for all types of relationships, regardless of the potential. Some humans choose to neglect contact with others under the pretense that they do not need others in their life based on satisfaction. Glasser went on saying that they choose not to engage with other persons on the basis that the frustration of getting along with others is not worth the trouble. Though, Glasser argued that despite this minority of people, the human race stubbornly continues to facilitate connections with others as a way of meeting the needs of fun, belonging, freedom, and power (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Power. Glasser (1998) remarked that power is a construct in which humans participate to a different degree than any other species. Although other types of species exhibit aspects of power in their lives, whether protecting their families, courting a mate, or hunting, the extent to which they want power unfolds until they are no longer in a place of survival. Humans, however, strive for power in situations that do not demand it. Glasser pointed out that humans look for power when it has already been achieved and sometimes attempt to harness more of it at an exponential level (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

While this is apparent in accruing status in careers or gaining a higher salary, more subtle but frequent occurrences of power grabbing occur within relationships of all types of humans, poor, rich, healthy or sickly. Glasser linked the basic need of power to failed marriages, damaged relationships with children, and dismantled partnerships in careers (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Glasser (1998) painted broad strokes with these assertions while making sure to point out that many humans do not always engage in excessive power consumption. He asserted that it is within humans' capability to understand their role in power struggles and adjust accordingly to best meet needs while not harming others in the process (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000). While power has its numerous negative aspects, Glasser noted that it can be used for constructive outcomes. Glasser (1998, 2000) wrote that doctors, teachers, and counselors function as professionals who seek to help others by way of their power with knowledge, skill, and opportunity to provide assistance.

Wubbolding (2000) explained that power is taken after the French word *pouvoir*, which means, "to be able." Wubbolding asserted that power is described in choice theory as internal control of a person rather than an external entity that can be divvied up. Glasser (1989) spoke further of the difference between control and external domination, explaining that internal control (power) is the way people steer their own lives rather than lives of others. Wubbolding (1991) extended an example of power (before Glasser created the basic needs in choice theory) in the form of a baseball player. When a player gets a hit and raises his average, it does not lower the average of another teammate; it is simply an accomplishment that the particular player is gaining for himself in that situation. This comparison continues the importance of responsibility in choice theory and how gaining power for oneself does not necessarily mean another will lose the ability to do something else (Glasser, 1965, 1998).

It is this balance of power that has been shown by the human race so far that indicates that we are capable of humility and living with others. It is this ability to see others' viewpoints and constructions of reality that has enabled humans to co-exist. Wubbolding (2000) thought that clients' and counselors' ability to understand varying perspectives was imperative to the choice theory paradigm and understand that humans can exhibit restraint for their desire for power (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). The key is to understand that all humans strive for it and should be filled in a way that is suitable but also commendable amongst other people around them (Glasser, 1998).

Glasser (1998) proposed that within a counseling relationship, the counselor is looking for which part of the client's life may be deficient. If power is a basic need for which the client is striving, outlets for people to gain any sort of reasonable power in their life are a goal. People seek to have their voice or actions known and listened to so they can feel that they are part of a social system. A sense of purpose is developed when power is achieved and has a place in their lives (Wubbolding, 2000).

When power is obtained in an effective way, people feel that they are in control of their lives and decisions. The opposite is when people feel powerless and thus being externally guided to a goal or motive. In that case, freedom may be a basic need that should be addressed in counseling (Glasser, 1998).

Freedom. Freedom is a basic need that is generally addressed most often in counseling when people feel that they cannot freely express their desires in their lives or value system (Glasser, 1998). Wubbolding (2000) asserted that humans are born with the intrinsic urge to make decisions. He felt that when people come into counseling, they may feel that their options are no longer apparent to them. The basic need for freedom may seem out of their hands and thus they look for answers (Strohl, 1989; Wubbolding, 2000).

While humans show a particular affinity for power, freedom of creativity is also important, in comparison to other species. People engage in a unique balancing act regarding their desire to be free to create and help others, with the juxtaposition of also wanting to influence power over others (Glasser, 1998). The freedom need incorporates the ability to exert power over others, but also includes a nuanced situation for a person striving for independence. Counselors must work with the clients to express what part of the perceived need of freedom is lacking in their lives (Wubbolding, 2000, 2007).

Glasser (2000) suggested that humans' freedom to express themselves creates an opportunity for selfless endeavors. He believed that a pure definition of freedom incorporated the stance that people can prosper and enjoy their lives without the sacrifice of other humans. Not only are people able to achieve their needs without harming others, but their own ability to act freely and provide for themselves gives a sense of accomplishment that few other activities can match (Glasser, 1998).

Fun/pleasure. Glasser (1998) stated that fun is defined as an inherent process that gives people a reward for learning new things. People, from the earliest of ages, laugh when something unexpected, but truthful, collides with their life experience. For children, this happens in frequent and spectacular fashion. However as people age, fun is defined differently. People become accustomed to learning, from how to eat, walk, and manage our bowel systems; to learning games, managing social interactions, and learning to care for others. Despite this, even as adults, people cannot help themselves from smiling and being overjoyed when they conquer a skill.

It is the reason that full-grown athletes leap for joy when they accomplish a feat in a game (the game is fun when you win, learning to do it better than the other team), parents when they survive the first week of parenthood (learning how to keep their baby healthy), or a delightful conversation during a first date (learning about a potential partner; Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

Glasser (1998) posited that it is in humans' genetic instructions to get along with each other by way of learning new things that keeps humans social beings overall. Glasser reiterated that knowing to have fun, to constantly be willing to learn about others and objects around us, keeps us happy and willing to engage in long-term relationships. Ultimately, Glasser felt that meeting needs comes in many forms and throughout history people have found new ways to meet their needs and find purpose in different types of relationships and activities. He suggested that counselors need to continually seek new understandings of how people fulfill needs and, through this, will be able to assist clients in their own comprehension of an enjoyable and satisfying lives (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 2007).

Video Games

The following sections present literature on how games and people have interacted throughout their shared history. The sections detail the various ways that people have used them in the past and how they have evolved to become a mainstream pastime for millions of people throughout the world (Bissell, 2011; Donovan, 2010; Kent, 2001; McGonigal, 2011; Vorderer, 2000; Yee, 2006).

The purpose of games. In a survey conducted by Annenburg School of Communication (ASC) Games Group at the University of Southern California, competition (31%) was cited as the most important factor to engage with video games (Vorderer, 2000). Competition is something all video games, whether it be against another person or artificial intelligence of the game, contain at their core. Vorderer reported that challenge (21.4%) was the second most important aspect of games. Vorderer's findings are consistent with other researchers investigating motivation factors of gamers. Westwood and Griffiths (2010) stated that players engage in video games for a variety of reasons and should not be labeled as one type of player (Westwood & Griffiths, 2010; Yee, 2006).

Yee (2006) gathered data from an exploratory factor analysis study of motivation for players of Massively-Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs). He found that a myriad of different explanations were given by gamers when asked what motivates them to play. Yee used online survey data from 30,000 game users of MMORPGs from a three-year time period. He reported three main components that accounted for 55% of the variance derived from the data in his study: (a) Achievement component, (b) Social component, and (c) Immersion components that detailed participants' answers in more detail. Additionally, Yee found that users of these games acquired real-life leadership skills and experienced meaningful relationships with other players during the gaming experience (Yee, 2006).

Peng, Lin, Pfeiffer, and Winn (2012) focused on how needs satisfaction in video games were met under the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT consists of three major tenets that are responsible for adequate and effective functioning in a social system: (a) competence, (b) autonomy, and (c) relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Peng et al. manipulated features in video games to allow players the opportunity to achieve certain aspects or not depending on the group. The authors also reported that video games reinforced players' autonomy and competency levels. Furthermore, the participants' attainment of autonomy and competency led to enjoyment and recommendation of the games for future use (Peng et al., 2012). Similar results were found by Ryan, Rigby, and Przybylski (2006), who used SDT to assess for video game motivation across four different types of quantitative studies.

Bissell (2011) commented that video games can supersede the void a person can feel through various emotions even though there may be people or situations that could potentially help the person. He suggested that a person may look at the external world and feel frightened by the amount of situations he or she cannot control and thus the person may not be able to fully participate in the real world. Instead, video game creators provide a space where gamers can obtain a degree of control that is not only heightened, but also potentially not available to them within their own life (Bissell, 2011; Corliss, 2011; McGonigal, 2011).

McGonigal (2011) explained that during her research of the reason for game play in human society, a notable checkpoint was defined by Greek historian Herodotus. Herodotus explained in his texts that the Greek people used games as a distraction from periods of great hunger. Games were a welcomed diversion that aimed at improving mood, creating community, and developing resiliency (Van der Crabben, 2012). And while the reasons and value of distraction vary from gamer to gamer, the core aspect remains the same of today's video games. Parkin (2013) wrote about an 18-year-old gamer named Yousif Mohammed who lives in Iraq. Parkin recounted events in Iraq that have pushed teenagers into their homes due to safety concerns. He interviewed Mohammed regarding the increase in videogame play in Iraq. Parkin reported that Mohammed, ranked in the top 2% of players in the world playing a military-style shooter *Battlefield 3*, found refuge in video games because of the dangerous real world outside of his home. Mohammed explained that video games became an activity that provided a distraction from the destruction outside his home. And through video games, he was able to find and maintain friendships, enjoy entertainment, and gain a sense of control over his surroundings (Parkin, 2013).

Through video games, Mohammed found an activity that satisfied several of choice theory's basic needs by being gratifying (fun/pleasure), offering a safe place to meet peers and gain friends (love/belonging), and granting an opportunity to gain control over his environment (power; Glasser, 1998; Parkin, 2013).

Schell (2008) posited that games do not function as solely an experience to complete, but rather, that the game grants the opportunity for the experience to happen for the player. Games allow for emotions and feelings to be experienced by the player via interactivity. For players, games offer the opportunity to engage in an activity that both allow for real choice and faux consequences (Calleja, 2010; McGonigal, 2011). Albeit these game consequences do not have a tangible essence to them, for researchers it is the mental and emotional affect that games produce in players that warrant studies (McGonigal, 2011; Nitsche, 2008).

Calleja (2010) commented that the concept of escapism is typically defined as a lack of real entities such as material items, friends, family, or living things. However, he argued that video games actually exist on a plane that overlaps into escapism without leaving reality entirely. Calleja suggested that video games tread between the digital and real by appealing simultaneously to the gamer. Castronova (2005) stated that to view video games as a purely binary experience is to sell the experience short by creating a template where only a certain amount of choices or paths are available. In video games (which run on a sliding scale of autonomy depending on the game), interaction with the virtual domain is the hallmark of the media.

Calleja (2010) went on to state that video games are made to push gamers toward their boundaries of reaction time, cognitive ability, and dexterity. The purpose is to engage the player in the experience as wholly as possible. Video games do this by fitting into persons' individual identities and how they adopt challenges that satisfy needs in their lives (Calleja, 2010; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011).

Video game creators have developed media that has become entrenched into all kinds of peoples' lives, forms of entertainment, and needs. The next section explains how video games have been woven into the fabric of people's lives from pure entertainment to possibly reaching an art apex (Bissell, 2011; Davis, 2013).

Evolution of console-based video games and interactivity. The purpose of this section is to explain the process in which gamers have included console-based video games into their lives. In turn, this segment describes how video games have molded their way into the culture of gamers and non-gamers alike. Finally, the last segment

explains how the depth in which console-based video games have evolved, as some authors have argued, to meet psychological needs for gamers (Bissell, 2011; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011, Parkin, 2013; Peng et al., 2012; Schell, 2008).

In 1958, William Higinbotham, an employee of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, worked on a system he hoped would generate interest in their research and machines in their laboratory. He created *Tennis For Two*, a rudimentary game where two people got to push buttons to control hitting a ball. The game was well-received and introduced separate components to control the on-screen movements, which would later be called joysticks (Donovan, 2010).

Mainstream video game adoption was not a reality until 1985 when the Nintendo Corporation released the Nintendo Entertainment System in North America. Nintendo opted to market their machine as a toy for children and families rather than a piece of technology. While improvements in the technology allowed for better graphics and more in-depth storylines, the key to the system was its ability to function within, what Nintendo deemed to be, the average family structure of game players' homes (Brown, 2008; Donovan, 2010).

Nintendo not only made video games mainstream but almost single-handedly revived the video game industry. The rebirth of the gaming industry allowed for other companies to once again compete on a global level. Sega Corporation attempted to break into Nintendo's industry dominance in 1989 when they released the Genesis[©] console system in the United States. Sega released their system hoping to appeal to gamers in America in a different way from that of Nintendo (Kent, 2001). Michael Katz, head of

Sega America, thought teenagers who grew up with the general cartoonish nature of the Nintendo enterprise would want a grittier version of their games as they matured (Claiborn, 2011; Donovan, 2010).

This battle between companies would continue through events that not only affected each company but the industry as a whole. Up until the early 1990s video games had, for the most part, stayed out of controversy from the United States government. This would change when *Mortal Kombat* was released in 1993. Senator Joseph Lieberman was alerted by a staff member who observed the game's violence, as something they should look into given the number of young people interested in the game. A Senate inquiry into video game violence was convened on December 9, 1993, and a discussion regarding how the influence of video games on young people was legislated (C-SPAN, 1993).

Senators closed the meetings and asked the video game industry to create a system for age rating their games by March 4, 1994. During this time, the major market game companies organized the Interactive Digital Software Association while also creating the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). Similar to the ratings board of films, the ESRB would evaluate games based on their content to assign an appropriate age level label when they were on store shelves (Donovan, 2010; Williams, Martins, Consalvo, & Ivory, 2009).

The video game industry came out of the debate with newfound experience dealing with politics and another lesson: controversy and violence sells (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2008; Kent, 2001). The mandatory age rating system gave the industry a structure to market to adults. The hearings in the Senate made violence safer for video game companies to market, subsequently giving them permission to label adult themes. The trend of expanding on experiences for the player via violence, emotions, and story would continue as technology improved to store more complex and greater amounts of information. With the advancements in technology, a slow process began to branch out the types of heroes that gamers would play as their avatars.

During the mid-1990s, Core Design released *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* designed with a female lead character (Marshall, 2013). At that time, the video game industry was primarily male based and many game designers were under the impression that women had token interest in video games. Designers were also worried that playing as a female as their avatar for a complete game would put off males. While Lara Croft was a derivative male fantasy with her large chest and minimal clothing, she represented a shift in the game market that was already beginning to take shape (Donovan, 2010; Kent, 2001). The Game Girls Movement and "riot grrls" feminist movement began in the late 1990s as a conduit to include more girls into gaming. Online "clans" of gamer women became less unusual and thus a symbol that females could be and were interested in all types of games (Donovan, 2010; Jenkins & Cassell, 2008). As the video game industry gained strength by icons such as Lara Croft, it gained a reputation that games were not just for children or even teenagers.

Throughout the years, forms of interactivity with console-based video games differed from just using a controller to control the onscreen events. The Sega Dreamcast, released in 1998, was consequential for one major development, connectivity to 56k-modem Internet access, allowing gamers to play through the Internet with opponents and friends (Bennett, 2013). Furthermore, Nintendo looked into changing the video game experience via the controller that gamers used to control their avatars on the screen (Bennett, 2013).

The core concept of the Nintendo Wii was to integrate a controller and play experience that was easy to pick up and organic in nature to those who were not veterans of video games (Bennett, 2013). The Wii's launch game, *Wii Sports*, utilized the motion-controls that allowed for families and friends to engage quickly in fully interactive games that did not require high learning curves or extensive time commitments. The *Wii Fit* exercise software increased awareness of the Nintendo Wii to legions of people who had previously never owned a video game console (Juul, 2009). As the push was happening to create input devices that changed the way games were being played, actual game play and stories within the software was undergoing a shift as well (Holmes, 2012).

Three decades after the initial console video game had been created with a simplistic goal of shooting space ships and playing ping pong, console-based video games had approached a new level of sophistication (Holmes, 2012). Although there are still games that function on straight-forward prompts and limited storylines, console-based video games have begun to adopt strategies similar to that of film, television, and books (Bustillos, 2013; Holmes, 2012).

Video game analysts have started to discuss whether video games have reached a point in their evolution that they can be considered art (Davis, 2013; Parker, 2013).
Games such as *Dues Ex* (2000), *Bioshock* (2007), *L.A. Noire* (2011), and *The Last of Us* (2013) pushed boundaries related to morality, player choice, and accurate portrayals of relationships between characters (Clark, 2013).

In the fall of 2013, the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 were released. During the 2013 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) video game conference, Hollister (2013) commented on the question of what defines a next-generation game console and game. Consensus of the analysts group stated that visions of the game creators could be more articulated and emotions could be conveyed more clearly through the medium (Hollister, 2013). Buchanan (2013) wrote that the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 promote uses outside that of where their original intent more than four decades ago. As with many products of human design, the original intention of the product, pleasure in the case of video games, expanded past what was previously thought possible.

Lane (2013) examined the movement of gaming culture to incorporate mental illness and reported that video games have had mixed results regarding representation and validity. However, while mainstream video games are moving slowly towards a realistic portrayal of mental illness, Owen (2013) pointed out that lesser known game producers have already produced sincere efforts to bring mental illness to the forefront of game issues.

A game not available on console-based systems, *Actual Sunlight* is based on a character experiencing depression and thoughts of suicide. Will O'Neill, creator of *Actual Sunlight*, opined that games are art and thus should grant permission to engage in topics that books or film can delve into for audiences. O'Neill continued to note that

games have a unique quality of empathy that other mediums cannot get to given their limits of interactivity. Video games have an inherent characteristic of empathy woven into their fabric by the fact that players must engage in another's shoes, in this case, a digital character's (Campbell, 2013).

Identity formation within video games. The following section expands on video game interaction and how gamers' identities meld into an experience that is different than any other type of entertainment instrument. Bissell (2011) explained that video games are a unique medium that blends the way humans engage in entertainment. Within movies, television, and books, humans are giving away control. Bissell contended that people willfully do so in an attempt to create an identity that is not theirs for the short time to be immersed in the fictional world. People give up a sense of themselves so the narrative can take over and allow them to let go of decision-making and succumb to the scripted nature of a movie, television show, and majority of books (Corliss, 2011; Wendler, 2014).

Video games function from a slightly bent view of this structure. Video games vary from proscribed activities to open world experiences, but the concept is that games allow for a meshing of a person's identity within the events of the storyline. In many games players will identify with the avatars within the game parameters (Klimmt, Hefner, Vorderer, Roth, & Blake, 2010; Langlois, 2013; Pearce, 2006). Boetcher, Duggan, and White (2002) pointed out that players go to escape their lives during game sessions. During these sessions the players can construct an identity and play as a completely different person or group of entities depending on how many separate versions the player desires.

It is within the ludonarrative (the unscripted or gamer-controlled actions) that players experience a combination of self-fulfilling identity creation and structured play-areas produced by the creators of the game. Depending on the game, agency is given to the player in various instances, so at least some control is noticeable by the player. This juxtaposition populates a niche role that video games hold for people to engage in for entertainment. The balance of this entertainment is explored by each different play through and choice that a person makes within the game (Bissell, 2011; Corliss, 2011; Mateas & Stern, 2006).

Graham et al. (2013) discussed a term known as augmented reality where players' real lives become intertwined with their digital versions. Players' real lives circle around commitments to those that they may not know outside of the players' voice or onscreen avatar. The researchers stated that commitments come in many forms; one such movement took the form of shaving their avatars' heads in support of childhood cancer research (Kee, 2012).

Ledbetter et al. (2011) argued that digital communication is becoming ever more enmeshed into the real lives of gamers' friends, families, and strangers. Communication and how people express their interests with others is constantly changing and adapting to different ideals and needs throughout respective identity development levels (Corliss, 2011; Kee, 2012). Pelletier (2008) explained that a player's identities shift and bound throughout each experience much in the same way that our identity in life plays out. Journet (2007) stated that it is possible that when some players will start up their chosen adventure they are actively deciding whether to employ their real-life values, construct a new set, or meld the two into something else. Although some games offer more choice within the narrative structure than others, there is a crossover appeal of moral values where the players tap into or reject based on their whims of that particular time (Mateas & Stern, 2006). Pelletier (2008) explained that during interviews with girls and boys, he found that they chose games, at least partly, by their real life identity. Pelletier also concluded that gender and identity played a role in what constitutes an appropriate game for girls or boys.

Jin (2010) examined the connection between 'malleable self' (Markus & Kunda, 1986) and avatar creation in the *Wii* digital universe. The malleable self refers to the way a person projects himself or herself and how the presentation changes depending on the situation. Jin explored this process of gamers creating avatars and attitudes related to perception of self. Jin found that some of his participants were more connected to their ideal avatars rather than one that was closer to their real selves (Jin, 2010).

Calleja (2007) added that the complexity involved in how some players make sense of their identity in games cannot be easily organized into a black and white concept. Calleja argued that, for some players, human feelings such as empathy meld into digital world of their avatars. Calleja (2010) discussed the fact that video games have the ability to blend our experience between the digital realm and the real-life realm that we occupy in our lives. In video games, the ability to mold identity offers an opportunity for counselors to glean information from a gamer client (Langlois, 2013; Pelletier, 2008; Yee, 2008).

Wubbolding (2000) asserted that self-reflection in counseling was needed by clients to understand obstacles in their lives; that they must recognize where they need to adjust their wants and expectations in order to be successful in their goals. Wubbolding explained that the more insight clients have into their hobbies, behavior, and thoughts, the better they could be at creating and controlling their path towards goal achievement and meeting their wants.

In the choice theory paradigm, people create pictures or expectations for their lives, which make up their respective quality worlds. The counselor would go through the journey with each client to understand how to achieve meaningful relationships and ultimately satisfying quality worlds (Glasser, 1980, 1998, 2000). Through identity creation in video games, a possible window is opened for a counselor to see how, when given the chance, a person might behave or how to behave given the choice.

Concepts Within Console-Based Video Games

Goals and rules. A goal within a console-based video game can be one specific outcome or a set of specific effects that a gamer will work towards accomplishing. A rule within a console-based video game consists of parameters that a gamer must work within in order to complete tasks within the game (Wolf, 2001). Goals and rules can both free the player towards problem solving creativity or restrict options in order to facilitate opportunities the player has yet to discover. It is the scarcity of certain freedoms that

makes playing a game challenging and worth getting better at it (Costikyan, 2006; Wolf, 2001). While constraints in real life have been shown to lower utility of a person, they are required for a video game environment. Constraints act as barriers in which gamers can see progress being measured (Newman, 2004; Nitsche, 2008).

Video game designers are aware of the balancing act to create enjoyment and challenge the gamer. Keeping this in mind, the designers create video game worlds that are appealing to gamers in different ways. It is the frequency and intensity of the conflicts that a player encounters that creates an optimal experience (Costikyan, 2006; Newman, 2004). Appropriate conflicts most often come in the form of difficulty levels that the player can choose from as pre-ordained by the game designers. The designers attempt to appeal to a wide range of gamer skill levels, so options within the game are given to promote a balanced experience for the gamer (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2008). However, if the player feels the experience is too easy or too hard he or she will generally disengage in the activity (Juul, 2005).

Wubbolding (2000) noted that treatment through reality therapy focuses on choices and responsibility. When clients look to create goals, it is their responsibility to formulate objectives that are achievable and realistic. Completion of tasks that will ultimately fulfill a person's quality world should function in the present and be process oriented. In relation to video games, a person must deal with rules and obstacles in order to complete objectives. This experience of purposeful engagement and adherence to preset goals and rules has been studied from a video game perspective as well as real-life games (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2008).

Huizinga (1955) coined the term "magic circle" to reference the difference between rules and constructs within a game as opposed to that of outside the game. Huizinga used play and games as an example of where a magic circle takes place. Huizinga related the game space to social circles as a way to explain the different perspectives that can occur in a same universe, whether this in real life or a game space. Because games require special rules for people to play, everyone observing or operating outside of that rule set will not be able to understand the nature of certain lines, areas, or objects that are inherent to the progression of the game (Huizinga, 1955; Newman, 2004).

Langlois (2013) commented that a client in counseling could participate in their own version of the magic circle where they were able to uncover past experiences and gamify their own treatment. By being able to fully explore their concerns in a way that possibly made sense to them, clarity and wellness could be reached. This translates into reality therapy through the idea that each person formulates his or her own quality world by understanding what basic needs and wants fulfill it most satisfactorily (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 1991, 2000).

Feedback system. The feedback system is how the gamer knows that a goal is being worked toward or accomplished. This comes in various forms including points, levels, or any arbitrary measuring system where players know that they are moving in a particular direction (McGonigal, 2011). In digital games, feedback systems have evolved into tightly woven aspects of video games and have been integral to their success since their inception. This is part of all games, real life or digital, such as scoreboards in baseball, but none nearly as direct and detailed as in video games. When players move their avatar and choose actions, the feedback is shown via audio, video, or some combination of the two (Nitsche, 2008). The invention of vibration into controllers adds another component, along with headsets that are able to discern where sounds are coming from among other novelties (Brunner, 2013). It is an increased level of engagement that further blurs the line between real life games and digital versions.

The object of a video game player (and any other type of game player) is to take a challenge that is put in front of him or her and overcome it, but all the while understanding that a further goal is just out of reach. There is finality to most video games, but the feedback system is in place to push the player to keep playing by virtue of the desire to accomplish tasks and goals. These feedback systems measure voluntary barriers in which hundreds of millions of persons engage in everyday (Birdwell, 2006; Costikyan, 2006).

Voluntary participation in unnecessary obstacles. Young people between the ages of eight and 29 years use roughly 50 hours of their week engaged in media that requires the use of a digital screen (Malikhao & Servaes, 2010). Although this number includes media other than video games, it is an apt statistic to show the amount of time people in this demographic engage in the entertainment. These types of media involve and take up enormous parts of persons' lives and subsequently have an effect on their cognitive development (Bissell, 2011; Malikhao & Servaes, 2010). McGonigal (2011) contemplated an interesting paradox where she believed that many people strive for a life where they are not struggling or being tested. However, games offer an experience that is counter to that paradigm. McGonigal set out to understand this curious contradiction and

examined why so many people engage in video games and are consistently challenged (Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011).

Voluntary participation necessitates that each player agrees to the rules and social contract within the parameters of the game. This creates a common ground in the system that gels the parts of the game into one set of collective aspects that produces an outcome of the game (Bissell, 2011; McGonigal, 2011). McGonigal (2011) explained what makes an optimal unnecessary obstacle: (a) an apparent goal, (b) arbitrary constrictions, and (c) instant feedback on progress, which can come from visual or audio cues.

In one of the first descriptions of the experience gamers feel when they engage in unnecessary obstacles, David Sudnow (1983) documented how the game *Breakout* maximized the feeling of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Sudnow commented how the game almost instantaneously caused him to be addicted to the feeling that he was progressing, albeit slowly, through the game even though there was no grade scheme or narrative. Sudnow explained that each game looks to create an obstacle that pushes the gamer to the limit of their skills simultaneously allowing for hope to be seen or at least conceived in the gamer's mind (McGonigal, 2011; Sudnow, 1983).

McGonigal (2011) argued that humans wish to find challenges and overcome them during the course of the respective person's life. It creates a feeling of accomplishment and thus pride in the self-worth of the person. In choice theory, self-worth and feelings of accomplishment are important as part of the belonging and power basic needs. Wubbolding (2000) commented that if a person is not meeting one or more of these needs, it could be reasoned that he or she is depressed, anxious, or in some way not living his or her most fulfilling life (Glasser, 2000).

McGonigal (2011) suggested that a person purposefully engages in unnecessary tasks of games as a way to meet the aforementioned needs. She maintained that games serve as a conduit in which people can meet their basic needs while enjoying the process. With this in mind, McGonigal proposed that these challenges are necessary in the broad scope of human behavior and participation in challenges through games is just another form of meeting needs.

Langlois (2013) proposed a different view of unnecessary obstacles in people's lives. He suggested that people go through their lives partaking in what they believe to be unnecessary obstacles because of hurtful experiences in their past. In his view, the clients would come into a counseling and realize that the obstacles they are living out could be overcome and would no longer be bound by the obstacles that hamper their quality worlds (Glasser, 1998; Langlois, 2013). Whether taken from the view of McGonigal or Langlois, conquering challenges fulfills the desire to feel in control, freedom to make choices, and produce feelings of pleasure (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Juul, 2005; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Wubbolding, 2000).

Flow, Fiero, and Naches. The construct of Flow was created by Csikszentmihalyi in 1975. He defined Flow as a mental state where the person feels an increased focus level, attention, and full perception of the ability to complete the current task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). However, he reported that gamers often label the experience flippantly as "that was enjoyable or fun" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). He argued that Flow was actually people experiencing a complete immersion of pleasure and focus within a dedicated activity. He asserted that humans must find ways in order to fulfill this requirement by activities that we participate in a given day and proposed that games (though he did not comment necessarily on video games) are an optimal source of Flow and, in many cases, happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

However, Flow and its underlying chemical reactions in a person are not limited to just video games or games in general. It is in the act of satisfying work in which humans can induce the feeling of Flow while not engaging in games (McGonigal, 2011). McGonigal argued that video games are a rich source of how to learn this process and get better acquainted with the experience in order to reproduce it. Flow can be connected to choice theory through the basic needs of power and fun/pleasure (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). As game players experience Flow, they inherently fulfill these basic needs. Thus Flow could be seen as a means towards achieving the basic needs each person is attempting to fulfill.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that Flow can only happen when the challenges are near or meet the player's ability level. While not universal, Csikszentmihalyi purported that if a challenge is too difficult, the player will give up and not want to play anymore. If the challenge is accomplished quickly and without struggle, the player will be bored and move on to another task (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990; Juul, 2005).

The facets of Flow and the ability to complete challenges can be linked to reality therapy goal structures. Applegate (1980) outlined eight aspects that are effective in

creating goals in reality therapy: (a) Simplicity; (b) Small timeframe and scope; (c) Process oriented; (d) Action is dependent in the individual; (e) Specific; (f) Repetitive action that can be repeated; (g) Immediate outcomes; (h) Commitment, being responsible for the task. Csikszentmihalyi suggested that game related activities can offer optimal opportunity for Flow to be obtained within the confines of the channel.

Procci, Singer, Levy, and Bowers (2012) used the Dispositional Flow Scale-2 (Marsh & Jackson, 1999) to measure how Flow is experienced by adult gamers who described themselves as "active gamers." Active gamers were defined by playing at least two times a week and five hours or more in one week. Specifically, the researchers were attempting to measure empirically how gamers understood the experience of being immersed in a game that they lost track of time and were disconnected from self-consciousness. The DFS-2 has been used to measure athletes' conception of Flow and was theorized that it could be applied to that of the video game Flow experience. The study was also done in an attempt to replicate findings from Wang, Liu, and Khoo (2009) where children were used as participants who engaged with Internet usage and gaming. Wang et al. (2009) measured the psychometric properties of this usage to confirm the 9-component model detailed in the creation of the Dispositional Flow Scale-2 by Jackson and Eklund (2002) who measured athletes' state of Flow while competing in their respective sports.

Procci et al. (2012) reported that they could not produce sufficient evidence from the data to support the nine components of the DFS-2 to measure Flow in gamers. The researchers reported that there were possibly several reasons they could not produce evidence for Flow in active gamers, including the addition of only accepting "active gamers" and using an exclusively adult population compared to the Wang et al. (2009) study that focused primarily on young children. The authors explained that it is difficult to understand whether the construct of measuring Flow in gaming is not appropriate. Procci et al. (2012) stated that the concept Flow may not be able to fully measure the various mental states of humans as they engage in digital games. The authors indicated that the issue could also be that the DFS-2, with its validation in "real life" sports athletes, was not appropriate for producing the statistically significant data as it relates to video game players (Procci et al., 2012). While a video game player can cross into a state of Flow, it is not the end of the spectrum regarding mental statuses.

Fiero is described as a visceral feeling that humans experience when the sensation of Flow has been established but increases into another level of endorphins. Translated, Fiero is the Italian word for personal triumph (Lazzaro, 2004). In choice theory, Fiero would most closely be associated with the need for power (Glasser, 1998). Fiero has been adopted into game culture as a way to describe the feeling despite not having a suitable word in the English language (McGonigal, 2011).

Hoeft, Watson, Kesler, Bettinger, and Reiss (2008) conducted a study where Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans were done on gamers' brains during game play. Results from the Ben-Shahar study indicated that Fiero may be the concept that is responsible for players reporting an addictive feeling when they play. Glasser (1998) pointed out that a person striving for power can also become dependent to the feeling. While Flow and Fiero dominate the internal state of heightened focus, researchers have found that game players organize their feelings differently when presented with a social game playing experience. A person aiding another in an activity he or she is passionate about creates a different feeling than that of Flow or Fiero. The underlying structure of the terms may be present but displays differently when connected to other people. Similarly, the basic needs of power, freedom, and fun/pleasure change in nature when the social component is applied (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Concepts such as pride in games assist identity creation with other players (Bissell, 2011; Lazzaro, 2004; McGonigal, 2011). Glasser (2000) noted that individuals create systems for love and belonging in several different and oftentimes, hard to understand ways. He said a counselor should seek to understand efforts by clients to fit in with a group and use that knowledge to help the client satisfy his or her need for love and belonging. Glasser went on to discuss that belonging can take the form of being accepted by others or by exhibiting a sense of belonging towards others. This is evidenced by another term in video game culture, Naches.

Bateman, Boon, and Lowenhaupt (2008) stated that players experience different types of emotions while playing video games. In a study conducted in 2008, the authors recounted 10 emotions that were most reported by participants. Among the top 10 were the terms Fiero and Flow. One emotion that surprised the authors by its frequency was the term Naches. It is a Yiddish word that describes pride that one would get from mentoring others and seeing them through a successful learned task. The authors

reported that this was the fifth most represented emotion taken from a sample of (n = 1,024) participants.

Naches is a concept that Paul Ekman has studied in his work with communication and emotions (Ekman, 2007). He reported that this emotion can likely be attributed to an evolutionary mechanism for creating community and groups which leads to survival over the long-term. Ekman went on to explain that this trait is important to individuals because it instills a sense of pride and happiness in people when they cheer on others who accomplish tasks. The Naches concept is seen frequently in parents, coaches, teachers, siblings, and friends (Ekman, 2007; McGonigal, 2011).

Ekman (2007) stated that feelings of pride come from teaching one another just enough about the game environment that the mentee can traverse the arena without feeling that he or she is simply following instructions. McGonigal (2011) cited blog posts regarding the game *Braid* as an example of how gamers choose to watch others succeed in their attempts to conquer tasks. The game revolves around puzzles and thoughtful approaches to task completion in order to progress through the game. Newman (2004) reported that former players enjoyed seeing others succeed with the same games that produced such positive emotions for them.

With Naches, Flow, and Fiero in mind, video games and games in general have been shown to extend past entertainment into feelings of determination, pride, and accomplishment (Bateman et al., 2008; Ekman, 2007). Since the inception of video games, the progression and intention of satisfying emotions, events, and needs from real life has been varied and widespread (Juul, 2005; Kent, 2001; McGonigal, 2011). Game designers have continued to try and emulate real life into video games and feelings out of characters in video games.

Game developers hope to speak to a different set of emotions and mental pathways to create a vivid and memorable experience for the player. In a similar way that people choose to see films or read books that impact them emotionally, the lasting effect of a strong feeling is the desired result. Due to the interactive aspects of video games, researchers are interested in exploring whether there are subsequent mental health concerns to be addressed regarding game play (Bissell, 2011; Lane, 2013).

Mental Health Implications of Video Game Engagement

The following sections detail the various perspectives and literature regarding the implications video game engagement has on people's lives. The first heading concentrates on the positive effects that have been found from video game engagement through different types of research studies. The proceeding section focuses on the negative effects that have been found from video game engagement from various types of research studies.

Positive implications of video game engagement. McGonigal (2011) and Langlois (2013) reasoned that video games have the potential to function in many other ways rather than strictly for fun, pleasure, or entertainment, in general. In 2012, a survey conducted of (N = 15,142) respondents from the European Union, found that the second most cited word set associated with gaming was, "Good at providing escapism," with "Entertaining" ranking first (Ipsos MediaCT, 2012). Among the areas video games could offer potentially positive effects, increased brain matter (Kühn et al., 2013), better coping skills when stressed (Pokorski, Borecki, & Jernajczyk, 2012), improved physical body balance (Schoene et al., 2011), training and engagement with social situations (Keating & Sunakawa, 2010), and possible reduction in depression, hostile feelings (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

Researchers in various fields have begun to test video games with different types of ideas outside their use as entertainment devices. Kühn et al. (2013) reported that in tests where subjects played 30 minutes of video games for a two month period compared to a control group that did not play video games, the video game playing group players' increased their gray matter (GM) in their brains. The parts of brain that grew GM are responsible for spatial navigation, strategic planning, motor performance, and working memory. The researchers went on to note that due to the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex growing larger, video games could be suggested as a treatment for diseases where these parts of the brain shrink as a result. The researchers suggested, for example, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, and neurodegenerative disease.

Pokorski et al. (2012) reported similar findings in their study when they found that adults aged 20–25 were less neurotic and more emotionally stable than that of the non-gamer control group. The authors added that the gamers were also able to cope better in stressful situations, using task-oriented strategies, than their non-gamer counterparts. The authors stated that video games may offer a rehabilitation cognitive training that can possibly combat disorders such as depression and neurodegenerative diseases. In addition to studies of specific brain functions, medical investigators have considered the physical interactivity component of video games for research (Howcroft, et al., 2012; Primack et al., 2012; Schoene et al., 2011). The video game industry has produced several types of accessories and peripherals that work with the systems to give the user a unique way of interacting with the game. One such way was a mat that had sensors within it for people to step on. The mat was to be used with dance games where players would match on-screen prompts of dance moves and attempt to match them and achieve points (Donovan, 2010).

The mats caught the interest of researchers who then examined the potential for the mats in areas of medicine and rehabilitation for patients. In a study to measure balance and stability in elderly patients, researchers were able to establish data points that served as thresholds to determine fall risk in patients (Schoene et al., 2011). Furthermore, researchers utilized the *Wii Sports* game as assistance to children with cerebral palsy to maintain appropriate physical activity levels and increase engagement in physical rehabilitation therapy (Howcroft et al., 2012).

Through the lens of a choice theorist, the aforementioned extended use of video games was creating autonomy, control, and enjoyment for the patients. Through the opportunity granted by the researchers and video games, these patients are able to satisfy basic needs and live a more fulfilling life (Glasser, 1965, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). Another example of how video games satisfy basic needs came in the form of melding a real life problem with an opportunity to be helped by gamers. In 2007, The Sony Corporation partnered with Stanford University to create an opportunity for PlayStation 3 (PS3) owners to install an application to their console system. The application allowed for a program to run from its internal computer to do medical-based computations. PS3 consoles were used in conjunction with researchers at Stanford University to assist them in cancer research by running these computations in the electronic background architecture of the consoles. The program started in 2001 and was known as Folding@home. While home computers could also participate, an estimated 74% of the computing power came from PS3s. The program garnered over 15 million PlayStation 3[©] users from its inception through 2012 when Sony discontinued the partnership. Sony reported that more than 100 million medical computation hours were completed by the PS3 users' systems (McGonigal, 2011; Sanders, 2012).

This example showcases gamers fulfilling basic needs of: (a) power, the ability to help cure diseases; (b) love/belonging, joining together as a group on a specific goal; and (c) fun/pleasure, gamers posted to forums and encouraging other gamers to use their systems for the to help the research (Glasser, 1998; McGonigal, 2011). For some gamers, working towards a goal involves logging online and working together with a group to accomplish a task.

Keating and Sunakawa (2010) remarked that online gaming worlds are often complex and require high-level tasks for collaboration. In a similar vein to sports, these digital worlds require the player to be responsible for his or her own action but offered the potential for directing and working with others to complete tasks within the game. Keating and Sunakawa explained that participation cues are required for outcome achievement for the players. Due to the unique properties of video games, the use of participation cues to decipher when to make decisions relative to where the other players are creates a learning environment for skills in language and spatial awareness. This spatial awareness allows for creativity and imagination to fill in gaps and foster solutions to problems that can be solved by the player alone, but also, with almost as much frequency with a group of players. Keating and Sunakawa suggested that decisions, roles, and relationships within the game can produce situations that will aid the players in real-life circumstances of social space (Keating & Sunakawa, 2010; Thompson & Brown, 2007).

Ferguson and Rueda (2010) conducted a study where young adults were measured on the effects of violent video games on hostility, depression, and aggressive behavior. The intention of the study was to evaluate if violent video games increased levels of depression, hostility, and aggressive behavior more so, less than, or with no effect compared to non-violent video games or playing no video games at all.

Ferguson and Rueda (2010) asked 103 adults from a university in the southern United States to participate. The first step of the study was for the participants to take the Video Game-Playing Habits Measure (Anderson & Dill, 2000) to evaluate their preferences of gaming and frequency of playing (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010). The participants then completed the Aggression Questionnaire-Short Form (AQ; Buss & Warren, 2000). Respondents rated statements using a 5-point Likert scale of their level of aggression. The AQ results were interpreted to achieve good predictive validity of trait aggressiveness (Felsten & Hill, 1999). The researchers then administered a frustration task using the paced auditory serial addition task (PASAT; Gronwall, 1977). The PASAT is a computerized task where participants must add serialized numbers as they become available to the previous number in the sequence (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

Next the participants completed the State Hostility Scale (SH; Anderson, Deuser, & DeNeve, 1995), a 35-item Likert-type measure in which participants endorsed each item relative to their current mood. The results were interpreted to be effective for examining hostile feelings in a person with an internal consistency score of $\alpha = .92$ at the pretest state and $\alpha \square \square$.95 at posttest (Anderson & Dill, 2000). The participants then completed the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), a 21-item measure of the severity of depression (Beck, 1996). The BDI-II was used to measure how mood-management progressed through the study (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

After the surveys were completed, the participants were asked to engage in one of four different groups, to play one of three different video games, or not to play a video game. The options were: (a) a violent game, *Hitman: Blood Money*, a game where the player is a "bad guy;" (b) a violent game, *Call of Duty 2*, a game where the player is a "good guy;" (c) a non-violent game where there was action, *Madden 07*, a football game where there was action; or (d) no video game was played. Participants in the control group who did not play a game were told there was a computer malfunction and were instructed to wait until the next portion of the study was ready.

After each participant completed the respective controls, a modified version of the Taylor Competitive Reaction Time Test (TCRTT; Anderson & Dill, 2000; Epstein &

Taylor, 1967) was completed by each participant. The instrument was a "reaction time game" where the player is poised against a fictional opponent that is said to be connected via computers on the other side of the wall. Players were told that they will set the level of a noise blast for their opponent if the opponent loses the "reaction time game." The researchers explained to the participants that if they "won" the game the noise blast would play at the participant's decibel level. If they "lost," it would play at the opponent's noise decibel level. Each participant played for 25 trials against the fictional opponent and the white noise decibel levels ranged from 0 to 95 decibels. The series of wins and losses were pre-set in the computers beforehand and each participant had no bearing on the results. The TCRTT was used in this study to survey the reliability of the laboratory measure of aggression. The researchers found that the reliability of the scores was $\alpha = .94$ for the current study (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

After completing the TCRTT, participants were given a questionnaire so they could endorse their perceptions of video games on their feelings playing them, their competency level while playing, if they had played before, and if they would play the game again with their free time. They rated their thoughts on a 5-point Likert scale and were calculated to produce a measure of game experience. The respondents were shown not to differ on the three game conditions, F(2, 74) = 0.35, p > .05; r = .07, $-.16 \le r \le .29$ (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

One-way ANOVAs were used to make sure that video game-playing group equivalence between the four groups was randomly assigned given age, real-life game violence exposure, and trait aggression. Chi-squared analyses were employed so group equivalence for gender and ethnicity was met. ANCOVA analysis was used with the video game groups as the independent variable and gender and trait aggression scores as covariates. Researchers reported that the test yielded no impact from video games on aggressive behavior. Effect size was used to mitigate Type I or Type II errors. In addition, a *t* test was utilized on the two groups with the greatest mean difference, the non-violent game, *Madden 07*, and no game played. Researchers found that the *t* test reported no significant differences (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

Ferguson and Rueda (2010) also used an ANCOVA design to test the video game playing group on hostile feelings. Gender and trait aggression scores were used as covariates. Changes in scores from the pretest and posttest to the hostile feelings measure (time in between the tests) were used as a within-subject independent variable. Results showed that the interaction effect between time and the video game playing group showed no interaction. Finally, to examine the impact of the video game playing group from the BDI-II, a mixed ANCOVA design was used in the same way as previous statistical testing. Trait and aggression score were used as covariates. Interaction effect between time (BDI scores) and group was not significant. However, trait aggression as a covariate was significantly related to depression scores, along with an interaction between time and trait aggression. This suggested that more aggressive persons were more likely to stay more depressed (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

Ferguson and Rueda (2010) reported that the results are purely correlational and should not be expected to imply causation. They explained through the findings of their study that there are no results to suggest that short-term 45-minute engagement with

violent video games produce or reduce aggressive behavior as seen in a laboratory environment. The researchers found that long-term exposure, measured by a hierarchical multiple regression of real-life reported experience by the participants, to violent video games was associated with a reduction of hostile feelings and depression after a frustrating procedure. Furthermore, participants who engaged in the study were seen to lower their feelings of hostility and depressed mood but were not less aggressive. The results suggested that for some players mood-management, in this case a higher tolerance of anxiety, was evident but problematic to tie causally to playing violent video games. The researchers cautioned that the results are dependent on the sample, college-age students with a majority of Hispanic participants, and should be noted when being compared to other persons (Ferguson & Rueda, 2010).

The previous studies indicated circumstances where video game play can be influential in creating positive feelings, physical body improvements, and social development. However, other studies have shown that at minimum, positive mental health results are not always the case and at maximum, video games may be at fault for negative effects related to the mental health of gamers (Elliott et al., 2012; Kuss & Griffiths, 2012; Lemmens et al., 2011).

Negative implications of video game engagement. McGonigal (2011) pointed out that game companies have a vested interest in keeping people buying games and game systems, but it is more important that they are lifelong gamers rather than candidates to burn out. Addiction within the video game culture is a hotly debated topic with varying statistics that inform differing types of conclusions (King, Delfabbro, & Griffiths, 2010; McGonigal, 2011; Petry, 2011; Wood, 2008).

Kuss and Griffiths (2012) reported that 8–12% of adolescent video game players are addicted, as defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR* (*DSM-IV-TR*; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013) or suffer from some related type of impulse control disorder. In a collection of studies, Kuss and Griffiths went on to mention that 58 papers have been published regarding problem video game playing. Ten of these papers focus on addiction and other types of mental illness that could be the result of video game play in the gaming population (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012).

Lemmens et al. (2011) expounded on the difference between pathological video game use and excessive use by the pervasiveness of the engagement. If the amount of time gaming is problematic by way of ignoring social or emotional endeavors then it leans towards pathological video game use. If the gaming is rooted in an unbalanced amount of time comparably towards other activities but does not inhibit social or emotional functions, it ceases to be pathological and is only excessive. In their study, Lemmens et al. used a seven-item game addiction survey to measure the participants' level of pathology in relation to aggressive behavior (Lemmens et al., 2011).

The seven-item scale was based on the *DSM-IV-TR* criteria for pathological gambling (Griffiths, 2005). The sample size was 1,024 adolescents from four schools in the Netherlands. The study was conducted in a two-wave longitudinal form and due to the format Lemmens et al. (2011) were able to collect (n = 524) students' data on the

subject. Games were coded as violent and non-violent based on 'realistic' violence (ex., *Call of Duty*) and 'fantasy' violence (ex., *Ratchet and Clank*).

The study generated two primary findings: (a) that higher levels of pathological gaming projected an increase in the frequency and length of gaming periods six months thereafter, (b) pathological gaming predicted an increased level of self-reported physical aggression six months later irrespective of the players choosing violent or non-violent games, though the effect was only found in adolescent boys. Lemmens et al. (2011) commented that pathological involvement with video games appeared to be generally focused on adolescent boys. Furthermore, the authors indicated that boys were more involved with violent video games than girl gamers. The adolescent girls did not show indicators that would be in line with pathological or excessive gaming (Lemmens et al., 2011). Though the study did not indicate what made the games addictive in nature. However, the possible addictive nature of video games has been researched in other research studies.

Elliott et al. (2012) stated that video game creators have figured out a formula for creating habit-forming aspects inherent to most video games. One of the aspects cited are Experience Points (XP; King et al., 2010) which are gained by players working through tasks in the game and subsequently the players earn in-game perks by playing with more frequency and skill. This coincides with another term known as Achievements (Elliott et al., 2012). Achievements are acquired by successfully completing tasks set by the game that offer particular challenges that go above the average playing skill integrated into the game play (Jakobsson, 2011).

Achievement rewards can take the form of collectable items or creative attributes that can adjust or enhance an avatar of the player (Moore, 2011). Moore contended what makes an effective feedback loop in a video game may also be contributing to a system of obsessiveness. Poole (2000) commented that video games have been compared to the addictive qualities of substance abuse before the most recent additions of experience points, achievements, and avatar changes. Players have been tempted to continue playing with enticements offered in-game such as being offered extra lives, in-game bonus scores, and special abilities for their respective character (Elliott et al., 2012).

King et al. (2010) explained that video games mimic the same system of variable interval reward structures that gambling machines use to keep players at the respective unit. Video games use XP and achievements to keep gamers satisfied with their progress; slot machines use small payouts to satisfy the player's hope that they will win the jackpot on the next spin. Indeed, Griffiths (1991) made the explicit connection of coin-operated video games and slot machines.

Weaver et al. (2009) conducted a study comparing gamers and non-gamers on perceptions of their health, greater reliance on Internet-based social support, and more use of media and Body Mass Index (BMI) scores. The authors used adults (n = 562) from the Seattle-Tacoma area of the United States for participants. The results indicated that female gamers responded with higher levels of depression and a more poor health status. Male gamer counterparts responded with higher levels of BMI and Internet use. Both female and male gamers reported that they relied on the Internet for social support. The study was conducted in an attempt to understand results on the lifestyles of gamers and how the results could be used to promote healthy living (Weaver et al., 2009).

Gentile et al. (2011) produced a study that examined pathological video game use during a two-year period with elementary and secondary school students in Singapore. The authors examined participants' (n = 3,024) various lifestyles and how they intertwined with their game play habits. The groups were measured three different times throughout the two-year period. The researchers were interested in how pathological gaming intersected with possible predictor or outcome variables. Those variables were: (a) amount of time played, (b) social ability, (c) impulsivity, (d) social phobia, (e) depression, (f) anxiety, (g) the parent-child relationship quality, and (h) academic performance (Gentile et al., 2011).

Gentile et al. (2011) defined pathological somewhat separately from the Lemmens et al. (2011) study by using a comparison of similarly defined diseases by the American Psychiatric Association. This occurs when harm is induced to the individual's social, family, occupational, school and psychological functioning by the activity.

Gentile et al. (2011) reported that the average numbers of pathological gaming symptoms were small (mean = $2.28 \pm SD = 1.78$ during the first trial) and were correlated moderately with the amount of playing time each participant gamed (e.g., r = .33 at the first trial). The researchers found that boys were more likely to feature pathological symptoms than girls and meet the minimum requirements for pathological use in all three trials. The researchers indicated that between 7.6% and 9.9% of their sample could be considered pathological gamers given the definition cited by the *DSM-IV-TR*, which listed that if a person displays one-half of the symptoms, that person would be considered a pathological gamer (Gentile et al., 2011). These symptoms included impulsivity, lower social competence, low amplitude for empathy, and reduced sense of emotional regulation.

Gentile et al. (2011) found that pathological video game use could be an indicator of depression, social phobia, and anxiety. When gamers no longer played at a pathological level, the symptoms of depression, social phobia, and anxiety receded. The researchers noted that the results do not indicate that gaming causes depression or other issues but rather that they can work in tandem much in the way that medical illnesses can be diagnosed onto one another (Gentile et al., 2011). McGonigal (2011) reported that video games function well into most peoples' lives up to the 20 hour range per week. The 20 hour threshold was reinforced by the Gentile et al. (2011) study as participants who played on average 19 hours or less per week exhibited fewer symptoms than participants who played an average of 31 hours per week, which is also where pathological gaming was exhibited (Gentile et al., 2011). Lastly, the researchers reported that the main takeaway from the study was the quality of data regarding the risk factors, causes, course of addiction, and outcomes of pathological gaming (Gentile et al., 2011).

In a study of adolescents (n = 524) in the Netherlands, Lemmens et al. (2011) found that console gamers play an average of 4.2 hours a week which could suggest that most console players play generally under the 20 hour point. The researchers pointed out that findings showing time spent on games was not predictive in pathological engagement. Additionally, gaming is not addictive given their findings from the Netherlands study (Lemmens et al., 2011). While the Lemmens et al. study did not suggest a pathological correlation, other authors suggested that pathological outcomes may not be the only drawback to extended periods of gaming.

Thompson (2007) coined the term "gamer regret" at the notion of a people realizing the time spent gaming and doubting how they used their time. The concept of measuring time played in the game world is something that only more recent players have had the advantage or disadvantage of knowing. With new game systems able to track numerous types of statistics the opportunity for 'gamer regret' is plentiful. Thompson explained that gamers fill their time with consuming, and many times challenging tasks, but function rarely outside of the person engaging in the game. This creates a seemingly never ending struggle for gamers who question the work put into the game as meaningless and without merit, as opposed to their feelings of accomplishment from completing the game (McGonigal, 2011; Thompson, 2007).

How Treatment Occurs in Reality Therapy

Glasser (1998) wrote that relationships and how they fulfill the basic needs are of the utmost importance in understanding how to help a client. Clinicians should understand what personal relationships are lacking for their clients and explore how those relationships fit into the quality world of the client. Glasser also explained that the clinician should understand what basic needs were not being met (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000, 2007). Through these two aspects, Glasser maintained that a client could start the treatment process (Glasser, 1965, 1980, 1998, 2000). Glasser (1965) explained that congruence with the client through appropriate questions, being positive, using metaphors, and humor was imperative to establishing an effective counseling relationship. Furthermore, he suggested that reality therapists work to create a supportive, compassionate, and helpful relationship with the client. He wrote that for a clinician to be successful with a client he or she had to be accepted into the client's quality world. Glasser wrote that this is important because reality therapists do not avoid confrontation when it is suitable and the client must feel supported when the clinician asks about the client's choices and behavior (Glasser, 1980, 1998; 2000).

Glasser (1998) pointed out that dreams and diagnoses were not seen as helpful in reality therapy. Glasser felt that dreams were a waste of time and that diagnoses (outside of insurance purposes) was a form of external labeling and did not benefit the client. Glasser did comment that there are mental illnesses; however, these came in the form of physical conditions that could be aided by medical treatment, such as Alzheimer's and Down syndrome. Glasser believed that people who received a diagnosis could use it as a way of explaining what was happening to them rather than that people had control over their mental well-being. Diagnosis was a form of external control over the person's choice to be well (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

To further explain this aspect of reality therapy, Glasser (1989, 2000) created a model called Total Behavior. Glasser suggested that people do nothing from birth but behave. Through this assumption, the total behavior concept is used by reality therapists to assist clients in understanding their actions, thinking, feeling, and physiology. Glasser noted that people steer their lives with choices and likened the similarity to driving a car

(Glasser, 1990). He labeled the front wheels with the action and thinking components and the back wheels feeling and physiology. Furthermore, the basic needs were compared to the engine of the car (Glasser, 1990). While each element is important, the critical component is the action piece. Glasser felt that when a person chose action and thinking, their feeling and physiology would follow. Glasser made it clear that a person can change what he or she does and the result was a changed viewpoint of the behavior (Glasser, 1989, 1990, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000). Wubbolding (1991) commented that reality therapists work with clients to create action and choices in their lives in order to instill a sense of hope towards accomplishing goals.

Glasser (1998) maintained that the majority of information in counseling could be obtained by asking clients what the pictures in their quality world are and how those pictures intertwined with important relationships for them. Furthermore, fulfillment of a quality world is understood by an evaluation of wants. Wubbolding (2000) suggested that a reality therapist seeks to understand the difference between the external pressures and desires and internal wants of the person. This is accomplished by understanding the client's internal wants, desires, and relationships; in reality therapy, it is the client's quality world. The reality therapist then suggests those themes to the client so a change in behavior and thinking can be done in order to start meeting basic needs and connecting with important relationships (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 2007).

Wubbolding (2000) explained that all people want to be happy. However, being happy is a thorny concept to pin down, let alone master for a person's entire life. Glasser (1998) suggested that people in counseling seek to fulfill at least one need, if not multiple of them; adding that love and belonging was nearly always a central need. Wubbolding and Brickell (2008) noted that clients can empower themselves to create new options and meaning in their lives. This ability to focus on the client's choices allow for an instant feeling of power for clients when they go to counseling. Much like the choices and control that are enabled with video games, the reality therapist assists the client in creating pathways that he or she may not have noticed before, which gets the client to think in the positive mindset that treatment is obtainable (Glasser, 1965; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Wubbolding, 2000, 2007).

Glasser (1998) emphasized that when people are in counseling they are living their life under poor choices. Thus, asking the client to explain their recent decisions can be difficult if there is not a solid base in the counseling relationship. Glasser explained that a counselor should ask the client what they are doing at the current time. Glasser proposed that while clients are allowed to complain and discuss feelings, it is the actions of the person that are of most focus to the reality therapist. A client may explain that they are depressed and cannot bear to talk on the phone with family or relatives. The action of not engaging with others will be the focus point for reality therapists as it is the most changeable for clients; the reality therapist would ask the client what they are doing to help themselves (Glasser, 1965, 1998, 2000). Kim (2007) explained while working with Internet-addicted clients that he used questions such as "Does the behavior I'm engaged in help me or hurt me?" Kim went on to mention that utilizing reality therapy techniques of confrontation and support, the client groups were able to gain insight into their faulty behavior (Kim, 2007).

Glasser (1989) reiterated that at this stage the clinician must remain nonjudgmental of the person's actions. Being in the quality world of clients is important because they will most likely be feeling that they have tried numerous interventions or that their current behavior is helping in some way but as they deconstruct it, they realize that it is not helping them. This process begins the final stage of clients being able to recognize their misdirection and begin to form a plan that will help them by assisting the client in making an effective plan. Glasser contended that he does not object to the clinician making a plan, albeit at first, as long as the client understands it. He pointed out that people rarely continue with ideas or plans with which they do not agree or in which they do not see the value (Applegate, 1980; Glasser, 1989, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000).

Lawrence (2004) explained that an increase in self-efficacy is possible when reality therapy is used because control is given to clients in order to obtain goals. When choices are made and positive results are achieved, clients are apt to continue counseling and see treatment as empowering not only in counseling but in other facets of life.

Glasser (1998) wrote that humor plays a role in the reality therapy as part of the fun/pleasure basic need of people. Though, Thomson (1990) noted that reality therapists must be cognizant of using humor to create an alliance with the client rather than humiliate or confuse them in session. Glasser pointed out that reality therapists should be aware of the amount of change they are expecting and thus try to create an environment where small failures are respected and acknowledged as part of the process. Glasser felt that humor could be used to bridge small failures and create hope for new accomplishments. Through this, less pressure was put on the client to be perfect and expectations would be realistic throughout the process of change (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

Assessment of Needs

Initially, assessment for effectiveness of reality therapy was obtained from the self-reported goal achievement of clients (Glasser, 1965). However, since the inception of reality therapy, researchers have developed assessments to gather information and evaluation of client's needs. Mickel and Sanders (2003) developed the Basic Needs Assessment to measure the strength of 'want' from clients and what types of needs were lacking for the client. The Contextual Needs Assessment was developed to assess clients in a similar way (Brown & Swanson, 2005). By being specific about which needs are deficient, the reality therapist can then assist the client in creating goals to obtain higher levels of the need or to outright fulfill the need. By creating objectives that are obtainable and realistic, the client will see that he or she has met his or her needs and will solidify the vital relationships in his or her life (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

Reality therapy assumes that each client, no matter the experience or culture, can be helped by using this type of counseling. How clients tend to view their needs and wants are different by culture, but by nature each counselor should be using questioning to understand how the clients view their needs in order to assist them in change (Glasser, 1989, 1990, 2000; Wubbolding, 2000). Reality therapy has been used in several different areas of the world including Egypt, Iran, and Korea (Christensen & Gray, 2002; Wubbolding, 2000; Wubbolding & Brickell, 2008). Glasser (1989) wrote that many clients believe they are victims of circumstance and events around them, that it is the world and the events that have happened to them that are the cause for their despair. And because of this, clients may feel they cannot create personal goals or even assess their own wants and needs appropriately. Glasser said that reality therapy accounts for these types of situations and thus does not ignore them or, more specifically, the effect the events have on the person. Wubbolding (2000) recommended that a reality therapist should allow the client to look, but not stare, at past and external concerns. The reality therapist intends to help the person understand that in virtually any situation, there is a choice and some degree of control. And through choice and control, there is hope (Glasser, 1980, 1989, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 1991, 2000).

Need for This Study

Glasser (1998) felt that every person needs to meet the four psychological, internal, and universal needs of choice theory to live well: (a) love/belonging, (b) power, (c) freedom, and (d fun/pleasure. In addition, Wubbolding (1991, 2000) believed that each person met these needs in various and, sometimes, misunderstood ways. This study attempted to understand if and how console-based video games fulfill these four basic psychological needs for gamers around the world.

This study is needed to help understand how console-based video games are perceived and understood by people who engage with them in relation choice theory. Stuart (2013) explained that adults engage in video games for a myriad of reasons similar to the reasons people engage in other hobbies or pastimes. It has been argued that the American mainstream population has viewed, incorrectly, that video games are strictly
children's toys and thus have no place in an adult's life (Bissell, 2011; Donovan, 2010; Ipsos MediaCT, 2014; Kent, 2001; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Stuart, 2012, 2013).

Through the research questions of this study, an understanding of how adults viewed their video game engagement through the lens of choice theory's four basic psychological needs was gained (Glasser, 1998). The participants were interviewed for this study to capture experiences, examine perceptions, and explore the meaning behind their video game engagement. Counselors are always looking to understand clients' quality worlds more clearly. Through this study's data, it is hoped that counselors can glean new ways to approach and understand clients who engage in this activity and how they meet their needs. Ultimately, the results may be able to inform discussion and practice of counseling with populations similar to this study's sample.

Summary

At the core of choice theory are two concepts. The first concept is the basic psychological needs of a person; love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun/pleasure. The second concept is the acknowledgment of clients that they have choices in their life. Choice theory and its counseling component, reality therapy, place the client firmly in the role of action. Reality therapy focuses on how clients can meet their basic needs through their own choices and behavior. Console-based video games function in a similar way requiring the player to make choices and initiate behavior (Bissell, 2011; Glasser, 1965, 1980, 1989, 1998; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011). When a person chooses to engage in console-based video games they are choosing to be challenged. Fundamentally, video games function on the concept of choice. A video game only progresses as the player navigates decisions within the video game world. Depending on the game, players will engage in a sliding scale of choices, from a direction to walk in to morality-based decisions. It is these choices that offer a connection to that of choice theory and how people choose to satisfy their wants and goals (Bissell, 2011; Glasser, 1998, 2000; Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011).

The task of this review of literature was to examine the previous literature of console-based video games and choice theory. Choice theory has evolved to incorporate how people continue to meet their basic needs within their lives. Thus with the popularity and continued engagement with console-based video games, choice theory will be used as a filter to understand why and how people understand their experience with console-based video games (Glasser, 1998).

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This study sought to understand how players make meaning out of engaging in the digital and real world of console-based video game culture. This study attempted to generate an understanding of the patterns of the gamers' basic needs and how console-based video games fulfill those needs for players.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand how the four basic psychological needs of choice theory (love/belonging, power, freedom, fun) are possibly being met by console-based video game players.

Research Question #1: What are the experiences of console-based video game players relative to choice theory's four basic psychological needs?

Research Question #2: How do console-based video game players make meaning of choice theory's four basic psychological needs while engaging in video game experience?

Research Question #3: What are console-based video games players' perspectives on video game culture in context of the four basic psychological needs?

Rationale and Description of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

When conducting an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study, the researcher is looking for the essence and meaning underlying the phenomenon being studied (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The intent is to understand the lived experiences of those who are engaged in an activity or lifestyle that is to be studied. The

purpose of this methodology is to give readers a picture inside the participants' lives and thus understand how they construct meaning of their experiences (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999).

According to choice theory's basic needs, people make decisions based on what they believe will meet their needs in the best possible way. These decisions outline how the quality world of each person is created and sustained (Glasser, 1998). Glasser suggested when clients come into counseling, they are trying to understand why their relationships are poor or absent and which basic needs are lacking in their lives. He noted that counselors work with clients to try to interpret and understand their perspective and ultimately guide clients toward a place of wellness. By using interpretative phenomenological analysis, the same type of understanding can be done with participants.

Smith and Osborn (2008) explained that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is connected intellectually to hermeneutics, the study of interpretation. Specifically, IPA was used in this study due to its focus on perception and interpretation surrounding participants' understanding of their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). For this study, the experiences are rooted in their console-based video engagement. Smith and Osborn (2008) commented that all types of human experience are intricate in their construction and thus require a rigorous analysis of participants' data as the best attempt to interpret their experiences. IPA methodology was used because of its focus on in-depth examination of participants' broad understanding of their own experiences. Jin (2010) suggested that current video game play is a complex issue concerning how identity is understood in the digital world relative to how players understand themselves in the real world. Furthermore, Wubbolding (2000) commented that choice theory's basic needs are varied and are fulfilled in a myriad of different ways. To explain this phenomenon, Markus and Kunda (1986) created the term "malleable self" to explain how people interpret their identity and needs in various places outside of their own consciousness. McGonigal (2011) pointed out that many people engage in video games to find an environment where their identity can be changed and manipulated to suit real world needs that gamers are possibly lacking.

To study how video game players perceive the possible connections between console-based video game play and need fulfillment, a complex qualitative analysis of their experiences has been employed. IPA was chosen for this study based on the characteristics of in-depth interpretation of meaning making, staunch analysis of the data, and detailed investigation into perception of decisions by participants (Smith et al., 2009).

Participants

In this study, 11 participants were chosen for one-on-one interviews. The participants were over the age of 18. The participants currently engaged in console-based video games. They were within the geographical area available to the researcher and were amenable to be interviewed for the research study. The participants in this study were chosen by age because the average age of a console-based video game player is 31

years old (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014) and several mental health diagnoses have an observed onset after the age of 18 (NIMH, n.d.).

Participants needed to meet the following basic criteria: (a) participants must engage in console-based video games (as defined by engaging with the Sony PlayStation console series, Microsoft Xbox console series, or the Nintendo Wii console series); (b) participants must be able to reflect on their experience and meaning of their engagement with console-based video games; (c) participants must be able to articulate their experience that allowed the researcher to understand how the console-based video game play affects their real life behavior, feelings, and thoughts.

Procedures

This section includes the following procedures: (a) procedures for gathering participants, (b) participant descriptions, (c) arranging interviews, and (d) data collection and analysis. The first segment concentrates on the gathering and sampling of participants.

Selecting Participants and Organizing Interviews

Smith and Osborn (2008) recommended sample sizes for an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study should be relative to the needs of each study. They suggested a sample of four and 10 participants is generally an adequate number to achieve a rich data set. The authors explained that because of the idiographic nature of IPA, researchers should be focusing on a small but in-depth set of experiences. By moving towards a sample that is largely homogenous, consistent themes can be derived from the participants' experiences and inform more precise outcome data. For the purpose of this study 11 participants were recruited using aspects of two different purposeful sampling methods: (a) intensity sampling, which describes participants who are able and willing to give information-rich descriptions of their experiences; and (b) criterion sampling, the process of selecting participants who meet certain parameters as prescribed by the purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). The participants had to be willing and able to conduct an in-person or Skype Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) interview with the researcher.

Skype VoIP is a software program that allows two people to video conference between two different locations through the program's software via the Internet. The Skype software was deemed appropriate to use for this study by conducting research and finding literature that supported the use of Skype as a trustworthy and applicable tool for interviewing participants. Sullivan (2012) and Hanna (2012) explained that as qualitative researchers we can never truly know if a participant chooses to tell the truth. Qualitative researchers accept the perspectives and experiences of participants as they explain it. This concept is salient whether the interview is done over the Internet or in-person.

Additionally, as opposed to using a telephone for interviews, Skype type software allows the researcher and participant to see each other and thus have visual contact. By having these visual stimuli, the interview is more closely similar to an in-person interview. The participants also agreed to be contacted by email to conduct member checking on data gathered in the interview.

Participants were identified in two ways: (a) by a flyer posted in Kent State University buildings (refer to Appendix E) and (b) by snowball or chain sampling. The flyer was posted at the following Kent State University academic buildings: White Hall, Cartwright Hall, Moulton Hall, Mathematics and Computer Science Building, and Merrill Hall. These buildings were chosen because they have locations within the building to post flyers and house academic colleges that have graduate programs. University buildings were chosen because they typically contain students over the age of 18, thus possibly meeting criteria for participation.

The flyers described the criteria for participation. Anyone who wanted to participate contacted the researcher via email. The participants' emails were replied to by the researcher to confirm the participant met the appropriate criteria and to inquire about possible interview times. Email was used to establish a mutually agreeable interview time.

To supplement recruiting participants via flyers, snowball or chain sampling was used. Snowball or chain sampling is using current participants to find more participants (Noy, 2006). The researcher then reached out to possible participants via an email (Appendix F). The email included the researcher's full name, credentials, a synopsis of the study, and how the person's information was collected. The flyer was included as an attachment and if the potential participants were interested in the study they replied with their interest. The researcher scheduled a meeting for the interview.

Interviews were conducted in library group rooms at various locations or through Skype Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The Kent State Library was used for interviews along with other libraries when the participant could not be interviewed in Kent. Skype was used when the participant could not meet at a particular location with the researcher for scheduling purposes. The researcher and participant communicated through email to find a suitable room (if necessary) for the interview. The rooms that were used for interviews provided confidentially, and a quiet, distraction free space. If the interview was done via Skype, the rooms used in both locations offered confidentially and a quiet space for accurate recording and comfort.

These rooms were reserved through the respective library's websites. The participants were informed of the time and location of room where the interview would take place. Participants were reminded that they could contact the researcher at any time regarding schedule changes, questions about the study, or if they did not want to participate in the study.

Participant Descriptions and Demographic Data

Arthur. Arthur was a 28-year-old Caucasian male who obtained a graduate school degree. He was married and was expecting his first child. He was a full-time student and played between 4–6 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred adventure and role-playing games.

Brinual. Brinual was a 29-year-old Caucasian female Master's degree graduate. She was single and had no children. She was employed and played between 10–15 hours of console-based video games a week. She preferred adventure and role-playing games.

Carl. Carl was a 29-year-old Caucasian male college graduate. He was single and had no children. He was employed and played less than 4 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred adventure and role-playing games.

Crash. Crash was a 21-year-old Caucasian male college student. He was a member of an unmarried couple and had no children. He was employed and played between 6–10 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, adventure, strategy, role-playing, and puzzle games.

Garth. Garth was a 27-year-old Caucasian male college graduate. He was single and had no children. He was employed, played between 6–10 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, adventure, and sports games.

Joel. Joel was a 20-year-old Caucasian male college student. He was single and had no children. He was employed and played between 4–6 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred adventure and role-playing games.

John. John was a 31-year-old Caucasian male college graduate. He was married and had no children. He was employed and played between 6–10 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, adventure, and sports games.

Moya. Moya was a 23-year-old Caucasian female college graduate. She was single and had no children. She was employed and played less than 4 hours of console-based video games a week. She preferred shooters and adventure games.

Peter. Peter was a 20-year-old Caucasian male college student. He was single and had no children. He played between 6–10 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, adventure, sports, and role-playing games.

Ryan. Ryan was a 32-year-old Caucasian male college graduate. He was married and was expecting his first child. He was employed and played between 4–6

hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, adventure, sports, and role-playing games.

Will. Will was a 21-year-old Caucasian male college student. He was single and had no children. He was employed and played less than 4 hours of console-based video games a week. He preferred shooters, strategy, and role-playing games.

Interviews

The interviews took place in April, May, June, and July of 2014. When participants arrived to the interview, they were greeted by the researcher and thanked for their participation in the study. At the start of the interview, the consent form (Appendix C) was reviewed with the participant; questions were answered and signed consent obtained.

Participants were given the opportunity to create a pseudonym that was used in the data reporting stage. If they did not wish to create a pseudonym, the researcher did so. Participants then completed a demographic sheet (Appendix A) of questions similar to the questions asked in the United States Census. The demographics sheet included two questions regarding the participants' gameplay habits. At this point, the interview questions (Appendix B) were asked. When the questions were answered, the interview ended and the researcher informed the participant that once the interview was transcribed, an email would be sent for him or her to review.

A digital voice recorder was used to record the participants' interviews. A back-up recorder was also used in case of human, digital, or recorder malfunctions.

There was one scheduled interview for each participant, lasting approximately 40–90 minutes.

My presence with the participants had potential to improve and better their lives by helping them make sense of their video game engagement. However, these interviews also had potential to open up feelings and thoughts regarding their video game engagement and make links to uncomfortable situations in the participants' lives. Because the purpose of the study was to understand meaning and the essence of console-based video game engagement, it was possible that the participants had significant feelings and meaning attached to their game play. For this reason, I explained all the risks described in this section to each participant before their interview. Additionally, the risks outlined in this section were also addressed in the written consent form. Each participant was offered a mental health contact card with resources if they desired.

Data Handling

The data were transferred from the recording device to the researcher owned external hard drive and was password-protected. Additionally, it was kept in a locked container where only the researcher was able to access the hard drive. As the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the data. The computer was password- protected and had a fully updated computer security suite installed. The transcription process was done using Microsoft Word[©] computer program. The hard drive was only taken out of the locked container for transcription and analysis of data to occur. Once transcribed the data were saved to the external hard drive. When not in use, the external hard drive was locked in the container until it was needed again for analysis of the data.

A member checking email (Appendix G) was sent to participants with a transcription of the interview. This member checking email and transcript process was agreed to by each participant on the consent form each of them signed before the interview. The transcription email functioned as member checking with the purpose of the participants to add information to their data set if they chose. If the participants wanted to add information to the data set, they were instructed to reply to the email with their intention to schedule another interview. None of the participants elected to add information to the data set after their respective interviews.

A data-oriented audit trail was completed by recording thoughts and ideas throughout the process of the interviews. The audit trail journal was locked in the same container as the external hard drive. An audit trail recording journal is important for ethical concerns, as it showed how data were obtained in interviews and during any contact with participants after member checking (Schram, 2006).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using two forms of data analysis, Typological Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Used in conjunction, these two types of data analysis informed the procedures in which the researcher reviewed and constructed themes and patterns from the data. Interview data were read and shortened into smaller bits of information that were used as themes developed and placed under categories. This process kept the authenticity of the meaning but dissected the data down into smaller more clear pieces. These pieces were then used to support each respective category that each theme was most related to for the purposes of the study.

Typological Analysis

Typological Analysis is a form of data analysis that concentrates on the collective reflections and experiences of the participants' data within a set of categories that are present via theory or research questions. This is done to find the underlying meaning of the phenomenon being studied within the constructs being studied, in this case, the four psychological basic needs of choice theory (Glasser, 1998; Hatch, 2002; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This study included categories as typologies to be examined. The themes represented are four of the five basic needs as described in the counseling theory, choice theory. Each typology represented an area where themes were generated from the participants' interviews (Hatch, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Each typology and subsequent theme created represented a connection from the console-based video game experience and how they intersected with the four basic psychological needs of choice theory.

Typological analysis is similar to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) because of its rigorous attention to detail in the participants' data. Assigning typological categories and themes are two separate ideas within the structure of qualitative data analysis. Categories are described by Rossman and Rallis (2003) as structured place markers that act as concrete guides for the data. In this study, categories were generated using literature from choice theory (Glasser, 1998). The categories functioned as a

roadmap where themes were placed, as they are uncovered through data analysis of interviews of the participants.

Patton (2002) discussed the strategy called "analyst-constructed categories" which is a form of classification schemes referenced as a typological category. These categories did not lead the analysis portion of the study but helped guide themes that were inductively created and pushed further exploration opportunities to ask questions of the data and reach deeper into the meaning of the data (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Interpretative Phenomenological Data Analysis

In using the interpretative phenomenological analysis method, Smith and Osborn (2008) explained that the researcher engages with the data transcripts in an interpretive way to create themes (Table 1).

Interpretative phenomenological data analysis involves intensive reading to find in-depth meaning in the data that is not apparent from a cursory review. Additionally, IPA was used to delineate the themes that do not fit into choice theory's four basic psychological needs represented in this study as typologies (Glasser, 1998; Smith et al., 2009).

Choice theory's four basic psychological needs: (a) love/belonging, (b) power, (c) freedom, and (d) fun/pleasure were used as a deductive form of analysis of data. Strictly speaking, interpretative phenomenological research tends to steer away from deductive analysis because the aim is to understand a personal or group lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). This goal could be compromised if steps are not clearly laid out as to why and how data will be collected and analyzed.

Table 1

Data Analysis Steps

Analysis Concepts	Description
Reading and re- reading	Listen to interview recording while reading transcript. Record important, powerful, or noteworthy thoughts during this process. This is done by reading each line of text and analyzing what each word, phrase or sentence means to me as the researcher and to the participant. Words, phrases or sections will be underlined and referenced in the sidebar of the transcript to highlight possibly important pieces of data.
Initial noting	Note items of particular interest especially in regards to how the participant talks, thinks, and understands the topic.
Descriptive comments	Comments are noted revolving around the descriptive meaning that the participants explain in the interview. Examples include discussion of events, places, relationships, and values from the participant's perspective.
Linguistic comments	The transcript will be analyzed to interpret how language is used to describe their life world. Through this, abstract concepts will begin to emerge from the data. This includes non-verbals such as pauses, laughter, tone, repetition, and speed of talking.
Conceptual comments	This level of annotation is focused on over-arching concepts of the participant's viewpoint and understanding of the topic. This portion of the analysis process is concentrated on general meaning rather than descriptive speech. Notes will be taken diligently on the transcript and journal, as with the previous sections, for the purpose of delineating a path from the raw data, which can be traced back to when working with conceptual ideas.
Emerging Themes	Interpretation of the participants' words and meaning will lead to themes in the data. The themes should represent a complete and consistent essence of each of the participant's data. Themes will then be listed on a separate Word [©] document. Themes will be analyzed for relatedness and clustered as such using the Abstraction process.
Abstraction	Abstraction is done by deciphering patterns between emergent themes and linking abstract thoughts into a typology/super-ordinate theme. Choice theory's four basic psychological needs will function as super-ordinate themes/typologies. The themes generated from the transcript data will be examined to see if they fit in any of the choice theory super-ordinate themes. If they do not fit in these themes, a new super-ordinate/typology theme will be created.
Patterns across cases	This level of analysis focuses on possible connections or patterns between participants' data. In this stage, themes may be re-configured due to reflections across the cases.

Note. Adapted from "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research," by J. A. Smith, P. Flowers, and M. Larkin, 2009, London: Sage.

The themes describe a more abstract and subtle form of data organization that develops after interviews are conducted. Themes are created through intensive analysis of the data and emerge out of combination of thoughtful reflection and consideration for the context of the participants' lived experience (Smith et al., 1999). This data analysis is different from other types of analysis because IPA works on several layers of analysis. The researcher uses IPA to not only understand the experience but also the perception of the experience and what the experience means to each participant (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith and Osborn (2008) explained that theme generation requires a focus and dedication to the data in order to describe accurately the phenomenon that is being expressed by the participant. Referral to the data in its raw form is expected, as themes will need to be continually traced back to the participants' words and experiences. Themes, in this context, are series of thoughts, experiences, or phenomenon that happens in a collective pattern (Smith et al., 2009). By collecting information from participants and piecing together themes, the researcher can understand how the phenomenon fits into the participants' lives (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

By using the interpretative phenomenological method, this research attempted to uncover meaning behind console-based video game play through the lens of choice theory's four psychological basic needs. By balancing non-judgment and non-bias with thoughtful and reflective data analysis procedures, the researcher was able to create an effective pattern for trustworthy themes and data reporting through the typological and interpretative phenomenological analysis methods (Hatch, 2002; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Smith et al., 2009).

Steps in Overall Data Analysis Process

This section details the data analysis process, from the beginning of the interviews until the results section written by the researcher.

- 1. Gathered data through semi-structured interviews of the participants.
- 2. Wrote down impressions of the interviews in recording journal. This served as a data audit trail of the data collected and how the research questions were being answered was reflected upon while reviewing the recorded data.
- 3. The researcher transcribed interviews.
- 4. Each interview data set was read as a whole, and memos were recorded from global perspective. Specifically, notes were written on the sidebar of the transcripts to highlight particular phrases, thoughts, and perceptions of the participants. These notes would start the process of forming themes within the data to then be applied, as appropriate, to the super-ordinate themes of love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun/pleasure.
- 5. Contacted participants with member checking transcript email. If necessary, the researcher would have conducted a follow up interview to gather additional data from the respective participant. Received notice from each participant that he or she approved of each the data sets.
- 6. Re-read data and noted responses on the sidebar of the page. These notes were reflected upon and in accordance to the content and meaning the participants explained in the interviews. This process is the IPA component. By analyzing the data in this way, meaning and themes emerged from the

participants' experiences. After the data were thoroughly re-read and noted, the process of analyzing the data from the Typological data analysis methodology was conducted. Themes were then categorized by typologies/super-ordinate themes, the four basic psychological needs of choice theory. Themes that did not fit into the four basic needs were created as additional super-ordinate themes and presented as such in the results section with explanation of why they did not go into any of the typologies. A detailed description of the data analyzing process is reported in Table 1.

- Went back through the data with the memos and codes to contextualize and re-affirm the meaning and essence of the themes and codes for the participants.
- 8. A professional peer of the researcher, Dr. Randy Moate, reviewed the themes, general results, procedures, and data for trustworthiness.
- 9. Reported the data through themes generated and how they relate to choice theory's four basic psychological needs typologies.

Bracketing Prior Experience

In this research study, participants gave their interpretations of meaning associated with the basic needs of choice theory and their experiences of console-based video game engagement (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000). Growing up in video game culture, my personal view is that there are numerous aspects, feelings, and meanings related to video games and how they connect those who engage in them. During the interviews I disclosed that I do play console-based video games and have for nearly all my life. This disclosure was done to communicate to the participants that I understood a majority of the jargon and culture of video game engagement. A secondary reason was to build trust with the participant. The hope was that the participants took relief that I was of a similar ilk to them and thus they could be free to expand on their experiences without being judged.

However, due to my experience in the counseling field, I was aware of the position of power I had and my presentation of self during the interviews. Professional interactions where one of the parties holds the position of power, in this case, the researcher, can influence the data being collected. Thus the implication is that they have the power to control the situation and interview. Researchers must always be cognizant of their personal views and how or why they choose to focus on certain information (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Smith and Osborn (2008) pointed out that when studying a social phenomenon, it is impossible to become fully detached from the knowledge being gained. Furthermore, the ability to be reflexive of the impact that the researcher has on the topic and gained knowledge is linked to the very aptitude to detect the knowledge and meaning from the participant. In a way, the two are inseparable and should be taken into account when analyzing data. I gained rapport with the participants but also knew my role as a researcher as to not bias my data. Ultimately, I balanced the stance of gaining trust but also sustained my objective stance to gain the best data I could on the subject. I was able to do this by limiting my empathic responses that came naturally to me being a counselor. There were times in the interviews where the participants were having emotional response to games or game characters and I stayed neutral in my replies. In this scenario I was generally more objective in my responses by not suggesting experiences.

The possibility of asking questions of meaning presents the possible occurrence of sensitive data that was not expected. As a counselor researcher, I presented clear boundaries and safeguards from the outset and reminded the participants of these boundaries as I conducted research. This was done by me explaining the role of being a researcher and collecting experiences and meaning but not assessing or commenting on the experiences. This was different than my role as a counselor where I would be able to process through issues or experiences with clients. This was relevant in the discussion of having a clear informed consent of the study for the participants. While the beginning and middle stages have important ethical obligations, I was aware of how to end my relationship with participants (Schram, 2006).

Regarding the topic of disengaging, I was clear at the beginning of the research of how I expected the process to go and was also open that some of the goals may change slightly as the study progressed. As participants reacted differently to my presence and researching, I attempted to adapt to the varying degrees of disengagement as the study concluded.

Gaining Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, certain actions and processes were done to make sure that the data and impressions recorded and interpreted were accurate with the participants' lived experiences. Three specific techniques were used to solidify trustworthiness: (a) member checking, (b) peer review, and (c) a data audit trail. Member checking is the process of transcribing and evaluating data, then allowing the participants to review the transcription and deem it correct from their perspective. This process is done to allow the participants the opportunity to correct any wording or thought processes that they believe was incorrectly recorded or said by themselves. After this practice has been completed, the data were considered to be accurate from the standpoint of the participants and ready to be evaluated by the researcher.

Peer review is the process of using a colleague of the researcher (who is not connected to the study) to confirm that the data, coding, themes, and impressions were done in an appropriate way as dictated in the procedures of the study. Dr. Randy Moate, a professional colleague, was chosen as the peer reviewer of this study. Dr. Moate was familiar with phenomenological research, console-based video game culture, and is licensed as Professional Counselor.

A data audit trail was employed to show thoughts from the researcher and how they were linked to the interpretative phenomenological and typological data analysis (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). The data-oriented audit trail was done by writing in a data journal throughout the process of the study. Notes were written in this journal during the interview and during each phase of the data collection and data analysis stages. This was done to trace back thoughts and connections from the researcher so other researchers would be able to see how themes were created and molded with the data.

An additional trustworthiness aspect of interpretive phenomenology is epoché. It is the idea that researchers must be able to detach themselves from bias, impressions, and ideas that may influence the collection, interpretation, and reporting of data (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007; Schram, 2006). A process used to try accomplishing epoché, is Reflexivity. Reflexivity is a way of bracketing personal values that a researcher may have regarding the topic. The goal is to temporarily put up mental barriers so past experiences and bias will not degrade or affect the data within a study (Goodall, 2000; Schram, 2006).

I as the researcher did this by reflecting on my own experiences before the interviews and recording my feelings on the questions that would be asked during the interview. I then made a conscious effort to not relay my experience before the participants explained their point of view or experiences on the questions. If I felt a self-disclosure after they alluded to an experience could build trust and they would expand on the experience and the meaning they felt from it, I would only then relay my personal thoughts on the topic. In this way I was able to process topics with the participants without influencing their experience.

Delimitations

This study focused on 11 participants ages 18 and over. By restricting the age range, the study was bound by the experiences within that scope. For some gamers, their engagement in the console-based video games may have changed from meeting this requirement in the recent past to having different responsibilities and not being able to meet the qualification now. This would inhibit their experiences that could have been beneficial to the study. Furthermore, by only allowing gamers who engage with video games through console-based systems, it excludes those gamers who focus on computer gaming. By doing this, the study would not gather any information from the computer gamer population.

A phenomenological study has an inherent lack of generalization characteristic. The researcher could have used an email method of interviewing participants, who would have returned answers to the questions via email; however in-person and Skype interviews were used to facilitate more clear language and observe non-verbal communication as a way to get richer data set. Further research can expand the methodology and research scope of the topic by way of more participants, additional researchers, and an expanded sample of participants.

Summary

Through this study, the researcher attempted to uncover data regarding the connection between choice theory, reality therapy, and console-based video game culture. The subject has been chosen due to its potential to add to counseling research literature. By doing a phenomenological study, the expectation was to understand a variety of meanings and essences of the participants. It is assumed and hoped that a vast and varied set of experiences was gathered to form a data set that explained how these participant gamers made sense of their four psychological basic needs as suggested in choice theory (Glasser, 1998) relative to their feelings and emotions playing console-based video games.

The digital realm is consistently becoming pervasive in every corner of our lives (Brown, 2008; McGonigal, 2011; Newman, 2004). It stands to reason that counselors should take note and understand how participation in digital realms affects clients. By

understanding console-based video game engagement and how it meets needs in persons' lives, counselors can formulate ideas and interventions that speak to video gamers (Glasser, 1965, 1998; Juul, 2005; McGonigal, 2011; Newman, 2004; Wubbolding, 1991, 2000).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Introduction

The following chapter details the results of the 11 participants' interview data. The first heading reviews the research questions of this study. The second section of the results chapter explores the words, phrases, and meaning that made up the information reported by the participants. The interviews were listened to, transcribed, and read through to discover themes in the data from each participant and also across participants. The end result of this data analysis is the following chapter, including overarching themes and sub-themes, which attempt to group the information in a way that not only reflects the participants' voices but also reflects the meaning of their experiences through their words.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand how the four basic psychological needs of choice theory (love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun) are possibly being met by console-based video game players. The results section details the various themes that were discovered from the experiences of the participants. The themes in this chapter outline the various data that attempts to answer the following research questions.

Research Question #1: What are the experiences of console-based video game players relative to choice theory's four basic psychological needs?

Research Question #2: How do console-based video game players make meaning of choice theory's four basic psychological needs while engaging in video game experience?

Research Question #3: What are console-based video games players' perspectives on video game culture in context of the four basic psychological needs?

Themes

The first theme that is detailed is social excerpts from the participants. Within the major social theme, three sub-themes emerged from the data: (a) family, (b) friends, and (c) connections to characters. This theme outlines data related to relationships that the players developed within console-based video game engagement. The second major theme is challenges. Under challenges, two sub-themes developed from the data. These sub-themes are: (a) accomplishment and self-worth and (b) competition. This theme details how players make meaning of obstacles and the personal results from the challenges. The third major theme that emerged from the data was distress tolerance. Under distress tolerance, two sub-themes emerged: (a) relaxation and (b) coping mechanisms. This theme specifies how players understood their own modes for tolerating concerns in their life as it related to their gameplay. The fourth major theme that arose from the data was gamer regret. This theme outlines how some players see their gameplay in a negative way. The fifth major theme that occurred from the data was choices. Under choice, two sub-themes emerged: (a) sense of control and (b) safe place for experimentation. This theme details the understanding that the players had of autonomy within console-based video game experience.

Social

Participants suggested that social interaction is an integral component to video game engagement. Participants commented on the social interaction that occurred in various capacities from being in the same room and engaging with others to playing through the Internet with other gamers across the world. Within these contexts the participants noted that their experiences were shared with not only peers but family as well. Indeed, several of the participants commented that they started playing video games due to family members being interested in the same activity. Between playing with family, friends, and strangers, participants explained several different types of experiences that made up the social component of console-based video gameplay. The following sections tease out the different themes that emerged through the participants' interviews.

Family. Participants noted that their family members played a role in the beginning phases of their video game engagement. Some participants explained that their family members presented them with their first social experience with consoles. In all cases, participants commented that their family members provided a positive experience. Because of this positive influence, all the participants continued playing into their teen and adult years. The following data explains the varying experiences that each member had with their family members and how console-based video games were involved in the experience.

Will, a participant who played video games with his sister frequently, commented on exploring life consequences mutually with her and the effect this had on his viewpoint of life and the consequences of choices:

Yeah that was my sister and I . . . we played a lot of games that we were both interested in, so we played the Sims, Pokemon Stadium, [it] was fun for both of us . . . my sister and I played The Sims a lot . . . as younger children we would create stories for, essentially we would play house with Legos. So that actually translated very well into The Sims. Because we got to then control people's lives, the same way we did in our imaginations. But these had actual effects and successes and failures in them. So it was interesting to see the ramifications of our actions and see that teaching life experience from that.

Will's experience suggested that children could possibly learn social skills from a video game environment. This excerpt also alluded to the transition of physical play with Legos into digital play.

Arthur recounted how his first social experience with video games was also his first memory of his family. This experience also gave him a positive orientation to video games from trusted sources, his family:

And my parents were the first people in my life to do console gaming. The earliest memory I have is sitting down with my father playing Dragon Warrior. I couldn't have been more than six years old and just getting to explore the world with him and explore the dynamics of how to play that game. Learning about the enemies in the world that we were fighting against and helping him navigate that world. [It] was a good experience, a fond memory.

Arthur's experience recounted a fond memory of his father and is rooted in family interaction beyond that of the video game experience. Other participants remembered pleasant experiences when family roles and obligations crossed over like babysitting. Joel remembered, "I would say I was five years old maybe. My cousins who used to babysit me a lot had a Super Nintendo." Peter had a similar experience with family members supervising him:

I don't remember how old I was . . . I'd play those a lot with my brother. The first game we played a lot of was Mario Kart. So there was a lot of that every time he would babysit me, we'd play Mario Kart. My sister would play Mario Kart with us a lot.

Arthur explained that video games allowed him to connect with a family member in a way not many other activities could have and this allowed him to understand his family member better and in away he did not believe he could have in other situations:

The other memory I have is playing video games with my cousin. He was 10 years older than me but he had a mild developmental delay. And so playing video games with him as an equal . . . Getting to compete with him but at the same time, just get to know him. It was really the only way I spend time with him.

Crash also said he bonded with his nephew playing together on the same game. "Once I got older I would play with my nephew, he's actually older than me. We would play a lot of co-op games together." The excerpts seemed to indicate a core value of positive family interaction with video games serving as an underlying factor in these cases. It seemed that the console-based video games served as a conduit in which different family members were able to gather around and be equals or competitive depending on the situation. Because of the nature of games where new identities could be forged, it seemed that this opportunity suited family members to show new worlds and relationships to each other. Parent interactions suggested that the parents used the games as a way to teach and bond with their children. Despite these positive interactions, it seems that like other activities, children tend to outgrow spending time with their parents in favor of connecting with peers.

Friends. While many of the participants noted the family ties to their early gaming years, all of the participants noted that the majority of their social involvement while engaging in console video games was with their friends. Participants discussed how friends overtook family. Garth commented on the transition from family to peers:

Now I play a lot more with my friends. There for a while I would play with my cousin when he would come over and play with us during the summertime. But for the most part it's mainly just been friends.

Crash commented on his gaming peers: "I don't play with my family at all. I play with my friends all the time." Joel commented on the move from childhood into adulthood playing experience; "When I was younger, preteen and early teenagers, my neighbor Rob, I go over to his house and will play games." Arthur discussed how, even with his fond memories playing with his father, their video game playing decreased and thus aided in the transition of playing from family to friends:

As I got older . . . my father [tried] to keep up but his interests were in other areas and he got busy with work and we spent time doing other things besides video games . . . he got to a point where I was just beating him handily and it was not fun for him and not fun for me. And so our interest really diverged.

While family represented a starting point for several of the participants, social interaction with friends was a consistent presence in the participants' experiences. Some of the participants explained that video games offered a place where their friends would meet up and be together. Arthur commented, "I remember playing Goldeneye[,] a Nintendo 64 [game], for hours with friends. It was a really fun thing to do, after school just go over and play a billion rounds of Goldeneye." Carl explained that his personal social gaming component transition from family to friends happened when he was older:

It changed in college, it was more of a social thing in college. When we're just kind of putzing around the dorm with nothing to do, let's go play some Smash Bros., so I have fond memories of that.

The experience of playing with friends seemed to fill different needs than playing with family when the participants were younger. When the participants commented on their experience of playing with peers, the meaning of the interaction seemed to change from learning and exploration to a purely social interaction where the actual gameplay was less important as opposed to spending time with friends. This seems to change as the participants grow older, as is discussed later in the data exploration. When the participants first transitioned into experiences with peers more so than family, time together seemed to take precedence. The meaning of the experience suggested the social interaction in real-life, whether it was in-person or in voice over the Internet, was the most sought after need rather than deriving meaning from the gameplay. This seemed to be also evident when two participants discussed playing with their significant others.

While not as common as engaging with peers from this data set, two participants commented on playing console-based video games with their romantic partners. Their discussion of the practice was relatively short, but was directly brought up by the participants and was suggested that it was rare to find a partner who played games as well and was an important factor in the relationship. Carl reported that his gaming was pervasive into his dating life, "I was dating a girl who was big into Dr. Mario. We mostly played a lot together for a while, when I dated her." Crash also mentioned playing with his significant other and how they bonded through the process:

I'll try to play video games with my girlfriend sometimes . . . It's just interesting. She dies a bunch, so you usually have to do the easier levels. But it's still fun because it's my girlfriend and it's something I like to do. So it's fun to sit down and play video games with her even if she is bad.

The previous data detailed experiences related to whom the participants chose to play with during their video game engagement. However, a few of the participants commented on how they engaged with others. In-person playing usually involves having one or more physical video game consoles and physical controllers for at least most of the players in the room. Video games such as the original Nintendo and others only had two slots for controllers. Trading off or sharing between players was the only way you could play with another person. The Internet changed this aspect because with current generation game consoles, depending on the game, a player can log in online and play either real-life friends or strangers playing the same game. Participants commented on the difference between playing in-person together and playing online. Garth explained his view of playing in-person compared to online gaming with friends:

So definitely I think in person is a lot better, than just talking through a headset. We like to joke around and you can kind of tell facial expressions, if someone [is] having a good time you can kind of get the vibe from them in person . . . Just the whole atmosphere of it too. Yeah, some of my fondest memories of gaming were playing Halo 2, well, Halo before it was online, having everyone together.

This experience of playing together seemed to mean that participants preferred to see interactions and "feel" them rather than just hear the person's voice over the headset.

Carl reported that most of his social experiences were rooted in face-to-face games:

Rock Band was always a great social game . . . it's a lot of fun, just, everyone is clearly working towards, on the same thing at the same time. There's comradery and friendship and social interaction and all that stuff; it was all pulled in. As well as the experience of playing video games and which if you enjoy that and if you combine that with actually being social then it's kind of a win-win there. So you graduate college and everybody spreads out, you can get together and play Halo or play Rock Band or whatever.

Carl seemed to hit on the fact that comradery was an important factor in the gameplay, that playing together in a room represented a difference in how people played the game. As if, when others were in the same room, it pushed a player to do better via possible peer pressure or a desire to perform when in the direct presence of others. He alluded to the fact that this created a sense of elation when accomplishment did happen however, producing more intense feelings of joy and pride than would have been over a headset.

Despite most of the participants preferring to play in the real life company of their peers, one of the participants explained how the online component was not only convenient but provided a different sort of experience. Brinual commented on the opportunity for players to go online to obtain social contact:

You could reach out and talk to someone if it's a game and you could talk to someone . . . in a way that wouldn't be able to in real life . . . you just want to be able to hang out with someone, an online game, for example, would be a really perfect way to hang out with someone because there's always going to be people all over the world in China or South Korea . . . who are always online playing the game . . . for a lot of people that are awkward, like me, that could be an easy way to make friends and have a connection with someone when you're in a place physically or emotionally where you can't really be hanging out or be connecting with someone. Brinual's comments suggested that while in-person playing was desired by most participants, for times when it was not feasible, console-based video games also offered the alternative of playing online with people, and with the ability to reach all parts of the world, social connection was almost always available. This suggested that video games could serve social needs on multiple levels. Whether it was in-person gameplay or when not convenient, online gameplay, there was practical means to gain social interaction.

Though whether or not it was online or in person, a couple participants went as far to say that their time playing video games with their friends was life changing. Will recounted that his life would be different without the influence of video games:

I guess without it though, I don't think I'd have as many friendships. I feel like a lot of them, if not built over video games, but fortified through video games. So a lot of my stronger friendships probably came from there. It [multiplayer] is a very social thing but at the same time the single player's also a very social experience. It's essentially the same as seeing a movie and talking about it. Peter also discussed how his entire social life experience would be different without video games through his development:

I definitely wouldn't have the same friend group that I have right now. We play games a lot and that's what brought us closer together as friends. And like, at the same time, I think it's really helped me maintain close friends because at the high school [level] I was really far away so we couldn't always go over to each other's houses and stuff. So we had to hang out over Xbox Live and that's how we had
fun. Yeah, it provided social media before Facebook and we can talk to each other and stuff and that was cool to do that after school.

Peter's experience suggested that video games, like other hobbies in which people engage, were instrumental in the creation of friendships and also maintaining them. Gaming in this context seems to allow those who engage in them the opportunity to connect with others around them as well as create new experiences while playing.

Connections to characters. While real-life friendships seemed to dominate the experiences of social contact within console-based video game engagement, some participants commented on the ability of in-game characters being able to act as social contact. While none of the participants explicitly stated that in-game characters could replace real-life friendships in totality, they did report that in certain situations, video game characters could temporarily fill the need for social contact. Brinual discussed how characters in games could be a substitute for social contact in real life when she was not willing to interact with people:

For me, being so introverted, it's like I had a conversation with a person, without actually having to have a conversation. I feel like I've been around people, like I'm not just some crazy old cat lady sitting alone . . . if you can stay in and play this game and ya know . . . feel like you're more . . . you're doing something more than just going out and talking to people and having an awkward conversation.

Some participants talked about how connecting with in-game characters created real social feelings for the digital characters. The participants commented that they were able to see themselves in a different social role than they had been able to in real life. This suggested that players were able to explore new parts of life not available to them in real-life. Crash stated he was able to understand a different perspective than he has ever had in real life:

And you kind of get at the start that you need to protect this girl. You just get that relationship as it evolves and you have to take care of Joel. It kind of made [me] feel like a father at that point. And they just care for each other. And that was, it was sad in a good way. It's [games] gotten good enough or you can actually relate to the character.

Though he also added that storyline was the most important factor for players to connect to in-game characters. "Even in an old game with bad graphics, as long as the story actually makes you feel for the characters, that's art."

A suggestion made by another participant discussed the possibility that games lose their ability to be impactful when the technology shows its age years after production. Crash's sentiments on the everlasting effects of story over graphics seemed to override the concerns of technological losses. Furthermore, the comment that relationships and character stories matter no matter the age suggests that quality writing and storytelling will always have a place for players to go back to regardless of the technology showing its age.

This seemed to be the case for Moya. She discussed relating to the in-game character's relationship that mirrored her real-life family. This prompted her to make an emotional connection to them. "In Infamous, they have a brother relationship where they are teasing each other and I can relate to that because I have three older sisters." For

Moya it seems that a connection to family was important and allowed her to transfer feelings she had for her sisters into the concept of the game's characters.

For other players though, the act of spending time with the game's characters and the environment had an impact on them psychologically. John felt connected to the characters by way of time invested with the storyline. He felt that because he spent so much time with the characters, he was able to better understand their storyline arc and how as the player controlling the character and having input on their decisions affected how he connected to the avatar's journey in the game:

So, I feel like if you're in control of the character . . . I think it could affect you . . . you spend so many hours playing a game. I think he can be more than a movie, but I think it [would] have to be really well done.

In all these scenarios, participants commented on how they saw their social involvement intertwining with console-based video game engagement. From early family involvement to an almost exclusive transition into playing with friends, each participant reported having a social aspect to their gameplay. In several cases, they explained that their console-based video game experiences transformed which friends they connected with and in some cases directly impacted their social circles. The following sections detail more specific themes that occurred throughout the participants' experiences.

Challenges

Participants talked about how console-based video games provided an activity that challenged them mentally and physically. Because these video games offered

challenges, participants noted that they also allowed for accomplishments to be had by players. Accomplishment was derived by players in video games in the form of individual accomplishment or in a group setting. Additionally, participants talked about the slim line between a challenging objective that can be achieved and task that is frustrating and unobtainable. Participants noted that if the objective was too difficult in their experience they discontinued playing and as a consequence forfeited the opportunity to experience accomplishment.

Accomplishment and self-worth. A majority of the participants recounted their experiences regarding accomplishment in console-based video games. This process ranged from feeling good overcoming an objective and beating a game, all the way to fulfilling a need for self-worth based on gaining confidence that they were able to achieve and complete an objective.

Moya discussed how she enjoyed the completion factor of accomplishment: "Whereas if I'm playing Uncharted or Infamous . . . I have something I'm working towards. Like, beating it." John felt this way as well; "I think rarely have I ever played the game and not beaten it. There's been a few that [I'll] start and never finish. But that's the other thing, if I start it, I want to finish it."

It seems that players enjoyed completion as a way to feel accomplishment but also pleasure. The participants yielded experiences of completing games as a challenge in itself that they alone took on as a challenge. Several of the participants commented that they knew no one was forcing them to take on these challenges or that they would feel shame to others if they did not complete the game. The need for this seemed to be intrinsic. The desire for accomplishment was inherent to the participants. They got no monetary reward for playing well and received no accolades from friends or family. The participants truly wanted to complete these games for an internal sense of accomplishment.

For others, different types of games yielded different feelings of accomplishment and challenge. Will explained how strategy games challenged him more than other types of games; "Strategy games and real-time strategy games specifically, are just more of a mental exercise than just running around." Moya recounted how video games offered challenges and thus the chance to feel accomplishment; "I like having something that challenges me. I like getting the sense of accomplishment . . . it's fun in the sense that if I can accomplish it, from it being challenging, then it was fun to me."

Joel spoke to the point of relishing in a triumphant moment. Similar to that of feats of competition, these video games allowed for opportunities to achieve and feel an intense level of pride in the accomplishment:

When you finally beat the boss, you get, you complete the puzzle you're having trouble with. You just get this really great relief. Like there's this weight lifted off your shoulder. When you're playing a game there's always the . . . you can fail at playing a game. That also gives you the ability to win at a game. So it just gives that great feeling of, "I could've failed at this, but I continued through it, push[ed] through it and conquered it."

Arthur related to this feeling as well: "You die over, over and over again, and eventually it feels really great when you succeed."

A couple participants explained that games have changed throughout the years and now offer more incentives to reach a goal, or simply adding more objectives and rewards to continued play. This seems to buck against the concept that players inherently chose challenges and instead need incentives to keep playing. But a few of the participants commented that the incentives did not replace the need to beat games just for the satisfaction but added a level of gratification. John talked about how achievements in the game offered a new level of enjoyment compared to games of the past: "nowadays there's achievements to unlock . . . I find that it adds a layer of enjoyment to it. I play Titanfall and I played every mode. But I did that because there's an achievement for it." This concept of achievements is not uncommon in games as Crash echoed the idea: "I like to get the trophies. Achievements for Xbox. It's just nice to have, you feel like you're achieving something . . . if I can get a trophy it just feels good. It feels nice."

Trophies and achievements would suggest that game producers have tried to balance the line of allowing inherent desire to complete tasks but also upping the ante and providing additional layers of completion. As the participants noted, they did not always play through games to "total completion." That is, finding all the hidden items, completing all the tasks, or trying all the sub-quests. It seemed that the participants were suggesting that having these achievements and trophies served as an adequate reward for completing the additional tasks. Ryan commented on new additions to video games and how that entices him to engage:

And I think, with video games are some amount of skills and strategy that you do need. I could just sit and watch a movie and not use my brain as much basically

versus a video game. I think they made it a little more fun in the newer Call of Dutys where there's more achievements in things, more statistics and more goals you can strive for.

Game developers seem to have found a suitable angle to entice players to play longer and in some instances, back through a game to collect or achieve at more tasks. Despite all these avenues to accomplishment, a few participants conceded that video game objectives, when not balanced correctly, can be too difficult. This imbalance created issues with the flow of the game and the players' willingness to continue playing. For some players it created a divide in how they enjoyed games. Garth recounted his experience of one of his favorite games but also how frustrating it was at times:

I know that Zelda was really fun and was really challenging. It wasn't just sitting down to occupy time; it was giving you a challenge and makes you think a little bit. Any game you play there some point where you get frustrated and you can't beat a part you just sit there and go at it for hours and hours and you beat it and it's like, the greatest feeling in the world sometimes [laughs]. You're like, gosh that took me forever to beat and I finally did it.

While Garth gained accomplishment from the difficult challenges he seems to tease that the extreme challenge made the reward that much more meaningful. Though, if the challenge was too great the player will give up completely. Brinual explained how a game that was frustrating to a point that it was impassable, ceased to be enjoyable:

Now I would say for me for it to be a favorite game of mine it can't be, too, too difficult . . . throw the controller like rage quite kind of a situation . . . whereas

other games from other countries make me, while they're difficult, they are not impassable so those for me tend to be more fun.

Carl had a similar viewpoint to Brinual regarding challenging goals in video games. He discussed how he wanted to enjoy a game but that the difficulty level was too hard and thus had a detrimental effect on his enjoyment and eventually the time invested in the game:

But I really like that Dragon Age 2: Origins game because it's really simple and easy to pick up. It was still challenging but easy to figure out what to do. I tried playing the, one of the Batman Arkham games. Insanely complex . . . I tried picking that game up like 4 or 5 times . . . I gave up on it. I like challenge. But I also like to be in control of the guy that I'm controlling. And if I can't figure out how to do the challenging thing, [it] just gets to be too much. So if I want to invest my time in it I want to enjoy it. I don't want to waste all my time being frustrated. But then you have to also know that you can get there so it's worth attempting to do it. The possibility that you'll beat it, rather than this is impossible, I'm never going to pick it up.

Carl described in more detail what certain games are composed of and why they may be asking too much from the player. He commented that if a game was too big or expansive it hindered his motivation to complete it and thus does not allow for accomplishment:

Because the problem with Skyrim and Oblivion . . . I've never beaten those games . . . 50 or 60 hours [laughs] . . . And I've kind of reached my saturation point with

this game. I'm never going to finish it but it was fun while I was playing it but I never got that sense of accomplishment that I would get from beating it like from some of the other more structured games.

Carl went on to describe his view of how game developers see the problem of frustration and obtainable goals:

So game designers are taking a lot of the stuff into account so they're trying to make games more accessible to everybody. They're figuring out what's frustrating people and removing that, and finding out what they enjoy and enhancing that stuff.

Though, while some games pushed participants away from the game because of the challenge, most of the participants emphasized that overcoming challenges was an innate component of console-based video games. Participants suggested that without the challenging aspect, games would cease to provide the same level of enjoyment or feeling of accomplishment. Carl summarized what he looks for in a game and how the sense of accomplishment is an important factor:

I don't know if fun is boiling it down too much. For me if it's fun it will be easier to play, it will look cool, it will have a good story, I'll get invested in the characters, it will be challenging. I want to achieve something, that sense of achievement is obviously one of the big things that draws people into play video games . . . 'Here go do this' then you did it, 'Hey, I did something. I was productive today.' Carl emphasized that while games are purely digital, the psychological gains of self-worth were palpable for him. This idea was echoed by other participants as they discussed how achieving something in video games also translated into a sense of self-worth that could be used in tandem with real-life accomplishments. Arthur explained how engagement in video games aided him in self-worth:

There's no ambiguity and the feedback is instantaneous. Getting a sense of mastery is something that I don't always get in my life [laughs]. It's that inputs and outcomes do not match in the real world [laughs] . . . like they do in a videogame. It's probably related [to] self-esteem. Yeah, just a sense that, "Okay, I can master something. I can pick up this game I've never played before and get really good at it. And maybe I'm not hopeless at this research stuff" [laughs].

Arthur's take on self-worth and mastery suggests that even though the rewards for in-game behavior are frequently only realized within that same gain, mastery, and confidence are transferable into a person's identity. Carl emphasized self-worth as a possible byproduct of overcoming challenges in video games:

You can get that sense of accomplishment, which you don't really get with other sources of media. Because you're actually accomplishing something. Even if it's fake, your mind still gets that sense of accomplishment. Of something worthwhile being done when you're feeling down.

Brinual commented that video games normalized her personality and made her feel that she didn't need to do activities she didn't want to do to feel self-worth: "I was, and am, pretty shy and introverted, so anything that could allow me to have fun and stay inside I would, like definitely, gravitate towards." Brinual further explained that through choices of the character's gender she was better able to relate and thus feel she was actually a part of the accomplishment process rather than through a different gender:

With Mass Effect partly because they allow you to choose if you want the main character to be a female or male, for me being female it kind of helps me put myself in Commander Shepard's role . . . you can just get into it more when you can kind of, see yourself as that person.

Brinual stated that by being able to achieve within the context of her own gender made the achievement more meaningful because the experience was closer to her identity. The ultimate feeling of self-worth and accomplishment was imbedded in being a woman, as a player and as the avatar in the game.

Competition. While most of the participants covered their experiences with playing games with others and the enjoyment of accomplishment, others went a step further to explain why accomplishment was achieved and the drive towards it playing against others. John commented that competition with real players was a draw to video games:

I don't think I seek it for social needs. But I like playing against other people . . . It's fun to try to get better stats than other people. Just another sense of satisfaction to try to be decent [at] it. I don't even like shooting the computer. I just find no satisfaction from that. I don't know why that is. I think [it] is the level of competition that I think is pretty fun. Joel stated that different games brought out different levels of competition; "Like back when I used to play Call of Duty and Killzone and all of that, and I'm playing online, I want to be, the best. I want to show them I'm good at this." Peter explained that video games offered an opportunity to compete with his brother despite him being several years older than him:

Just because he was so much older than me and he has always had a physical prowess over me . . . So I started learning stuff from other people and beat him, so that was really cool. He's nine years older than me.

This desire for competition stayed with Peter as he grew up. And similar to other participants, gameplay experience transitioned from family to peers:

And I like games like Fallout and Skyrim . . . I would put a couple hours in and then go to a game that was more competitive. That's really been my thing; I like competitive games. Because you can play on a team with your friends; it's just fun.

Peter's previous excerpt mentioned that playing with friends was an alley-way towards competition. He did not mention competition in regards to his family members. Thus he indicated that for competition style of play, he engaged with peers. This suggests a change in how the need for power and accomplishment are obtained. In the younger stages of his life, the level of competition and power obtainable was being met by family and possibly peers. By the time he was older, it seemed that family was not much of an option. Two participants, Peter and Garth, both discussed how they happened upon friendships online, but that the 'friendships' functioned more like business partners for the sake of being competitive against other online player teams. Peter described his experience with one of the 'business partners:'

There was one dude we play with a lot. He was really good, we'd invite him in front of other people. It wasn't really a friendships [as] someone we would play with a lot. I guess it was a Halo friendship. But we would win a lot when we played with [him].

Garth had a similar experience as Peter. He also had a 'professional partnership' while playing online games:

Oh yeah, there was one, when we used to play Call of Duty . . . any time he was on he would join up in our party. We really didn't have much conversations with him . . . he was just some guy we always played with. And it worked out pretty good because he was pretty skilled. Whenever he was on our team we didn't have to fight him [laughs].

This peer in the online game environment, while social in technicality, was rooted in competition and power over other players. Peter and Garth did not seem interested in gaining a new friend as much as teaming up with an ally who could help them towards a goal of winning over other teams in the games. Thus, the social component was present in order for them to work together, but the tone of the relationship was grounded in a mutual respect for the other's skills. From this, an agreement formed that they would work together to gain power and prestige but not with the responsibility of friendship. Garth also commented on group strategy as it related to competition:

It kind of depends on the type of game we're playing. But if we're in a lobby with a bunch of good players we actually have to work together to strategize, "Okay, there's four guys sitting in one room, we have to figure out how to get in there and take them out." So really depends on what game in what [the] situation is.

Garth explained in this excerpt that the goal was not to always socialize even though he played with friends. Depending on the situation the more important goal was to win rather than just spend time together with his peers. In several instances, it was shown that an experience appeared to be rooted in love and belonging or autonomy but then shifted into power and pleasure. It seemed that the goals and reasons for playing were fluid throughout different interactions and modes of engagement.

Distress Tolerance

Participants noted that video games were an activity that they went to when they wanted to get away from something happening in their real lives. Some participants explained that because of the immersive stories in video games they were able to transport their minds into another world and relieve stressors of real life. Nearly all participants commented on the ability to go to console-based video games for a sense of familiarity and relaxation. Participants explained that this form of going to video games was broken down into two reasons. When they started a game with which they were familiar, they were able to relax and not worry about learning new skills or thought

patterns in order to engage in the game. Alternately, participants also said that familiarity was associated with the nostalgic value of certain games. Participants discussed that the nostalgic value connected them to enjoyable memories from past experiences either playing alone or with others.

Relaxation. Brinual reminisced about how specific games reminded her of fond memories: "Super Mario World and that's probably still my favorite game to this day . . . it reminds me of childhood and fun." Garth had a similar experience as he described how games offered a glimpse of experience from his younger days:

I've [been] playing them since I was real young. Sometimes it takes you back to the good old days of when things were a little simpler before work, pay bills and all that fun stuff.

In both scenarios, it seemed that nostalgia played a large role in the enjoyable feeling of playing those games. Brinual went on to describe how a game that is more familiar also means she can progress further into it: "I feel like with Oblivion I understand how to level up easier and I've gotten farther on Oblivion and a shorter amount of time."

Brinual seemed to be describing a flow channel that is working well for her. The challenges are difficult but not insurmountable. This seemed to create a pleasant play experience as it challenged her but did not frustrate her. Carl commented that he took pleasure for knowing what to expect in a certain game and that he would not be surprised by the gameplay. He stated, "So on occasion I'll just go back and play a game that's only

going to take two or three hours. You can beat it in a night, yeah that was fun." Carl also mentioned that he will occasionally go to games for a passive experience:

It's possible that I spend less time playing video games . . . now because I don't want to be active, with my free time. Because I have less of it. So I put myself in the mind of the programmers sometimes when I'm solving problems in video games. So I already get a lot of that in day-to-day life, so there's less of a desire to get into it in my free time . . . that's the main difference to me anymore, the active versus passive thing.

This excerpt seemed to recount his former statement regarding that games can push a player into mental exercises and problem-solving and could also serve as an opportunity to comfort players. For Carl, playing something that he knew he could be good at and win without much effort satisfied this need for pleasure and comfort. John seemed to also feel a similar way in some of his games. He explained that familiarity of a particular game enabled him to relax:

Well, Call of Duty I'm more familiar with so I know exactly what I need to do . . . it's very repetitive. But also to that, I'll only play team deathmatch in Call of duty because I'm most familiar with that. Because I'm most comfortable with it.

While John appreciated choices and autonomy in games, "I think those ideas are cool. I kinda like that, the more choices." John added that he sometimes doesn't go to a game because of the lack of familiarity and direction:

Now, I will say. Part of the reason I won't start a game is deciding how much there is to do. So sometimes I find . . . is this a linear game? I just want to find

something and beat it. There's just way too much to do and I'll not going to do all that . . . I'm just weird, I don't want a bunch of options . . . I don't want to make a decision [laughs].

It seemed that John went to certain games to be challenged and other games for comfort. He said that he had reflected on these differences previously and at this point in his life, having played games for the majority of it, he felt the need to be conscious of what needs he was looking to fulfill which seemed to explain why he was picky about the games and how he divvied up his time. Joel also commented that he went to certain games for relaxation compared to other types of games:

And the last three years I've really come back to my adventure and role-playing games. I just want to sit down and get lost in that world. I just want to relax . . . I just want to try and live in this world for a little while.

For Ryan, the inherent ability to control the environment allowed him to play console-based video games where he might have difficulty in other hobbies. He explained that he had some difficulty with time management, that he often over-committed to activities and it negatively influenced his life. However, because of the inherent ability to control time in sports video games, he reflected on how he was able to use his time effectively and without the negative consequences of getting lost in the activity:

What I enjoy about the sports games . . . [is] because it's a limited time. I know how much time this game is going to take give or take a few minutes. But it's very structured and I found that it's very helpful for me at times. He was able to utilize a key component of video games to serve him in a way that other activities may not have been able to. While this alone may not help relax and in some ways create anxiety in other players because of the short time span, for Ryan, it allowed him to focus on playing rather than being distracted on keeping the time.

Coping mechanism. As was seen for Ryan, participants commented on console-based games being able to provide a coping mechanism for them. Will explained how the games offered stress release: "Purely as a de-stresser, [a] mindless to do, something that is not homework and schoolwork and things like that. So I guess it's an escape from the real-world regular work and things like that." Will's excerpt is part coping mechanism and part escapism. By way of escaping his worries, he suggested that he was able to relax. He added that he felt that escapism into a new world completely allowed him to temporarily leave the real-world and the anxiety that accompanied it:

I think one of my favorite games for the Xbox was actually Fable. Because I got to live in this world that I couldn't physically live in. I got to spend time in there have fun, mess around and do things for other people there . . . I think I enjoyed Fable a lot because I couldn't get [it] in real life.

Arthur commented on how his choice in games reflected his desire to relax and not worry about certain events going on in his life. He mentioned that for these types of games it was more than just pleasure or fun. While relaxing is pleasurable, he seemed to point out that for him, being able to win at a certain game helped him cope with not succeeding in life. I'm also more conscious, more cautiously choose gaming to zone out a time. So, NFL Blitz . . . there is nothing left for me to discover in that game. In a world where I don't know how well I'm doing, graduate school. Where the challenges are everywhere and the feedback I get is sparse and not reliable. Or I don't trust it. I found myself more cautiously choosing games that I know how to win . . . I'm choosing a game that I know I'm going to win.

For Arthur, games seemed to function as a way to reinforce his confidence and create a sense of worth. This helped him go back to the arenas in his life that were less concrete and allowed him to continue on with those challenges knowing that he could master and achieve in some form. Carl recalled how video games functioned as a coping mechanism for him when he was angry:

It's probably always been a decent anger management tool. And I think with video games the interactive-ness helps more so than other media. When you're mad and you go read a book it's not nearly as satisfying as when you're mad and you go kill some dudes in a videogame. Even listening to angry music, you're still taking it in. I think when you're mad at stuff, you kind of want to let stuff out ... you can go take it out on some bad guys that you're fighting.

Garth also talked about using games as a way to diffuse anger that built up from events in his life:

I can remember a couple times I was fighting with my sisters, I would just lock myself in a my room and just give me space, clearing my head. You don't have to worry about them arguing and yelling at you, you just zone out and calm down a little bit if you're arguing with them.

Joel had a similar experience and decision to go to games: "I know I've gone to games when I got into a fight with my parents. Or if they were fighting. I just go and sit in front of the TV and try to forget everything that's going on."

For Joel, Garth, and Carl the coping mechanism that games provided was an outlet for anger. For these participants, being able to absorb their minds into another environment allowed them to channel their anger into a positive force. In these cases it was used to reinforce the motivation of their respective characters in the console-based video games they chose to engage in. The hurt or anger was displaced into enemies in the game rather than real-life humans and thus real-life consequences of lashing out in anger were possibly avoided.

Ryan recounted his experience with using games to relieve a stressful day in real life. For him, he did not concern himself with objectives or story arc and chose to act out without consequence:

Grand Theft Auto, there were days I played that in college, "Oh this is a rough day, something went bad, you just go . . ." I wouldn't even follow the objective or the storyline. I would just go and . . . blow stuff up and run people over. Yeah, I just kind of let things go. But out here, yeah it gives you that opportunity to just . . . ahhh! [shakes hands in the air]. In a safe way . . . kind of, relieve stress in a way, I guess.

Moya shared a similar idea of players being able to vent after difficult days in real life: "I think if anything, it's a way to kind of get it out on a video game not take it out on anyone else." Similar to the uses of the participants, Moya extended the notion that actions of anger or venting after stressful situations could be better filtered through video game fictional scenarios rather than un-meditated acts of violence against real people.

While the participants did comment on video games producing feelings of frustration due to difficult tasks and objectives, none of them commented that they felt they or others around them struck out against others in the real world because of in-game frustration. While this was not a direct question in the interview, participants did not comment on experiences where video games needed a coping mechanism to deal with the feelings created during gameplay. The closest situation where this would relate would be commiserating with other players on hard challenges that were run into while engaging in the games.

Gamer regret. While many of the participants reflected on the positives of engaging in console-based video games, a couple participants explained that they were, at times, ashamed of the time spent with video games. Brinual discussed that while she feels accomplishment in video games, she also sometimes has dismissive feelings over the time spent with video games: "I mean it's incredibly satisfying . . . at the same time, [it] kind of makes me think like, 'Wow, I did nothing.' Like, really I've done absolutely nothing."

Brinual went on to comment on asking her mother about her past video gameplay: "I've been meaning to ask my mother but I always forget about it because it's, ya know, all the things to ask her, why would I ask her that."

Ryan explained his hesitations with gaming by way of not having something tangible in his hands to show to others for his work:

And sometimes as I get older, I find that there's a part of me that after [I] play a game for a little bit and you think about the time you're putting in. What, does it really matter, I'm not doing anything. I'm not creating anything I'm not furthering myself. I like to tell myself that there's those studies that say, "Playing these types of games improves coordination and things like that" to make myself feel better, eh, keeping my brain sharp. There's a little part of me that like . . . what's the point? How fulfilled will [I] be when I finish the game or achieve this goal? Or this Xbox achievement?

In both of these situations, it seems that the culture of console-based video game is still rooted in a niche role. While these two participants both commented on the prevalence of this type of video game play reaching a mainstream audience, it seemed that more gameplay was not an accurate defense for substantial use of their time in the console-based video game gameplay environments.

Choices

All the participants explained that choices and decision-making in games was a part of console-based video games. While each participant interpreted his or her gameplay in different ways, each of them reflected on how video games offered an opportunity that was different than most other media, the aspect of autonomy in video games. Autonomy came in various forms from choice in how to represent themselves in their chosen games to their decision-making skills to affect the course of the storyline.

Connecting and choice of digital and real identities. Joel disclosed his rationalization regarding his choices of character creation in console-based video games:

Whenever a game gives me the option to create my own character I tried to make it a little bit similar to me. And when it comes to abilities, I like to be able to give myself things I can't do in real life. In role-playing games that's why always like to play the Mage. Because in real life if I wanted to I can go outside and learn to swing a sort stuff but no matter what I'm not learn[ing] how to shoot a fireball out of my hand [laughs].

Crash talked about a similar experience; being able to go into a different world and experience something he couldn't in real life: "I can't pick up a sword and go on a quest. Just being a hero in a game is cool."

Peter talked about how the character and thus role in the games made him feel: "I guess feeling like a superhero. I definitely played the Spiderman games to do that. That was cool the superhero-esqe feeling. I like pretty much any game where you can do that type of thing."

For several of the participants it was to have powers that were not in reality. To gain abilities that they knew were not possible in real life. For a couple of the participants being a 'hero' or a person with abilities they themselves did not currently

have was important and pleasurable. Arthur explained how he understood avatars in games that he created:

Thinking through my decisions and trying not to go in before I'm ready. And so the character that I built was an Archer. With high sneak and high archery skills. And that certainly seems a match of my personality. It would've been dis-congruent for me to be a dual-wielding swordsman that would have left me open to a lot of attacks.

Moya commented that she is like Arthur in that her personality and identity filter into the game's character arcs. "I actually go for the good choices . . . it's just instinct you want to do good. For me at least [laughs]." Carl explained his view of character creation as similar to Arthur's: "I'm a pragmatic guy . . . I'll probably choose my race based on what attributes those races get, rather than what they look like."

In all of these participants' experiences, they discussed the autonomy to make choices that would be unavailable to them in the real-world for a variety of reasons. For some, the completely out of reach powers was a reason to change identities. For Joel and Crash, being able to do something they wouldn't have the chance to do in real-life was appealing. But in Arthur's and Moya's case, they felt that if he was in this environment, he would be an 'archer', which was currently outside his skill-set but in context of his personality was appropriate. Moya's reaction was that she would continue to use her own identity because it made the most sense for her instinctually whether the experience had real consequences in life or not. Joel also commented that certain characters and storylines had an effect on him in his own identity removed from the video game world. Joel discussed that even after some games ended, the characters' experience stuck with him: "Seeing how the other characters in game reacted to it . . . is what made it really click with me. And [for to] me think about that."

Will shared a similar experience with Joel. He described his connection to characters:

So you've spent three games playing as him/her. So no matter what you do seeing he or she going to die, [is] kind of sad. And to me that's more in depth than what most movies and books will get. Because you're controlling this person, making their decisions for them, so, especially the end of Mass Effect 3, coming to it and seeing that there is literally nothing you can do to avoid this death is very . . . kind of grim.

These excerpts suggested that players made all types of connections to characters. Joel and Will explained that the in-game characters' story arcs and how they as players were left to deal with the outcome well after the game officially ended. While this may be similar to people's experiences after movies or books, the participants noted the difference in games as the sense of control over character. Especially in games that afforded an extraordinary amount of choice in the character's path, when the choices ended, it left an emotional mark on the participants. Interaction within the storyline created agency in the decisions and thus an emotional connection to the results. As participants commented earlier in the section, this concept created alliances to the characters unlike other medium stories.

When the players had a stake in the story and personality construction of the characters, the act of breaking that connection manifested a sense of loss or accomplishment more closely related to real-life consequences than that of other story-telling devices. A sense of control not only changed how they interacted with the story and characters while engaged but also after the experience concluded.

Sense of control. Participants made a point to discuss the amount of control over a story or character they had. This had several ramifications; if control was too influential, some players turned away because there was too much commitment. Other players relished in a heightened control scenario. In almost all the interviews, participants explained that console-based video games were unique in their offering of control over video game characters and environments. And because of this control, the player is responsible, in one way or another, over the actions that come to fruition within the game.

Joel explained his view of controlling characters in console-based video games: "Since the character you're controlling is happening because you're the one controlling the character. Everything is your fault or your accomplishments." John said a similar statement, "I think it's very interactive and you're in control of the action." Peter commented on his choice of games and the control they offer:

I like ones where you get to make your own choices. Just because you get to live in a world that these designers created and that's pretty cool that you can do that. And kinda see how you can influence the game. The more control you have in the game I feel like is more satisfying it is to play.

Ryan explained his view of choices in games and how he appreciated multiple pathways towards a similar goal:

But a game like Mass Effect was interesting to me because I knew going in that there wasn't one path to go . . . your choices throughout kind of change the game . . . this kind of maybe, gives you a sense of independence or control, or more control over what is there. I think for gameplay a lot of people want to immerse themselves in it, and I think it definitely helps. Because it brings more of real life and more of that aspect into the game.

Ryan's comment highlighted the nature of video game autonomy in its clearest sense: that going into the game as a player, choices were available which meant that players' experiences could be uniquely their own. Carl reflected on the sense of control and accented the idea of individualized experiences. He also noted how video games make a requirement of the player to engage with them:

The thing that video games have going for them is that they're an active experience rather than a passive one . . . it requires mental effort to make choices and actually participate by you're doing rather than just take everything in. It's two-way rather than just all input. You're more connected to it that way. And even if you only have two choices . . . at least you have a choice. Having the controls is just more fun because it makes for a more personalized experience that you can control. Moya also explored the concept of intellectual engagement and control video games by comparing it to her personality style:

Yeah, entertainment that keeps me busy because I'm not one really to sit still very long. Games have lots of action in them. Say if you're playing a game and you're in a very intense dark scary scene you're going to feel that fear more because you're the one that's in control. It's kinda different when you're reading a book or watching a movie. I think it's different when you have control over something. People like to be able to make decisions. And to have control over stuff.

For Moya, having control and being involved in the process was essential because she preferred to be active in her engagement. The act of having control changes the experience for the player. Her comment suggests that players have the ability to not do something in the game. In turn, responsibility for the action from the player increases. This sentiment seemed to be present for Brinual as well. She explained that choices and control in the games she played allowed her to feel closer to the experience:

I would choose a gender that I want and it's probably going to be female because that's who I am. And that makes it easier for me to . . . see through that character's eyes, not necessarily but it's nice to have a choice. Nice to have a choice.

Will went on regarding control compared to movies or books. He also mentioned replayability as a factor for video games:

I think one of the most appealing things about video games over those other two options [movies and books], is the choices you can make, the replayability for a lot of things. You could see different stories unfold based on what you choose.

Will explained that these games offer a chance to not only intercept a journey through a game different but actually play through it completely different. Will hinted at the notion that not only do players relive the static parts of the stories but also have a part in changing the outcome or how the character gets to the end. Crash echoed the sentiment as well explaining the difference between identifying with a character in a movie and a video game:

They're interactive. I'd rather sit and play a game because I'm actually telling the character what to do instead of just watching the whole time . . . I feel like I am more that character than I do in a movie, just because I'm choosing what they're doing.

Arthur also commented on agency of console-based video games: "Watching the TV show or reading the book . . . there is no sense of agency or ownership over what happens. The decisions I made in this video game reflected myself and in a real way."

Arthur added that the connection to video game characters is heightened because the characters in the game become privy to information as the game player does, a sense of ownership to the information is palpable: "To see and to be part of that character's realization, the character doesn't realize it until I realize it."

Unlike other mediums of entertainment, video games only move as far as the player pushes the avatar. Because of this aspect, information is released in a way that the

on-screen character and the player understand it at the same time. According to Arthur, this creates a sense of connectedness to the avatar that books and movies generally don't obtain. Brinual also expressed a sense of agency in in games where the actions of the game player had an effect on the storylines:

Being able to play it and control it at the same time which makes it so much more fun and being able to talk to other people like, "Dude, I can't believe that guy died!" and Jonathan being like, "That guy didn't die, [what] are you talking about?" and me realizing, "Oh my god I could have saved him somehow!" and then furiously going back and "How do I prevent this from happening?" kind of thing.

In last excerpt Brinual spoke to the connection of character's stories in games. With the degree of control in a game, decisions have an impact on the life and death of characters with other effects in-between. Arthur also recounted this experience as he pondered certain decisions in the game and how it would affect his character's story arc but also the non-playable characters' stories.

Brinual discussed how console-based video games prompted an opportunity to not only feel control in the game but as an outlet from real life stressors in social situations.

[sighs] I guess [paused] it's all down to personality. So for me I don't do well talking to people . . . I'm going to be really awkward and I'm going [to] get embarrassed and then, they are going to think, "What's wrong with you?" Or I can stay in and play this game and it's more fun and more fulfilling it would have felt like I've actually done something . . . And depending on the game . . . "Hey I

did something cool even if it wasn't actually doing anything in the sense that a lot of people would consider it." Choosing between something I'm not 100% comfortable with, or ya know, playing a game I would rather play the game . . . then do that other thing.

For Brinual, she seemed to take comfort in the notion that she had more control over her situation in a video game world than that of a real-life social situation. Because of this amount of control, she possibly was able to obtain a sense of power and freedom over the way she spends her time.

Safe spaces for experimentation. Several of the participants talked about console video games as an arena where they could take chances and be 'other people' for a period of time. In this context, participants explained that they went to video games for experiences that they knew that they would not try in real life or would not be able to try. Ryan discussed a couple examples of him making decisions based on the concept that games don't have real life consequences but are entertaining to try in a digital world:

One of the things in that game [Bioshock], you got to choose whether or not you are going to save these little girls. So there is a choice of good or evil. I'm generally not the evil person and it's like, you tell yourself, "It's just a game" . . . in that perspective, if I would do this in real life, I wouldn't do this action but will it help me . . . I always still have a hard time . . . I tend to be more towards my personality in those games.

Some participants seemed to not have as much difficulty with the decision. Carl commented, "It's fun, it's just variety of the fact that you don't do that stuff in real life."

John mentioned a similar comment, "I'm like, 'Eh, I can do [it] in this game, why not do it when I can't do it in real life." These participants seemed to relish in the fact that they could try different forms of their personality or a wholly new identity. Although, other participants had more trouble differentiating their real-world personality and values from the decisions in games. Brinual recalled her experience dealing with decisions in games and what paths to go down:

I was going to start over . . . and I'm going to be a renegade this time . . . and darned if I couldn't actually do it because I would just feel bad, I don't know why . . . Nothing bad would happen to anyone if I chose the mean thing to do but I still could never do it because I just felt . . . whatever the renegade option was, was so against my character that I could never choose it.

Another form of experimentation came in the form of pure curiosity to see how consequences would appear. Will explained how he learned about real life through experiences in games:

I guess it taught me that there are ramifications to your actions and those can be very real. Things I hadn't necessarily experienced in life before. I think this could be, essentially a life simulator, kind of helpful, especially to developing children.

Where other participants experimented with their own identities, Will seemed to figure out what type of reactions he would get to certain decisions. He even suggested that children could learn about the world through that of a second type of environment.

Though for Crash, the experience of no limits was optimal. He suggested that he was not as interested as the response from other non-playable characters as much as his own agenda when he played:

I'd rather just go through the game and do whatever I want. Usually in a game, I want to be bad. I feel like it's more fun because you can just do whatever you want and get away with it. At the end of the day it's still just a game. I never equate how I feel about something to what I'm doing in a game.

Crash did not seem to think that his behavior in the game would or should reflect on his behavior in real-life. Moya explained a slightly different view of consequences in a video game environment. Moya shared her ideas of experimentation in console-based video games as experimenting with a way to get out aggression in a safe place that did not have real-life ramifications:

I think to a certain point it makes it a little more realistic to them [other players] because they get to make a decision and they get to deal [with] the consequences whether good or bad in the game. And it's better for them to experience it in a video game then doing something horrible in society.

Joel went on to explain that games offer a chance to play a character or personality he wouldn't normally do: "And typically when I have the chance to play as the bad guy, the villain. Because most games you are the hero and it's just interesting to kind, see it the other way around."

For Joel just getting the chance to play with another type of personality seemed to be appealing. He pointed out that being able to understand a different perspective was pleasurable and allowed for a sense of autonomy in things he wouldn't choose to do in his real-life. Arthur described that video games offered a chance to experience situations that he would never be able to in his current life:

Games offer that sort of, second life in a way. For me, games are about being put in a situation that I'm never going to find myself in again. And getting to explore the choices I make in that situation. So I'm thinking of The Walking Dead . . . A situation that I hope I never find myself in [laughs], zombie apocalypse. What choices do I make? Same thing with the Mass Effect series. I'm never going to be Commander Shepherd . . . But if I were that person what would I do? I don't really see the choices as a way to explore other versions of myself, or other possible selves. But I do think it's a way to explore my true self. Who I am?

Arthur expanded on this concept of his identity as a real person and how video games task him with exploring how he would deal with decisions:

I played a game about a year and half ago before my wife was pregnant in the story sets up a pretty strong father-daughter dynamic. With the main character Lee, coming across this little girl and as the time goes on you get more attached to this girl. And you start thinking about [tears up] . . . what would you do to protect this child, this little girl? I think that the way the characters interact with each other and with the environment sets up the chance to explore what . . . [pauses . . . laughs softly . . . tears up] . . . What would you do to help this little girl survive in this world? What does it mean to be a father? In this situation, what are your responsibilities to yourself, to your own sense of what's right and wrong, and to

the survival of . . . of your child. I didn't expect to be so invested [laughs]. I'm glad that I had that experience.

Arthur explained in these excerpts a thought process that seemed to underlie most of the participants' experiences, which was, "How do I see myself in these games?" For some, a new identity could be formed and tested. For others, their personal identity was transposed into the game worlds and a process of seeing their own values in the new environment was explored. And finally, players also used games as a testing place to try some decisions but generally adhere with their real-life ideals. As Arthur said, many of these video game realms offered a unique opportunity to explore identity, values, and decisions.

Summary

The results in this chapter suggested that the participants had varying yet similar experiences in several different areas of video games. All of the participants spoke positively of video games and the purpose they served in their lives. While some questioned the actual benefits and wondered whether they were truly gaining from the video game experience, the thoughts did not suspend the themes of social interaction, self-worth, accomplishment, and identity formation.

Many of the participants experienced console-based video games through their families. Even more recounted the social component of video game engagement. Several participants highlighted how they used this engagement to deal with stress and act as a coping mechanism in difficult times. And while the majority went to video games for enjoyment and relaxation, others also choose to use this engagement as a vehicle for competition and to gain self-worth via their skills. Finally, each participant explained their experience and thoughts on how console-based video games offer a chance for agency in storylines and character development. From promoting digital avatar creation of themselves to living in a world where discovery and taking risks was allowable, each participant reported that console-based video games offered choices. And through those choices came autonomy, accomplishment, pleasure, and a sense of belonging.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the connection of participants' experiences engaging in console-based video games and choice theory's four basic psychological needs (love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun). This chapter outlines choice theory's four basic psychological needs and how they are related to the themes generated by the researcher from the data of the participants.

The research questions that this study sought to answer were: (a) What are the experiences of console-based video game players relative to choice theory's four basic psychological needs? (b) How do console-based video game players make meaning of choice theory's four basic psychological needs while engaging in video game experience? (c) What are console-based video games players' perspectives on video game culture in context of the four basic psychological needs?

These three research questions are discussed throughout this chapter in the context of choice theory's four basic psychological needs. Each need is detailed through the lens of the literature and data gathered from this study. The research questions were designed in a way that upon data collection and data analysis, discussion would develop through the four basic psychological needs and potentially other themes. Hatch (2002) explained that in typological analysis, the findings discussion is linked to themes generated from participants' experiences. This is done as a way to explain the relationship between the participants' experiences, meaning they derived from the

experiences and the cultural implications of the experiences as a whole for readers to understand. From an IPA perspective, this section is organized by the super-ordinate themes (typologies) to address the research questions (Smith et al., 2009). In this way, the discussion is written to incorporate the data and reflection pieces of the research questions along with the cultural implications of the participants' experience. By doing this, it is hoped that a full conceptualization of the participants' experiences and meaning they placed on those experiences will feel substantial and complete.

The themes in this study were developed by analyzing the words, phrases, and meaning on which the participants expounded about their console-based video game experiences. The themes were then analyzed from the viewpoint of choice theory. Glasser (1998) explained that people have quality worlds where they produce what they believe will be the best relationships and ways to meet their basic needs. These relationships and need fulfillment function as signs in their overall quality world that direct themselves toward the obtainment of wellness. In a similar way, the themes of this study were analyzed as to how they fit amongst the four basic psychological needs.

The themes functioned as a way to understand the data by viewing them as indicators in which the participants met their psychological needs. By arranging the themes into the basic needs in which they are most connected, the reader will be able to understand the relationship between each theme and the overall fulfillment of the game players' quality worlds. Data gathered from the participants' interviews suggested that each participant had met at least one basic psychological need while engaged in gameplay. The first section of this chapter details the love and belonging basic need and how participants discussed social aspect of their gameplay. The next section explores the power basic need and the way participants made meaning out of their gameplay in relation to self-worth and accomplishment. The following segment outlines the basic need of fun/pleasure and how participants detailed their experiences as enjoyable and meaningful to their needs. The next section describes the basic need of freedom and how the participants understood the meaning of their gameplay in regards to obtaining autonomy. The subsequent piece describes themes that do not fit into choice theory's four basic psychological needs. This section details why the data do not coincide with choice theory but how it can be used by counselors to possibly benefit clients. The last section summarizes the findings of this research study and makes suggestions as to further research that can be done to build on the conclusions set forth in this chapter.

Main Findings

Love/Belonging

Console-based video game players seem to experience the concept of love and belonging in three different ways: (a) family, (b) friends, (c) and connections to in-game characters. These different ways were organized under the concept of social experience. This social aspect of video game experiences suggest a meaning derived from gameplay by way of a path to socialize with other players but also within the game as a substitute for in-person socialization. Glasser (1965) explained that a person needed a way to feel loved and to be a part of a group or partnership with other people. He maintained that relationships were a key building block for being mentally well. Glasser concluded that without healthy relationships in peoples' lives, they would be lacking in their sense of love and belonging. The underlying meaning in the social aspect of the gameplay is that players are provided an arena for them to spend time with others, whether real or digital, in a productive way.

Glasser (1998, 2000) explained that for people to meet the love and belonging need, they had to match their quality worlds with that of the social relationship. Without this congruence, the relationship will fail to produce adequately the feelings and desires that the parties involved need to fulfill the need. Glasser recommended that people must be cognizant of the choice to begin or stay in relationships. For this reason, he suggested that people reflect upon their quality worlds, in this case specifically upon their needs for love and belonging. When they are able to understand what unique and particular characteristics are desired for a satisfying relationship, they will be able to make informed and conscious decisions regarding their relationships.

The data from this study suggested that a majority of the participants were able to make meaning of their social wants and subsequently went to video games in one form or another in order to meet that need. It seems that console-based video games offer a chance for players to explore different types of social learning through family and friends. Participants noted the meaning of these experiences, explaining that they were already accepted in these situations, and because of that, they felt they were freer to take more chances with the peace of mind that they were part of a group that supported them. This suggests that game culture breeds a sense of community in certain types of games

and through this players can depend on a support group despite not knowing much about the fellow members.

Players seem cognizant of the potential that video games meet needs of belonging and love but are not always able to articulate a direct connection of their experience to their basic needs. However, it appears that the concept of social belonging in the video game experience is straightforward and clear for most players. In both cases, the data presented in the following paragraphs details how the participants in this study explained their experiences and subsequently the meaning of the experiences.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) stated that people will form relationships, even if they are not healthy for the sake of having a connection to other people. This research finding accentuated the notion that some people do not have an adequate idea of how to fulfill their need for love and belonging. This was sometimes apparent in this study when participants had a difficult time understanding their own love and belonging needs. That being said, all the participants were able to place meaning on the concept that social needs were learned at an early age through their siblings, friends, and parents.

Game players' experiences in youth suggest that they learned how social relationships function, healthy and unhealthy, and absorb this knowledge to then use in real-life. This suggests that players use their video game experiences as a unique way to understand their own feelings and desires regarding social bonds. Furthermore, they were able to understand situations of love and belonging that had not been apparent to them in their real lives and offered a new experience.

This was apparent in the experiences explained by a study participant when he felt like a father and thus broached into a level of love and belonging that they had never experienced before the game. This concept of feeling a connection to characters in games and how it translated to real-life feelings was echoed in other participants as well. It suggests that video game players feel an association of love and belonging to characters because they see struggles with which they identify in their own lives. This identification aspect produces a feeling of meaning to the participants. They are not alone in their thoughts and worry and are able to explore their feelings of love through their video game engagement.

This was most evident when players encounter a game that puts them in an unknown position and forces them to make decisions with little prior experience. This aspect of games, allowing for an experience not yet or ever to be had, is present throughout the themes generated from the data. As with many new experiences, people use family and peers to adjust them to an unfamiliar environment as a safe passage. This was true for console-based video games as nearly every participant noted that they started playing when family introduced them to the activity. Hence, the players understood that their families played an integral role in creating a sense of meaning while playing these games. Many of the participants explained that this introduction reinforced the idea that video games were not strictly an individual activity and supported the idea that engaging in console-based video games can offer an array of different perspectives and social connections maybe not possible with other activities. The participants' experiences suggested that in several cases video games provided an environment for positive social structures. Strasburger, Wilson, and Jordan (2013) stated that video games could offer pro-social training behavior by way of cooperative gameplay and strategy. Some participants commented on playing with peers through online gaming and how this allowed for opportunities of strategy and competition. While players cannot always connect with other team structures that offer the chance for strategy and competition, such as sports, they are able to be part of a group through video games. In this way, they are able to work together and figure out answers to challenges in the game and feel accomplished through team mechanics.

Langlois (2013) pointed out that gamers are frequently good at working together and helping out newer players who may not know the best way to overcome obstacles in the games. This is even more apparent when participants discussed working through challenges while playing together in the same physical room. While most of the participants mentioned that they played online with friends and family, they also commented that they preferred in-person gaming with family and friends. These remarks suggested that players, while engaged in digital world, still favor a live proximity and in-person discussion connection to others. This could mean that due to the availability of the persons sitting next to them, players are able to help sort out a new strategy to surpass obstacles in the games together. Not only are the players being social by playing together but they also act as a team to work together and solve problems.

Throughout this section, data have been discussed regarding how console-based video game players made meaning out of their gameplay experiences with regards to the

love and belonging theme. The data suggested that each participant explained that this engagement allowed them to feel love or belonging in some way. It seems that console systems allow for an activity that players can experience with their real-life friends in person. Additionally, the connections players make to in-game characters and the respective relationships that were either observed or created by the gameplay. Each participant in this study was able to speak to the concept that console-based video games fulfilled the basic need of love and belonging in each of their own unique ways.

Power

Wubbolding (2000) discussed the concept of the power basic need in people as an internal motivation and desire to feel able to accomplish a task. Glasser (1989) suggested that internal power was a function of a human being, so people could steer their lives in a way that was of their choosing. Furthermore, Glasser and Wubbolding believed that it is possible to accomplish tasks and objectives without taking away from others. Thus, power could be achieved individually throughout different types of tasks without stripping power from others in the process (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000).

The data suggest that gamers go to console-based video games as a way to feel accomplishment in their lives. Video games offer a place where players can use skills they had learned to traverse environments, overcome obstacles, and be challenged in a way that was not present outside their video game environments. Gamers play and subsequently continue to play, because they feel the need to reap the benefits of the work being put into the challenge. The meaning of this behavior seems to suggest that joy and

pleasure are earned from accomplishing tasks in the digital worlds that these video games offer players.

For players, the accomplishments provided a sense of self-worth. They commented on the notion that the real world does not usually offer rewards or benefits in an equal ratio to the amount of work put into them. These video games, it is suggested, fill a void where the amount of dedication towards storyline goals or conglomeration of objectives, could be reaped by players if they were successful. This experience is highly valued because it was so different from real life. The underlying meaning is that the gameplay provided relief that, even though in real life they were not confident in certain skills, the ones mastered in the respective games were rewarded. Furthermore, the challenges in games are pleasurable and worthwhile because of the inherent aspects of video games.

The nature of video games can be described in various ways, but ultimately it is suggested that most, if not all games, have a set of objectives that are clear and concise and the reward for accomplishing those objectives is also clear. Unlike real-life, most games have a well-defined flow channel in which players can understand the goal and the skills required to achieve it and were able to obtain it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011).

The meaning communicated in this instance was that, opposite movies or reading, video games offer challenges to players. Video game characters and storylines will only go as far as the tenacity and skill level of players. Games offer players a chance to fail but also an opportunity to win. The chance to win and foster self-worth in

accomplishment is due to console-based video games interactive experience that truly places players in a position to obtain a sense of control over their completion of objectives. This suggests that players understand the meaning of their gameplay insomuch that quality work in a video game produces self-worth and accomplishment. In choice theory, clients must have a sense of power and accomplishment in their lives that supports the ideal of their quality worlds (Glasser, 1998).

Glasser (1998) explained that counselors might be treating clients whose basic need that is in a deficit could be power. In such a scenario, clients might be searching for a purpose in their lives. A sense that their lives had meaning and their voices offered a viewpoint and perspective that was notable amongst the community of relationships around them. Glasser pointed out that people are in search of meaningfulness by way of accomplishment. Although participants in this study did not comment that they relied solely on video games as a source for power in their lives, several noted that video games were a part of their overall sense of accomplishment. Glasser would most likely comment that video games, in this way, functioned within the participants' quality worlds as a productive activity that could help meet basic psychological needs.

Whereas the productivity of video games to give players a sense of accomplishment is balanced to create a need and want, there is a fine line that video games tread regarding the intensity of the challenge. Some games were very good at allowing players to feel powerful, yet challenged. However, other games pushed players so far into frustration that they cease to continue playing. This situation extinguished the prospect of being productive in the respective digital world and thus the flow channel was broken (Csikszentmihlayi, 1975, 1990). It seems that players either alter the games they play or figure out a way to overcome the challenges in a unique way. This aspect of clearing obstacles in creative ways fits into the choice theory paradigm of meeting needs.

Wubbolding (1991, 2000) explained that choice theory's basic needs are fulfilled in various ways that are not always apparent or agreed upon by everyone. Especially in a complex form that power takes for individuals, Wubbolding noted that people satisfy their basic needs in their own ways that are distinctive to them. One of the participants in this study, a woman, explained that video games, unlike other activities where she was not directly involved, gave her the chance to succeed as a woman character. This experience created important meaning in her gameplay because it allowed her to see her accomplishment in the tasks as more closely related to her identity rather than a character that was male or non-human. This aspect of gender choice in video games allowed her (and other players) to experience self-worth and power in a clearer sense compared to other activities where the feeling was filtered.

Glasser (1998) also explained that people search for power in situations that do not necessitate it. He felt that people would always be in need of it and if they did not achieve it, relationships around them would suffer. The data suggested that video games could offer a receptacle for people to obtain power. A case could be made that video games could go beyond being a back-up solution and rather, an activity that could activity provide power and a sense of accomplishment when a person was lacking it in real life. Bissell (2011) wrote about experiences of console-based video games and the inclusion of competition within the culture. He stated that online gaming, and its predecessor, LAN (local area network, where players engage in an in-person group) gaming, gave an opportunity for competition and achievement. Similar to live sports, academic trial events, and other competitive activities, video game producers create challenges for players to overcome within the games. Like other activities, playing against other real people amplifies the desire for many players to win and accomplish. While Glasser did not exclusively discuss the act of competition, he did comment on power and the desire to achieve it. He commented that humans were one of the few beings that craved power even when they already gained it (Glasser, 1998, 2004).

In the video game environment, the ability of a player to easily go online and compete with others is available at all times. This opportunity serves as a source of reliable challenges that the game's artificial intelligence did not always supply. It seemed through the experiences, that the participants went to these types of games in order to satisfy the need for challenges. The meaning for their gameplay was to gain power over real-life players through skills needed in the game. Additionally, participants noted that playing with others online and in a group setting was 'fun'. Glasser (1998) and Wubbolding (2000) explained that the plasure basic need was often fulfilled through other means than strictly what people thought of as pure entertainment.

The data suggested that participants are deriving pleasure through the basic need of obtaining power and prestige. This implied that challenges are fun when the players are able to win but are not pleasurable at points of losing. A few of the participants commented that they knew they would not win all the time. However, when they felt confident and the opportunity to win was apparent, they would go back to it, despite no longer discovering new techniques or new levels of enjoyment. The basic need of power over competition was enough to bring players to the challenge regardless of the other needs. This suggests that players sought after competition and gaining achievement over other players over learning new skills or experiencing new events. While it appears that that power was more important than gaining new experiences for players, the end result was, again, pleasure for the participants. This suggests that fun and pleasure can be met through several means, which is discussed in the next section more completely.

Fun/Pleasure

Glasser (1998) proposed that fun and pleasure was closely related to people learning. Glasser suggested that people find new information and events pleasurable because learning was an inherent aspect of all people through the need for survival. He believed that to survive we needed to learn and thus learning is perceived as fun for people. Learning comes in many forms including something new about others or yourself. Learning about oneself can produce and augment several types of pleasurable activities. For the console-video game players it seems that escapism, relaxation, and coping mechanisms are ways to achieve fun and pleasure while engaging in video games.

Boetcher et al. (2002) reported in their research that video game players engaged in digital worlds as a way to escape the real world and the relationships within it. Game players purposely choose to leave reality to find or create a new identity and by doing so mean to start fresh in a new environment. However, how this new identity is presented and explored is different in each video game thus also contributing to the learning aspect of pleasure. For instance, *Portal*, a two-game videogame series, emphasized puzzles as the main game mechanic that pushed the storyline. In both *Portal* and *Portal* 2, players were not given a story that defined the character in the game (Wendler, 2014). With such a strategy by the game producers, Wendler pointed out that players must inject their own values into the narrative to fill in the gaps.

Through these ways of identity formation in video games, players experience escapism in different fashions depending on their personalities and the game design. This absence of identity and need for inputting identity is similar to the way a quality world functions (Glasser, 1998). People must fill their quality world with relationships and ideals that best meet their basic needs. Though not all games functioned this way, escapism by players in other games was done by adopting identities of the games' developers.

A few participants placed meaning of their gameplay as a device to experience new and wonderful environments that they would never see in their real lives. Because of this, pleasure was gained in discovery of new worlds and stories within the games. Furthermore, game players seem to understand escapism from two viewpoints. One way was that of relaxation. The other is using the gameplay experience as a coping mechanism.

For some players, console-based video games are an activity that produces relaxation. Most prevalent meanings underpinning the relaxation seem to be: (a) comfort, (b) nostalgia, and (c) lack of real-world consequences. Certain games create feelings of nostalgia in players because it links them emotionally to their childhoods. The effect of this connection is relational thoughts about what they were experiencing during their childhood. A lack of financial concerns, issues with careers, and worries regarding family and friends disappeared for the time when players engage in video games because they immerse them not only in the video game world, free of external worries, but also to a time period where those worries were not present.

For players, comfort is a key factor in their video game engagement. Players go to specific types of games because they were familiar with the mechanics, the storyline, or the characters. These aspects present a sense of comfort because there is a lack of new information to be learned. Game mechanics are already mastered and the storyline offered no drama to be fretted over by the player. The essential meaning of this sense of relief is that players can 'turn off their brains' and rely strictly on instinct. This type of gameplay seemed to function as rest for the participants' brains. This produces an experience where players get to recuperate from work stress or relationship issues without the worry that new anxieties, real or not, would plague the activity. This aspect of pleasure seems to contradict other feelings of pleasure where learning is a main component of the fun. In this scenario, similar to competition and power overtaking learning new concepts, mastery and support outpaced learning new ideas. However, the end result of the player engaging in the activity with comfort knowing their mastery will carry them suggests that the pleasure need can be accomplished by way of the other needs or other, temporary, identities.

Furthermore, a change in identity offers not only a release from players' real-life counterparts, but also the creation of a new identity that, for a short while, may be an improvement. Greitemeyer and Mugge (2014) reported that prosocial video games have the potential to help form positive behavior while decreasing aggression in game players. Several of the participants recounted instances where console-based video games acted as a coping mechanism to deal with anger, sadness, or other types of emotions. Engaging in video games as a coping mechanism functions as a method to experience pleasure by negating anger or displeasure. While players are not always going to the games for fun or pleasure, the result seems to end up with that as a way of coping with negative situations.

Although Greitemeyer and Mugge (2014) discussed the amount of play, they added that the content of the game played was important to the influence. This coincides with Wubbolding's (1991) assertion that clients meet their needs in a variety of ways. He explained that through this process, ways of dealing with stress and emotions is also unique to each person. Through the statements from participants and research by Greitemeyer and Mugge (2014) and Langlois (2013), the data suggest that the console-based video games can be a suitable activity for different types of coping mechanisms.

The data suggest that escapism, relaxation, and coping mechanisms function as a way of learning about how others approach situations and learning about oneself. Through this learning it appears that a certain level of contentment is achieved towards pleasure. Console-based video game engagement may be a possible activity for individuals to learn about these attributes and thus meet the need for fun and pleasure. It has also been shown that aspects of playing for relaxation can result in pleasure even if there is less learning involved in the process.

But because these video games offer an experience that is customizable for individual players, this may allow for more learning about oneself and how others interact with the gameplay challenges. Players may be able to understand which types of games meet their needs for relaxation and individual coping mechanisms. The result of this learning is a way for players to meet their basic need for pleasure and fun because they alleviate feelings of anger, anxiety, or other forms incongruence that lead to displeasure.

Freedom

Glasser (1998) explained that choice theory is built upon the notion that people are free to make choices in their lives and control their mental health more so than other counseling theories dictate. He explained that people using choice theory work under a belief of freedom through choices. Glasser pointed out that people's quality worlds are made up of the ideal self and the relationships with others that help produce that ideal. These optimal relationships are healthy and productive in each of the quality worlds. Through these relationships and the choices that occur on a daily basis, Glasser proposed that choice and control in peoples' lives were imperative to creating an effective quality world and thus a well life. This factor of choice and autonomy to make decisions was present in each of the participants' experiences regarding their video game play. Players of console-based video games make the most meaning out of the freedom involved in game environments. Because they were able to forage into the surroundings and make choices on their progression through the game, a sense of autonomy is nearly always present. They were able to act upon their own accord in almost all scenarios and their ability to control the surroundings was present the majority of the time within the game. Through this ability to decide where to go, who to talk to, and how to progress the story enabled a belief that they have control over their character's path and to a certain extent, the environment around them. This is not always experienced in real-life. In a way, this is analogous to that of the quality world that Glasser outlined in choice theory (Glasser, 1998, 2000).

Players are able to manipulate the digital world to their liking or to an extent more so than in real life which created opportunities for exploration into new decisions and identities. This aspect of video games creates a safe place to explore and try new things seemingly allowing participants to open up to questions of their personality and identity in ways they would likely be less hastened to do in real-life.

Furthermore, players are able to use console-based video games as a way to explore decisions and actions in an environment that did not return real-life consequences. Additionally, another meaning set apparent in gameplay is the freedom to explore personality traits in which players wouldn't normally engage. This manifests in games, as being evil or choosing to make decisions that were not positive or classically hero-oriented. This experience is important to players because it allows them to experience a personality they would not try to be in real-life. When asked, participants in this study had difficulty explaining why this was appealing. Some said it was "fun" or "just different." It seemed that curiosity was an important factor, as participants noted they gained pleasure for being someone they wouldn't normally be. This scenario lends a unique opportunity for choice theorists to evaluate.

The basic need of freedom in people's lives manifests in different ways for different people. It seems that the participants' experiences and interpretations of their experiences are implying that they gained an opportunity to try out choices that would normally not be appreciated in real-life. The ability to have a choice to be evil without the real-world consequences seemed to simultaneously provide an outlet for people, while also satisfying a need for freedom and choices.

Though for some players, utilizing video games to act out different forms or completely different identities was not a preferred use of their gameplay. They have trouble differentiating their personal values from the in-game avatars' decision-making values. Even though the consequences in games do not affect players' real lives in a concrete way, they still cannot separate their decision making and conscience from the video game storyline. Though, inherently, video games do not always meet players' needs for freedom and choices. Ultimately, players must find utility in the choices that video games offer for the gameplay to meet needs. And in the case of these players that have difficulty aligning with choices or actions opposing their values, video games do not meet their need for freedom in this way.

It seems that some players make an alliance with the game characters and storyline that prevents them from acting in a way that is unlike their normal real life personality or identity. For others, the connection may not be present or may not be powerful enough to warrant a personality or identity change. What this could possibly mean is that video games offer multiple sets of options for players to engage in the gameplay. For some games, it may be a direct intention of the developers to allow this type of freedom. For other games, it suggests that the game developers want a certain level of control over the experiences a player must go through to complete the game. This would be a case where some games operate on a linear path versus others to work from a more non-linear path and offer more options for the player. For a counselor working with clients who played video games, this distinction would have to be fleshed out and discussed in order to understand the clients' perspectives on the amount of control and choices they have in the game environment. Though, either way, players still have the option to keep playing; it's just that some games allow more autonomy to control the actions of the storyline than others.

It seems that players view their gameplay from various angles. For some, video games are an avenue to explore a completely new identity. For others, a different form of identity is used to progress through the game, maybe one that took more chances but still operated from the same moral values as their real life version. Still others work from the standpoint that their in-game avatar or character will traverse the video game world under the closest approximation of what their identity is in real life.

These data from this study imply that certain players are able to dissociate from the in-game decisions and storylines and others cannot or choose not to dissociate. Through a choice theory lens, this indicates that players have yet another choice when it comes to video game engagement. While the in-game decisions are present, the choice to apply values from real life also exists. This stands to support the idea that in most situations, people have a choice of their activities and by extension in their mental health. In this case, the activity of console-based video games offers multiple levels of freedom for the player.

This component of video games produces three different scenarios for players in regards to freedom of game engagement: (a) players can use their own identity and values to influence the game's characters and story arc, (b) players can deviate from their identity to influence the game's characters into a personality opposite of their own in real life, (c) players can try out certain decisions that stray from their values and but will also maintain their real-life values in other decisions in the game. While not all console-based games allow for this much freedom, it seems that if the player is looking for an experience where their decisions and values can be explored, the options are available across different kinds of games.

Nitsche (2008) explained that console-based video games (and video games in general) are different from other forms of entertainment media because of the players' roles in the games. Control over the actions in the game, although different between each game, allows for a sense of control that other media do not normally allow. Nitsche deduced that because of this control aspect, video game players would be able to adopt different identities within the digital environments, which could lead to numerous opportunities of autonomy and choice.

In nearly all console-based video games, players are able to control their surroundings. It enables them to feel a sense of control over how the environment reacted to them. Several participants in this study noted that their actions and decisions over their digital avatars contributed to a feeling of control not present in other forms of media such as the previously mentioned movies or most types of books. Thus video games change the perspective on how events take place in games in relation to the player. One participant noted that horror games have the potential to be even scarier than movies of similar ilk because the choices in the game were left to game players. Hypothetically, the choice to move through the dark alley is that of players, and subsequently, the consequences from that choice are also of the players.

For players, controlling the actions within video games creates a deeper connection to the avatars and relationships in which they engaged within the storyline. This connection facilitates a sense of urgency to help the characters and care about them when, as they previously commented, there were no real-life consequences. Nonetheless, players report being emotionally attached to the digital characters and their respective challenges placed before them, and by extension, the players. The control seems to equate to a higher sense of meaning for the players who feel responsible for the actions in the games and seem to hold themselves accountable in many cases. This potentially could be a foundation to understand what it means to people to show empathy and compassion to others, despite those others being digital entities.

Glasser (1985, 1998) believed that people's behavior was controlled by themselves and that this concept could change the way people viewed situations. He proposed that through reflection of behavior and the motivation set from the knowledge that they can control it would allow people the freedom and confidence to change their lives. He felt that if people were lacking control in their lives it would manifest in a sense of meaninglessness and loss of purpose. These instances of control in console-based video games suggest that video game environments and mechanics offer the opportunity for players to satisfy their need for freedom of choice and control in their lives.

This could potentially also influence how counseling could be done with video game-playing clients. Counselors could use video games as an analogy of control; to explain to clients that they did have control over their behavior and thus the ability to change. Further discussion of the counseling ramifications of video game engagement is explored in the following recommendations for counseling practice section of this study.

Theme Outside of Choice Theory's Basic Psychological Needs: Gamer Regret

A theme that seems to be present in some game players' experiences is gamer regret. Although each participant in this study gave several positive aspects of consolebased video game engagement, a few participants commented on their regret and reluctance playing video games. The core meaning of their comments suggested that the results from the games were not real or substantial in a way that painting, photo editing, gardening, or other types of hobbies might be. The results of this were that other people who did not play games saw the activity as futile at best and detrimental at worst. Even though console-based video games and video game culture in general has grown more mainstream since its inception, it is still stigmatized. Interestingly, participants who spoke about gamer regret also commented on achievement and self-worth that are derived from video games. The central struggle seems to be that the challenges of video games and challenges of other endeavors did not match.

This is particularly interesting from the lens that choice theory provides, in that Glasser (1998) and Wubbolding (1991) explained that needs are met by people in their own way. Counselors should not direct or judge a way that someone sees their quality world (other than in terms of self-harm and harm to others). With this in mind, players are simultaneously fulfilling needs of power, love and belonging, freedom, and pleasure while also condemning the same activity. This imbalance of thoughts reflects the possible culture of console-based video games players. In one respect, players see the benefits of console-based video games. But on another hand, the common trope that video games serve little purpose outside occasional entertainment continues to be a topic within video game culture (Bissell, 2011; McGonigal, 2011).

There are millions of game players throughout the world (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014), the data from this study suggested that there could be a group of game players that have a skewed sense of their activity. Many factors could contribute to this perspective. While satisfying in many regards, for some players, the pervasive thought that video games offer no "real" benefits such as a physical product to showcase is apparent in their experiences.

McGonigal (2011) explained that this viewpoint is precisely what undermines the true value of gameplay and how it assists people in their lives. She argued that console- based video games (and other forms of games) have significant and

research-based benefits. Though, the population at large refutes this claim based on anecdotal instances and the common misperception that video game players derive very little from video game engagement. At best this population views video games as little more than enjoyment. And at worst, video games are a mindless and possibly malicious activity (Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Stuart, 2012, 2013).

The data from this study suggest that there could be a contingent of players who feel pangs of guilt because of their video game engagement. For the video game industry, this aspect of gamer regret would seem to be an uphill battle for it to overcome. Whereas players have been shown to discuss in-depth portrayals of the benefits of their gameplay, it seems that all of them are not convinced of the benefits compared to other types of activities. This attitude may suggest that feelings of self-accomplishment that these players felt can be separated from feelings of self-worth. The participants that commented on this may be feeling a sense of empty accomplishment from their perspective. However, what they may not be taking into account is that their own need satisfaction varies from others and gets met in unique ways (Wubbolding, 1991, 2000).

In regards to mental health clients, clinicians must take the time to understand clients' quality worlds and how they might satisfy their basic needs. Glasser (1998, 2000) and Wubbolding (2000) advocated that counselors must build a therapeutic alliance with their clients and understand that basic needs are multifaceted for each one of them. Additionally, clients may not fully understand their own basic needs and their quality worlds.

This section discussed participants who concurrently praised video games also were ambivalent about their gameplay. This should come as a reminder to counselors that even when clients reflect upon the activities that may meet their basic needs, they may not fully comprehend the meaning of the experience or the caveats within the experience that are beneficial toward meeting basic needs.

Limitations

In-person interviews could have caused certain possible participants to avoid volunteering due to shyness, a perceived social stigma, or other types of social related fears specifically from meeting with a researcher in person. To lessen this effect while in interviews, the researcher attempted to build rapport with each participant. By using counseling attending skills, the researcher attempted to foster a comfortable interview environment for the participant.

A second limitation was the amount of time allotted for participants to vocalize their experiences. Participants were given an open time allowance for communicating their experiences in the interviews, though only one interview was scheduled. If participants thought of additional information after their interviews they had to contact the researcher to report added information for their interview. The researcher sent the respective transcripts to the participants for member checking. The transcript email offered a chance for participants to add information to their data set.

A third limitation was having only one researcher analyzing the data. Personal bias may have influenced the experiences of the participants. While data analysis from my perspective is a necessary part of interpretative phenomenological analysis and typological analysis, it should still be noted that it could have a detrimental effect on the core essence of the data. Additionally, if added researchers read through the data, other themes and interpretations could have been uncovered or written up in a different and possibly beneficial way. To offset possible data analysis misinterpretation, a data audit log was used in conjunction with member checking, and using a peer reviewer.

Recommendations for Counseling Application

This section provides recommendations on ways that counselors can assist clients into a place of wellness using the findings from this study. The beginning of this section gives an explanation on the reasoning for the age of participants and the relation to counseling for this choice. The section then transitions into each of the basic needs and how counselors can use the data in this study for counseling application.

The first need that is discussed is love and belonging. This segment delineates types of questions that can be used to understand players' connections to characters in games and real-life social aspects of video games outside of the digital environment. The second need that is outlined is fun and pleasure. These questions focus on why and how players find the experience of playing video games to be enjoyable. The third need detailed is power. This set of questions revolves around the concept of self-accomplishment, self-worth, and self-efficacy. The fourth need that is discussed is freedom. These questions are geared toward counselors exploring how autonomy and choices in video games reflect upon players. Each segment includes tables (Tables 2–5) containing questions that not only get at the experience of playing video games but also

lead into conversations about how the video games are related to or influence real life for the clients.

The final segment of this section details potential obstacles for using these questions in sessions. Resources are outlined in Table 6 to better equip counselors seeking information to relay to clients.

Recommendations

It was my hope as the author of this research study, that the results would suggest a variety of possible applications for counselors looking for creative ways to work with clients. With 59% of the United States population now engaged in video games, counselors should be prepared to work with clients who engage in the activity. From 2003 to 2013, video game sales have more than doubled (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014). The likelihood of counselors encountering clients who play video games is no longer small.

The participants in this study were chosen to be 18 or over for two reasons. The average age of a video game player is 31 years old (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014) and thus an adult, contrary to popular perception of the mainstream that video games are mainly played by youths (Langlois, 2013; Stuart, 2012, 2013). NIMH (n.d.) reported that in 2012 there were about 43.7 million U.S. adults aged 18 or older with any mental illness. Kessler, Chiu, Demler, and Walters (2005a) stated that 26.2% of Americans, age 18 and older, suffer from a mental disorder in a given year. Kessler, Chiu, Demler, and Walters (2005b) reported that Major Depressive Disorder onset has a median age of 32 and Bipolar Disorder median age of onset is 25 years and Generalized Anxiety Disorder median age of onset is 31 years old. Furthermore, other disorders, including Panic

Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Schizophrenia, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder have a median onset within five years of the 25 to 35 age range (Kessler et al., 2005b; Robins & Regier, 1991).

For the purposes of this study, I chose to evaluate participants who were adults and closer to the age range in which several types of mental illness onsets were present. I deemed this age group (18 and over) to be the most appropriate because I believe practitioners and counseling educators could possibly glean information on a population of clients that may be underserved.

Video games offer a potentially effective arena for mental health interventions (Granic, Lobel, & Engels, 2013; Langlois, 2013). The authors noted that clients may not establish trust in traditional counseling interventions such as journaling, and thus may not be able to comprehend how or why they are being asked to change their thoughts or behavior. Granic et al. (2013) and Langlois (2013) suggested that through the game mechanics, engagement in play and video game structure could play a role in treatment for clients. Also, McGonigal (2011) and Bissell (2011) remarked on the ability of video games to open up avenues of discussion regarding how players see their gaming experience and the effect it has on their lives.

Wubbolding (1991, 2000) and Glasser (1990, 1998, 2000) explained that people fill their quality worlds with relationships and pictures that they believe will meet their basic psychological needs. Furthermore, Wubbolding and Glasser believed that people's needs are met in various and unique ways. They proposed that counselors working with clients, whose needs were not being met, make every effort possible to understand how each of the clients conceptualizes how they would meet the needs.

This study was an effort to understand one type of experience, console-based video game engagement and if the experience of people engaging in it fulfilled any of choice theory's four basic psychological needs. Presuming that the clients in question engage with console-based video games, and in many ways, any type of video game, a counselor can glean possibly significant information from clients' gameplay. Counselors can explore their clients' decisions, choice in games, whom they play with, and how the game's story and characters affect the players emotionally (Langlois, 2013).

It should be noted that each client's gameplay, choices, and how much they play are on a sliding scale. For some players, games could be an important facet in their lives. For others, video games are easily described and do not present much depth. As with any client or concern, careful questioning and curiosity in each client's story is required to understand adequately the meaning they derive from the experience.

As it has been written in other sections of this study, console-based video games function when players engage with them by themselves or in a group of other players. How clients explain this aspect of their gameplay can be important to give counselors an idea of how the social lives of their clients are composed. Responses to these questions will also help facilitate conversation on the general love and belonging need for all people. Clients can explain their gameplay in relation to social components and their concept of belonging to a group, whether it is with real players or within the game. It is the job of the counselor to ask as many questions as needed to see connections between real-life love and belonging (see Table 2) versus a simulated experience in the games. Furthermore, the meaning clients derive from this gameplay and how it meets or does not meet needs for them will aid the counselor in comprehending clients' perspectives of their respective social needs.

Table 2

Video Game Engagement Questions—Love/Belonging

Basic Need	Questions
Love/Belonging	Do you play online with friends and what's that like for you? Do you play online with strangers and what is that experience like for you? Do you play with friends in person? What do you think about the characters in the storyline? Do you play on a team with others in the game? Are they your friends or strangers? Or are they in-game characters?

A discussion regarding the types of games that client's play and the storylines they find most enjoyable will encourage dialogue regarding their understanding of fun and pleasure. This may or may not include the experience of learning new skills and experiencing new events they may not have been a part of previously. These events and the objectives to overcome them could include topics of relationships between characters or events such as human or natural disasters or moral dilemmas not yet faced by the player. While some of these may cause temporary frustration to the player, overcoming these challenges may lead to pleasure felt by the participant. As Glasser (1998) pointed out, fun and pleasure are linked to learning. Whether it is learning new skills or using skills to complete objectives and succeed. Specific questions could be asked to get at the experience of the client to explore their conception of fun and pleasure in this context (see Table 3).

Table 3

Video	Game	Engagement	Ouestions -	-Fun/Pleasure
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Basic Need	Questions
Fun/Pleasure	What is fun about the game? What part of the game is most gratifying? Is there a component of learning new skills or about new people throughout the game? Is it more fun to play alone or with others? Could you tell me about a time you were extremely pleased with your gameplay?

While fun and pleasure may be met by overcoming challenges, these aspects of games also lead into topics of accomplishment and self-worth. For many of the participants in this study overcoming obstacles and gaining achievement in tasks was enjoyable to them. This is also related to the basic need of power. Glasser (1998) explained that people need to feel a sense of purpose and accomplishment in order to fulfill the need of power. Because video games are often rooted in a structured environment where objectives and obstacles are frequent, the chance for obtaining the feeling of accomplishment is common (Juul, 2005; Langlois, 2013; Newman, 2004; Nitsche, 2008). This aspect of power was evident in one participant's words when he commented that by using video games, he was able to remind himself that they could master skills in order to overcome challenges.

In the counseling context, this potentially has significant implications for reinforcing self-worth and self-efficacy. When searching for ways that clients are achieving, video games can be used as a conduit to explore ways they are already navigating obstacles and completing goals. In this way, counselors can work with use questions (see Table 4) to explore clients' views of power in their lives and how their gameplay could be used as a measure to gauge their sense of fulfillment in the power basic need.

Table 4

Basic Need	Questions
Power	Can you tell me about your character in the game? What are your objectives in the storyline? What do you mean to the other characters in the storyline? What have you achieved in the game so far? Or hope to? What is it about the game that makes you feel confident?

Video Game Engagement Questions—Power

Counselors should also pay attention to the types of stories, character story arcs, and personalities in the games their clients play. More specifically, information about the storylines and characters could provide evidence of how clients see themselves and their identities (or what they hope their identities to be; Langlois, 2013). Video games offer various and complex environments for game players to either adopt a new identity or create a new one (Corliss, 2011; Wendler, 2014). This would be an opportunity for counselors to explore what clients envision their optimal identities or personalities to be

in a world that does not have the real-life consequences normally associated with exposing themselves to the real world. Additionally, a discussion about video game environments and choices within them can offer information on how clients make decisions and their rational behind them (Langlois, 2013). These types of conversations and questions (see Table 5) hint at the basic need of freedom and open up dialogue on autonomy and the ability to make choices in the clients' lives.

Table 5

Basic Need	Questions
Freedom	How much control do you have in the game? Do you prefer to have a linear path through the game or more freedom to choose what to do? If you like the choice, what are your favorite types of missions/objectives? What choices did you make in the game? Do you think you use your personality in the game or what you want it to be? Do you get to do things in the game you wouldn't in real life?

Video Game Engagement Questions—Freedom

Application Aspects to Keep in Mind

Langlois (2013) commented that using media as assistance in the counseling relationship, the counselor must be fluent in the type of media that is being discussed with the client. Using the questions listed in the tables, counselors can obtain information about the types of games being played and how clients view their gameplay involvement. While certain types of games were repeatedly mentioned by participants as helpful in various ways, caution should be assigned to counselors looking to offer certain games to clients in hopes of them obtaining particular basic needs through gameplay. While this practice seems promising, similar to using movies or books for clients to read or watch, the counselor must be fully versed in the content of the media before assigning it to the client. Most console-based video games take much longer than movies to complete. Additionally, many of these console-based video games require a unique set of skills that must be learned independently from game to game. Although there are similarities between genres of games, each typically strives to function differently and thus require a period of time to acclimate to for successful traversal through the game's objectives.

For these reasons, it is difficult to recommend a specific game or set of games for a particular fulfillment of a basic psychological need or set of needs. Video game culture and technology change rapidly and as such, the content and gameplay does as well. However, based on the participants' data and research from the literature review, a couple recommendations can be made to certain types of games. As one participant noted, he frequently played a football game because the inherent clock of the game allowed him not to get lost in the game and lose track of time. This aspect could be used for clients who desire playing a game but need a clock to determine when to stop. Almost universally, sports games require the player to operate within the confines of traditional structure thus limiting the possibility for the client to play too long. It should be noted however, like most video games, settings can be changed and sports games time limits can be altered to a longer form than used normally.

An additional option for counselors is to play video games alongside of clients. This could take the form of playing the game as a co-op experience, where counselors and clients forge a 'team' and traverse challenges together. Another form would be to observe and talk with clients as they engage in the games. The questions in Tables 2–5 could be used alongside of the observation.

I would not recommend playing against clients in a game unless they specifically ask for the experience. This scenario has the potential to create a power differential that may distract from the counseling relationship. However, judgment may be used to decide which activity would be most beneficial to the treatment of the clients. If there is value to a particular way of engaging with clients and video games, then just as any other intervention, it should be utilized. To take part in this activity, counselors must be willing to learn the game, at least at a conceptual level in order to keep up with the client's play-through. While this could be intimidating for counselors, the potential to learn about clients and their thought processes is large. Counselors could be privy to decisions, choices, and reflection as it happens to clients' consciousness.

Because of the freedom of games that allows players to make choices and create their own characters, players can realize a sense of autonomy they do not normally have or could ever have in their lives. By being able to create their own avatar in games, players can experience a new identity or use their own into a new set of adventures unobtainable to them in real life. These options could serve clients well given the right circumstances and willingness. However, care must be taken to understand what clients may be looking for in the game and what type of storyline and values they may have going into the experience. By asking questions of clients and understanding the concerns from all angles, counselors should be able to ascertain what might be a possible positive
intervention. It is recommended to work with clients (or their guardians/parents if the client is a minor) and have them search out games that they might find interesting while also being helpful towards their concern. In this way, the client is still in control of their goals. For instance, if a particular client is having concerns about not having freedom and autonomy in his or her life, a game that is non-linear and offers numerous choices to the player may be helpful for the client to obtain a sense of freedom in his or her life.

Other aspects to note are ratings of the game and whether they have the financial ability to obtain and engage with the video game. Counselors should always be cognizant of the ratings of video game, similar to that of film ratings. This is especially important for clients who are minors. Video games traditionally have been expensive technology, and current models are no exception. As with any intervention, care must be taken to understand if the intervention is possible and reasonable for the client to complete. While there are possibilities of renting video games and systems, buying the console systems and games can easily reach into hundreds of dollars. In addition to these components, setting limits on engagement should be part of the discussion.

While many of the participants noted the positive aspects of video game engagement, two participants of this study explained that they had some guilt around the time they spent engaged in games. This brings up the topic of over-engagement and possibly addiction. The *DSM-5* does not currently have a diagnosis for console-video game addiction specifically (APA, 2013). With that in mind, I suggest a line of questioning that would seek to understand if the gameplay is causing stress and impairment throughout the scope of players' lives. This line of questioning could explore how pervasive the gameplay across clients' lives, how they feel emotionally before and after they play, and how they perceive the activity fitting into their lives. From this information, it can then be determined if video game play is the root of an issue or part of larger concern.

Despite the data in this study and research studies devoted to video game engagement presented in this paper, the clinician must understand the concern of clients fully and individually rather than jump to conclusions based on mentions of video game play (Langlois, 2013). Clients may first mention engaging in video games or it is discussed as a possible intervention. It is entirely possible that some game-playing clients will see their game habits, choice in games, and in-game decisions as wholly different than their judgments in the real world. This study was not intended to prescribe a counseling structure with a strict use of console-based video games as the main component of the counseling process. The therapeutic alliance is still the most important component of counseling (Meyers, 2014) and should be addressed with utmost importance over questions about particular gameplay experience or suggestion of playing certain games for basic need fulfillment. Again, counselors should have an intimate knowledge of the video games being discussed in the counseling relationship. The best way to understand video games is through questions of clients and personal research of the games. Table 6 provides resources on the rating systems of video games and current news of video games.

Table 6

Video Game Ratings and Informational Resources

Resources

theesa.com/parent-resources/ esrb.org pbs.org/kcts/videogamerevolution/impact/esrb.html gamepolitics.com

This study was an attempt to offer an additional way for counselors to connect with clients when attempting to comprehend their quality worlds and how they meet their four basic psychological needs. The data have shown that the participants' console-based video game experience and resulting meaning making can offer a window into their quality worlds and how they meet their unique and complex basic psychological needs.

Future Research

This study focused on one particular type of experience in which people chose to engage for different reasons. More specifically, it was one type of video game experience within the larger context of video game culture. With the proliferation of console-based video games within mainstream American culture (Ipsos MediaCT, 2014), this study was an attempt to understand if the activity was a way for players to meet their basic psychological needs as seen through choice theory.

The data suggested that for many participants, their basic psychological needs were fulfilled in some way. Though as mentioned, how they did so was varied and distinctive. This study focused on console-based video games, which are part of an ever increasing set of video game technology. There are numerous differences in gameplay experiences, such as the unpredictable and constantly evolving social component, the types of games played, the ages of the people playing, and the family perspective on the video game engagement. Each one of these aspects of video game engagement are potential starting points for future research. Specifically from this study, participants recounted basic needs that were met in varying ways.

Some participants commented that they met the basic need for power from video game engagement. They did this through the digital worlds with which they engaged while playing, either through competition with other real players or within the storyline of a particular game. This aspect of digital power versus power in reality should be researched in further studies. Implications from studies of this sort could produce data that shed light on whether the basic need of power from digital sources is equal to or greater than power achieved in the real world setting.

Participants also noted in this study that connections to characters in games functioned, at least temporarily, as surrogates for real-life social engagement. Future research should be done to explore these connections with digital characters and how social needs are satisfied. Additional research should also be conducted on the emotional aspects of video games and their role in teaching players how to recognize and deal with feelings. Bazelon (2014) discussed a game on mobile devices called *IF*, that attempts to teach children how to feel empathy for others. Though games that relate to players' understanding of feelings are starting to be produced, research needs to look into the action formation of the respective games' teachings. In other participant excerpts, discussion of player personality and integration into video games was noted. Participants commented on perceptions of their personality as they learned of different ways to engage in a particular game and with other players. This type of data could have implications toward using personality measures such as the NEO Five-Factor Inventory to explore personality traits and their association to video game engagement. With this in mind, specific research could also attempt to link certain types of games and personality types to ascertain any type of connection of behavior or thoughts.

Other participants noted that they were able to make choices in games that were not available to them in real life. Research needs to be done in this area of freedom in digital spaces and how this possible obtainment of autonomy affects real life behavior. Whereas this study concentrated on console-based video games, research into choices and autonomy could be beneficial in other areas of social interaction and digital spaces such as social media.

In this study, all the participants praised video games for their ability to have a positive impact on their lives. However, a few participants noted that they felt some guilt over their gameplay. This aspect of engagement could be researched further to explore the concept of why players are both promoters of video games benefits and also detractors of the gameplay. Additionally, investigations into video game addiction are needed, as the prevalence and interactivity of video games rises. Currently there is no diagnosis for video game addiction in the *DSM-5*. However, online Internet gaming has

been included in the section of the *DSM-5* to promote further research into the video game culture.

For these reasons and several more, continued research is necessary to more fully understand choice theory's basic needs obtainment in console-based video games, and video game engagement in general. In addition, this study concentrated on the lived experiences of the participants. This phenomenological approach was used to understand the lived experiences and how the participants made meaning out of their experiences. Further research using different qualitative and quantitative research methods would be beneficial to the literature as the topic of video games and culture continues to be an area of interest for researchers and clinicians.

For instance, grounded theory research could produce data and a theory of how video game use can be integrated into counseling practice on consistent basis as appropriate for each client. Data to examine in that type of study could focus on the structure of goal obtainment in video games and how it could be applied to goal structures in counseling sessions.

From a quantitative standpoint, a researcher could use several different types of designs to get useful data for the video game and counseling field. A correlational design could be employed to examine the relationship between open-world games and the choices that are afforded to players and how this impacts the basic need of freedom for players. Another quantitative design that could be used is a quasi-experimental study. In this type of study, researchers could analyze the effects of playing puzzle-oriented games, for clients lacking confidence in succeeding over tasks. This could potentially shed light

on how confidence is felt and measured as it relates to digital challenges versus real life versions.

In these different designs, each could potentially uncover data points and themes that could expand knowledge on the connection between video games and real life behavior and thoughts. And by using different research methodologies, fruitful knowledge could be gained by these wide-ranging lenses in research design that could be helpful by producing further research ideas and generalizable data. In all of these cases, studies that explore the different facets of these topics can interpret how people make choices and meet their basic needs in varying ways.

Summary

It has been debated that the American majority population has viewed video games as a youth pastime and thus has little purpose in adults' lives (Bissell, 2011; Donovan, 2010; Kent, 2001; Langlois, 2013; McGonigal, 2011; Stuart, 2012, 2013). However, Stuart (2013), McGonigal (2011), and Langlois (2013) explained that adults engage in video games for a myriad of reasons similar to how others engage in other hobbies or pastimes. Furthermore, Stuart (2013) challenged the idea that a person can easily measure an activity as being more fun, helpful, or educational than another. In choice theory, how a person meets their needs is varied and sometimes difficult to understand for others (Glasser, 1998, 2000; Wubbolding, 1991, 2000). Through this study, I attempted to understand how these adults viewed their video game engagement through the lens of choice theory's four basic psychological needs. By conducting a phenomenological study, I was able to gather experiences and meaning from the participants in regards to their console-based video game engagement. Through experience and meaning collection I was able to infer themes and patterns between the participants. Within these themes and patterns I analyzed their potential for fulfilling choice theory's four basic psychological needs. Through the data analyzing procedures, I was able to typify these themes and understand how each of the participants made meaning from their video game experiences and how it related to basic need satisfaction. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Appendix A

Demographics Sheet

Age What is your age? _____

Gender

What is your sex?

 \square Male

 \square Female

□ Trans-gender (MTF or FTM)

Race/ethnicity

How do you describe yourself? (Please check the option that best describes you.)

- D American Indian or Alaska Native
- □ Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- \Box Asian or Asian American
- □ Black or African American
- □ Hispanic or Latino
- □ Non-Hispanic White
- \square Biracial

Marital status

Are you:

 \square Married

 \square Divorced

□ Widowed

 \square Separated

 \Box A member of an unmarried couple

 \Box Single

Family

How many children do you have?

- \Box I have no children.
- □ Less than 6 years old? Number of Children _____

□ 6 through 12 years old? Number of Children _____

□ 13 through 17 years old? Number of Children _____

Employment status

Are you currently:

- \square Employed for wages
- \square Self-employed
- \Box Out of work for more than 1 year
- \Box Out of work for less than 1 year
- □ Homemaker
- □ Student
- \square Retired
- \square Unable to work

Education completed

What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

- \Box Never attended school
- □ Grades K through 11 (Some elementary through High school)
- □ Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)
- □ College 1 year to 3 years (Some college, technical, vocational, or associates degree)
- □ College 4 years (College graduate)
- □ Graduate School (Advance Degree)

Amount of Gameplay Hours

In your estimation, how many hours per week do you engage with console video games?

 $\begin{array}{c} 2 & 2 \\ \hline & 4 \\ \hline & 4 \\ \hline & 6 \\ \hline & 6 \\ \hline & 10 \\ \hline & 10 \\ \hline & 15 \\ \hline & 20 \\ \hline \end{array}$

Genres of Games

Select (one or more) the genre of games do you most frequently play.

- □ Shooters (Call of Duty, Halo, Gears of War, etc.)
- □ Adventure (The Last of Us, Uncharted, Super Mario Bros., etc.)
- □ Strategy (Halo Wars, Endwar, Command & Conquer, etc.)
- □ Sports (Madden, FIFA, Forza Motorsport, etc.)
- □ Role-Playing (Final Fantasy, Diablo, Mass Effect, etc.)
- □ Other:

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Explain how you started gaming on consoles? And roughly what age?

What was your experience gaming for the first time?

Please describe a particular experience that stands out while playing during your "formative years" of gaming (first five years) if you can remember one.

What do you think your life would be like without video games?

Additionally, please describe your experience gaming online with people that you know and those who are strangers to you.

What must a game provide to you, for it to become one of your favorites?

Have console video games ever fulfilled a need in your life that "real-life" people or communities were not able to do at a particular time or overall?

Explain an instance where you cared or had an emotional attachment to a character in a console video game.

From your perspective, what is the difference between gaming, watching a movie, or reading a book?

How would you describe your preferences for gaming over your gameplay years?

How would you describe friends that you only game with? How would you compare them to friends outside of the gaming community?

Please explain a time(s) where you chose to game to express or release emotions or feelings?

Please tell me your thoughts on the possibility of gaming being able to fulfill psychological needs for a person?

As gaming consoles grow in their technological ability there has been a trend to add more choice and morality in games. Have you ever played a game that involved the ability to make a choice that was seen as good or bad? If so, could you describe the decision making process.

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

Appendix C

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study



Study Title: An Interpretive Phenomenological Inquiry Into Fulfillment of Choice Theory's Four Basic Psychological Needs Through Console Video Game Engagement

Principal Investigator: *Dr. Steve Rainey* **Investigators:** *Dr. Betsy Page and Joe Alexander*

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you. There is no monetary compensation for participation.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to understand how the four basic psychological needs of choice theory (love/belonging, power, freedom and fun) are possibly being met by console-based video game engagement.

Procedures

Participants will be required to conduct one, 60-minute interview with a study investigator, Joe Alexander. Participants will be interviewed by Joe Alexander using questions formulated to attempt to answer the research questions regarding choice theory's basic needs (love/belonging, power, freedom and fun) and console-based video game engagement. The interview will audio recorded for data analysis after the interview has been completed. The data will then be listened to and transcribed by Joe Alexander.

Each transcript will then be emailed to the respective participants. By signing this consent form, the participant agrees to receive the interview transcript via email from Joe Alexander and check the transcript of this interview for accuracy. The participant has the chance to change or add to the data set via an email to the researcher informing him that they wish to schedule another interview to record different or additional data. If the participants confirm that they are satisfied with the data they have given, Joe Alexander will then analyze the data for themes and patterns eventually using the data for the results section of the study.

Total participation will take approximately two and a half hours. This includes email communication, consent form review and signing, demographic sheet completion, the in-

person interview, and reading through the transcript for member checking. Overall time does not take travel time to the interview location.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography

During the interview the participant and Joe Alexander will be recorded via an audio recorder. At the end of the interview, the participant may request that they listen to the audio recording of his or her interview. The audio recording will be used to transcribe the data into a written form by Joe Alexander. This will be used for member checking (checking with each participant to make sure the data is correct and there is nothing more to add to the data set) and data analysis. The transcripts will be used for coding of responses into themes and patterns, which will inform the results section of the study.

Benefits

This research will not benefit you directly. However, your participation in this study will help counselors better understand how people fulfill their basic psychological needs. This benefit may extend to your own understanding of your video game habits and concept of why you might engage in them. This could also benefit you by being able to describe to family members or partners why video games are important in your life. Furthermore, it may help you recognize fellow players' motivations and style of playing. For counselors who employ choice theory in their counseling, this study's results will aide them in understanding how engagement in video games could fulfill their basic psychological needs.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life. However, due to the nature of the inquiry there is a possibility that uncomfortable emotions and thoughts regarding game play and connections to your life will occur. Because the purpose of the study is to understand meaning and essence of video game engagement, it was possible that the participants had significant feelings and meaning attached to their game play. Some of the questions I ask may be uncomfortable for you to answer. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go on to the next question. You may ask to see the questions before deciding whether or not to participate in the study. Please feel free to ask questions regarding the interview questions. The researcher will provide a mental health contact card supplied from the Counseling & Human Development Center should the participants' feel they are in need of mental health services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Your pseudonym will be used in the data and report sections of this study. A digital document connecting your real name and pseudonym will be confidential. It will be password and virus protected. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from your study data. These physical documents will be kept in a locked container. Any digital versions will be stored on a password and security enabled computer device.

However, your name and email will be used to send transcripts for your review. Your real name will not be used in the transcription, data analysis, and report sections of this study. This data will be password and virus protected. This information will be confidential.

Your study related information will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Any identifying information will be kept in a secure location and only the researchers will have access to the data. Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used.

Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, or to certain federal agencies. Confidentiality may not be maintained if you indicate that you may do harm to yourself or others.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Joe Alexander at jalexan8@kent.edu (440-781-8384) or Dr. Betsy Page at 330-672-0696 or Dr. Steve Rainey at 330-672-0694. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

Consent Statement and Signature

I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

Participant Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

AUDIO RECORD CONSENT FORM

Appendix D

Audio Record Consent Form

AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLGOGICAL INQUIRY INTO FULFILLMENT OF CHOICE THEORY'S FOUR BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS THROUGH CONSOLE VIDEO GAME ENGAGEMENT

Principal Investigator: Dr. Steve Rainey Investigators: Dr. Betsy Page and Joe Alexander

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded interview about choice theory's basic needs, goal achievement and console-based video game engagement as part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis. I agree that Joe Alexander may audio-record this interview. The date, time and place of the interview will be mutually agreed upon.

Signature

Date

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that I:

____want to listen to the recording _____do not want to listen to the recording

Sign now below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

Joe Alexander $\underline{may} / \underline{may not}$ (circle one) use the audio-tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for (check all that you are willing):

_____this research project _____publication _____presentation at professional meetings

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT FLYER

Appendix E

Participant Flyer

Volunteers Needed for Research Study

Participants needed for a research study: "How do console-based video game players make meaning of Choice Theory's four basic psychological needs while engaging in a video game experience?"



Description of Project: This purpose of this study is to understand how the four basic psychological needs of Choice Theory are possibly met by console-based video game engagement.

To participate: You must currently play console-based video games. There is no monetary compensation for participation.

To learn more, contact Joe Alexander, at jalexan8@kent.edu.

This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Steve Rainey and Dr. Betsy Page, Counseling & Human Development Services Department, and has been reviewed and approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. IRB #14-240

Joe Alexander Jalexan8@kent.edu Video Game Research Study
Joe Alexander Jalexan8@kent.edu Video Game Research Study
Joe Alexander Jalexan&@kent.edu Video Game Research Study
Joe Alexander Jalexan8@kent.edu Video Game Research Study

APPENDIX F

PARTICIPATION EMAIL SCRIPT

Appendix F

Participation Email Script

Hello _____ (name of potential participant),

My name is Joe Alexander. I am a doctoral student conducting a research study for my dissertation to obtain my Ph.D. in the Counseling & Human Development Services program at Kent State University. I obtained your email information and name from one of your peers who believed that you may be suitable and willing to be a participant in my study. Please refer to the attachment to find a description of the study, qualifications to participant and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) information relevant to the study. If you are interested in being a participant in this study please email me at jalexan8@kent.edu. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Joe

Joe Alexander, M.Ed., LPC Graduate Assistant Department of Residence Services Doctoral Candidate Kent State University **APPENDIX G**

MEMBER CHECKING EMAIL SCRIPT

Appendix G

Member Checking Email Script

Hello _____ (name of potential participant),

We conducted an interview for a research study about console video game engagement and choice theory's basic psychological needs. As we had talked about before the interview, this is the member checking email with the attached transcription of your interview. The intention of this email is to allow you to read through your responses and make sure the information is correct and consistent with your experiences.

Your information will not be connected to your name but please let me know if you'd like parts/all of the interview to be removed and not shown to the public. Or, you are welcome to add to the data set. Please let know if you would like to do this by replying to this email with the information in the body of the email or an attachment. Or you can ask to schedule another interview if you'd prefer that process.

Lastly, if you believe the responses/data is satisfactory in its current state, then just reply that you do not wish to add any information or remove any data. Again, thank you for your participation. Let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing back from you with your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Joe

Joe Alexander, M.Ed., LPC Doctoral Candidate Kent State University jalexan8@kent.edu REFERENCES

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