



Marketing

Consumer behavior of electronic games' players: a study on the intentions to play and to pay

Comportamento do consumidor de jogos eletrônicos: um estudo sobre as intenções de jogar e pagar

Comportamiento del consumidor de videojuegos: un estudio sobre las intenciones de jugar y pagar

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Abstract

The electronic games market is one of the most profitable in the leisure segment, having surpassed the film industry. In terms of profitability, it is ranked as eleventh in the world and first in Latin America. Despite its relevance, there is little information about the reasons that lead consumers to play. This paper examined which attributes of the games influence consumers to play and pay for them. The methodology was a field research survey conducted with 600 electronic games' players, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the model. The results indicate that the constructs challenge, diversion, fun, fantasy and social interaction influence the intention to play and pay for games, while the construct competition has a negative effect on the intention to play. No significant causalities were found, regarding the constructs time flexibility and arousal, on the intention to play. Furthermore, we also observed that motivations that had the highest impact were fun, challenge and fantasy, attributes that should be considered by game developers and industry.

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Keywords: Electronic games market; Intention to play; Intention to pay; Structural equations modeling

Resumo

O mercado de *games* é um dos mais rentáveis no quesito lazer, ultrapassando o mercado cinematográfico, e figura como o 11° do mundo e o 1° da América Latina em rentabilidade para as empresas. A despeito desta importância, poucas informações são conhecidas sobre quais as razões que motivam as pessoas a jogar. Este artigo teve como objetivo analisar quais características dos jogos influenciam os consumidores de *games* a jogar e a pagar. Como metodologia, uma pesquisa de campo foi conduzida com cerca de 600 usuários, e a modelagem de equações estruturais foi utilizada para testar o modelo. Entre os resultados, mostra-se que os construtos desafio, desvio, diversão, fantasia e interação social têm influência na intenção de jogar e pagar, enquanto o construto competição influencia negativamente a intenção de jogar. Não foram obtidas causalidades

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significantes dos construtos flexibilidade de tempo e excitação, no construto intenção de jogar. Ademais, foi observado que as motivações que obtiveram maior impacto são a diversão, o desafio e a fantasia, características que devem ser observadas por desenvolvedores e indústrias do setor.

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Palavras-chave: Mercado de games; Intenção de jogar; Intenção de pagar; Modelagem de equações estruturais

Resumen

El mercado de videojuegos es uno de los más rentables en el ámbito del ocio, superando el mercado del cine, y figura como el 11° del mundo y el 1° de América Latina en lo que se refiere a la rentabilidad de las empresas. A pesar de esta importancia, hay escasa información sobre las razones que motivan a las personas a jugar. El objetivo en este trabajo es analizar cuáles características de los juegos influyen en el consumidor y lo llevan a jugar y pagar. Se ha llevado a cabo un estudio de campo con aproximadamente 600 usuarios y se ha utilizado como metodología los modelos de ecuaciones estructurales. Los resultados muestran que los constructos desafío, desvío, diversión, fantasía e interacción social influyen en la intención de jugar y pagar, mientras que el constructo competición tiene influencia negativa en la intención de jugar. No se han obtenido causalidades significativas de los constructos flexibilidad del tiempo y excitación en el constructo intención de jugar. Además, se ha observado que las motivaciones que tienen mayor impacto son la diversión, el desafío y la fantasía, características que deben ser observadas por los desarrolladores de juegos y la industria del sector.

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Palabras clave: Mercado de videojuegos; Intención de jugar; Intención de pagar; Modelos de ecuaciones estructurales

Introduction

Studies on the creative industry have been increasingly receiving attention. The importance of this sector's growth for the economy is noteworthy, as well as the need for more research to understand this field, which operates essentially through informal work (Bendassolli, Wood, Kirschbaum, & Pina, 2009; Castro & Figueiredo, 2016; Oliveira, Ribeiro, Cabral, & Santos, 2015). A specific field of the creative industry that has shown better results is that of electronic games, which experienced a remarkable growth in the last few years, and is considered a valuable sector for the economies of many countries (Plum & Hassink, 2014). The games market and the electronic games industry are booming, having surpassed even the film industry in revenue, and have become one of the largest sources of leisure in the world (Baumgarten, 2013; Mascena, Pimentel, Fischmann, & Polo, 2012).

However, studies focused on the electronic games market are still scarce, despite the growing interest of researchers in this field (Jin, 2014). In Brazil, according to the Group of Studies and Development of the Games Industry (Gedigames, 2014), data are scant, making it even harder to develop organizational strategies. Data show that until 2013 the Brazilian consumer market for games was the 11th in the world and the first in Latin America, in terms of revenue, which amounted to more than US\$ 1.3 trillion (New Zoo, 2013). It should be noted that this data only express the results of the regulated games market. The Brazilian Association of Electronic Games Developers (Abragames) acknowledges that this market is strongly affected by piracy and illegal imports (ABRAGAMES, 2008).

The Brazilian market has 49 million consumers, of which 61% spend on games (New Zoo, 2013). However, most of

this audience is not served by local companies. According to Gedigames (2014), Brazilian companies are small, and more than 70% have yearly revenue up to R\$ 240,000. They are also relatively young, being in the market for less than five years. As a result, they cannot afford to develop products of high production costs. Therefore, it is important for Brazilian companies to know this market, a modern and dynamic sector, which not only promotes entertainment, but also creates jobs, revenue and promotes innovation.

In addition, the arrival of smartphones has significantly changed the market by increasing games' consumption (Wei & Lu, 2014). These changes brought a new dynamics to the market, which now attracts different types of consumers. Considering the importance of the games market for the current context, it is relevant to carry out studies to better understand the context and the consumers. Therefore, this paper tries to answer the following research question: which attributes influence the behavior of electronic games' consumers in the Brazilian market, regarding their intention to play and to pay for them? To answer this question, the objective of the study was to analyze games' features that influence consumers' behavior, with respect to playing and paying for the games. In order to do so, we sought in the literature which variables are considered important for game consumers, and analyzed if there is a causal relationship between these variables and the intention to play and pay.

The study is structured in six sections, including this introduction. The following section brings a review of studies related to games market and the motivations that influence its consumers. The third section describes the main methodological aspects. The fourth section presents the research results, and the fifth discusses them. Finally, the last section presents the conclusions, including limitations and recommendations for future studies.

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