



## Motivational characteristics of Turkish MMORPG players



Muhterem Dindar\*, Yavuz Akbulut

Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, Turkey

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Available online 11 February 2014

#### Keywords:

Online gaming  
Virtual reality  
MMORPG  
Self-determination Theory

### ABSTRACT

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) attract millions of online gamers all over the world. However, very few studies have addressed the nature of participants in these games through a robust theoretical background. Thus, the need for theory-based attempts to understand the characteristics of players in different contexts is urgent. The current study adapted a contemporary scale on gamer motivations with Turkish MMORPG members. Confirmatory factor analyses with 307 Turkish MMORPG players revealed that the scale worked effectively. Furthermore, the proposed factor structure and the structural equation model sheltering the interrelationships among the motivation components were supported with a theoretical background on the Self-determination Theory (SDT). It was observed that Turkish MMORPG players were mostly non-working and young males who demonstrated unique playing patterns. Their playing time was correlated with the level of education, body mass index and age. Advancement in the game, game mechanics and socializing were the leading motivations whereas teamwork has been given less importance. The study also revealed that the autonomy, competence and relatedness needs which are proposed by the SDT are not mutually exclusive components. Findings were discussed followed by implications and suggestions for further studies.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

The access to internet has become widespread since 1990s, which impacted people's working, socializing and entertainment behaviors. The Internet has offered a new multicultural context sheltering different virtual experiences for individuals to interact with each other. How and why people act in these worlds have gained considerable attention in contemporary social studies. Online gaming environments, specifically Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) constitute a curious type of these worlds where individuals spend a significant amount of their time.

MMORPGs are online games where players can create and control their own avatars to play with others either as allies or competitors in 3D graphical video environments (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). Competition, collaboration and social ability carry the utmost importance in MMORPGs (Christou, Law, Zaphiris, & Ang, 2013). In addition, players can create new virtual worlds and objects (Peterson, 2012) in addition to their unique personal stories (Wang, Yang, & Kuo, 2012). Like other online games, MMORPGs provide access to gaming features and ample

opportunities to get in touch with others (Williams, Yee, & Caplan, 2008). Players can also communicate through texting or audio messaging, which enriches the gaming experience with social interactions (Chen & Duh, 2007). Thus, it can be suggested that these games provide strong social bonds and positive feelings among their members (Yee, 2006).

In order to depict the mainstream gamer profiles and to interpret the gaming behaviors of MMORPG players, player demographics have been investigated in several studies. Findings revealed that the average age of gamers ranged from 24.77 through 31.16 (Griffiths, Davies, & Chappell, 2004; Qian, 2010; Williams et al., 2008; Yee, 2006). These findings suggest that contrary to general expectation, the majority of players were not adolescents. That is, playing MMORPGs were widespread among adults as well. The findings further suggested that adults spent more time in MMORPGs than adolescents. Furthermore, differences among the players in terms of gender were obvious. More specifically, the ratio of females to males in these environments was below 20%, which reveals that MMORPGs are generally male-dominated (Griffiths et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2008; Yee, 2006). On the other hand, some studies revealed that females spend more time in MMORPGs than males (Hussain & Griffiths, 2008). The average playing time in MMORPGs was substantial, which ranged from 22.1 through 25.8 h per week (Williams et al., 2008; Yee, 2006). Moreover, players were reported to be more educated than the general population, and their physical health status were not

\* Corresponding author. Address: Department of Computer Education & Instructional Technology, Anadolu University, 26470 Eskisehir, Turkey. Tel.: +90 (222) 335 0580x3456; fax: +90 (222) 335 0573.

E-mail address: [mdindar@anadolu.edu.tr](mailto:mdindar@anadolu.edu.tr) (M. Dindar).

worse than the national averages (Griffiths et al., 2004; Yee, 2006). All these studies resort to American samples in general. A different profile has been suggested by Qian (2010) who describes a typical Chinese MMORPG player as a high school student, an IT employee in his twenties or a non-working individual.

Even though the background information regarding MMORPG players has been documented to some extent, few studies examined how MMORPGs can affect or reflect such gamer characteristics. For instance, De Souza, e Silva, and Roazzi (2010) reported higher levels of logical-numerical performance and better scholastic skills among MMORPG players than non-player high school students. Suh, Kim, and Kim (2010) studied the effects of playing MMORPGs on English language education and found that MMORPG playing students had better listening, reading and writing scores than students who only had face-to-face instruction.

In aforementioned studies, the demographics of MMORPG players were mostly gathered from Northern American samples. In this regard, it is necessary to focus on the characteristics of players from different cultural backgrounds where the main language is not English. Moreover, worldwide MMORPGs mostly resort to English as the official language. This may be misleading while interpreting the player demographics. That is, a non-native English speaking gamer can refer to an educated, employed, regularly paid, wealthy or relatively aged player in some contexts. In other words, English use might be a prerequisite to play such games, which is a contaminating variable while interpreting the demographics. Thus, the current study aimed to fill in this gap and addressed gamer characteristics in popular MMORPGs operating in Turkish.

## 2. Motivations for game play in MMORPGs

One of the leading concerns of MMORPG studies is to identify the motivations of players to engage in such gaming environments. Bartle's (1996) player taxonomy was among the first studies to address player motivations in virtual worlds. He stated four main reasons why people enjoy Multi-User Dungeon (MUDs: ancestors of MMORPGs): To achieve in the game, explore it, socialize with others and even to dominate them. In the study, the players were grouped as achievers, socializers, explorers and killers. Although Bartle's classification was a good effort to understand the gamer motivations, some researchers are skeptic about the validity of his conclusions since they were not validated through empirical works (Griffiths et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2008; Yee, 2007). Among the critics, Griffiths et al. (2004) stated that sociability was the most (24.6%) tempting feature of online games, followed by the opportunity to group together with other players (10.2%), being part of a guild (10%), no ending (10%), assisting novices (6.9%), possibility to play solo (6.5%), using magic (5.7%), engaging in hand to hand combats (5.4%), role playing (5.2%) and player versus player engagements (3.3%).

Through reviewing 16 relevant articles on the topic, Sublette and Mullan (2012) examined consequences of playing MMO games and reported that while addicted or problematic gamers were

negatively affected from MMO playing, findings about other gamers are mostly positive. That is, gaming motivations were listed as enjoyment, achievement, friendship, and a sense of community.

Another viewpoint was proposed outside the MMORPG literature, and addressed the attachment to online virtual worlds in the context of Second Life (Zhou, Fang, Vogel, Jin, & Zhang, 2012). The study explained the continuance of intention for Second Life use with two main constructs: Affective commitment and calculative commitment. In the paper, factors promoting affective commitment were listed as perceived utilitarian value, hedonic value, and relational capital. On the other hand, personalization and relational capital were related with the calculative commitment.

An alternative empirical framework was proposed by Yee (2006, 2007). Through considering Bartle's model, Yee aimed to define the motivations for game play in MMORPGs. The framework consisted of three components as achievement, social and immersion. Each component sheltered further sub-components which are reflected in a 39-item scale explaining 60% of the gamer motivations (Yee, 2007). A short summary of these components are presented in Table 1.

The scale developed by Yee was used in a few contexts. For instance, Billeux et al. (2013) applied the scale in Belgium and studied with 690 players to see whether the reported motives in Yee (2007) predicted the actual game behaviors in MMORPGs. Results indicated a relationship between reported motives and actual game behaviors. Findings further suggested that teamwork and competition-related motivations were the best predictors of progression in the game. Additional empirical studies have further implemented the scale which revealed acceptable fit values across different samples (Billeux et al., 2013; Qian, 2010). However, the framework has not been accompanied with a motivational theory yet. Thus, the following section suggests a potential theoretical background for the proposed components.

## 3. Self determination theory and game motivations

According to the Self-determination Theory (SDT), people pursue goals and relationships that support their need satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory maintains that there are three basic psychological needs to be fulfilled so that individuals' well-being can be sustained. These needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000). Individuals are more likely to be motivated to get engaged in activities when they have freedom to make decisions (autonomy), when they feel a sense of efficacy (competence), and when they are socially connected to others and supported by team-members or peers (relatedness) (Gagné, 2003). There are numerous studies from various disciplines supporting the assumptions of the SDT, which proposes that satisfaction of these needs leads to better performance or achievement outcomes (Benware & Deci, 1984; La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994) or higher self-motivation (Baard & Deci, 2004; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

**Table 1**  
The main factors and subcomponents of the motivations for play in online games scale (Yee, 2007) (reprinted with permission).

Achievement	Social	Immersion
<i>Advancement</i> Progress, power, accumulation, status	<i>Socializing</i> Casual chat, helping others, making friends	<i>Discovery</i> Exploration, lore, finding hidden things
<i>Mechanics</i> Numbers, optimization, templating, analysis	<i>Relationship</i> Personal, self-disclosure, find and give support	<i>Role-playing</i> Story line, character history, roles, fantasy
<i>Competition</i> Challenging others, provocation, domination	<i>Teamwork</i> Collaboration, groups, group achievements	<i>Customization</i> Appearances, accessories, style, color schemes
		<i>Escapism</i> Relax, escape from real life, avoid real life problems

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6839189>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6839189>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)