Online Sexual Violence and Misogyny in Gaming

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From Digital Violence to Respect

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Aims

Identity gamers
Lived experience
Behaviour of others
Impact and behaviour
Strategies adopted

Female Gamers Experience of Harassment in Online Gaming

Female gamers represent almost half of those who play videogames (United Kingdom Interactive Entertainment, 2016)

Social aspects of gaming as a significant motivational factor (Entertainment Software Association, 2018)

Structural factors in gaming create the need for social interactions

Individual differences depending on the social partners during gaming

What is the impact of negative social interactions?
Social Interactions in Gaming

Communication important in gaming and peripheral to gaming (Lewis & Griffiths, 2011; McLean & Griffiths, 2013)

Highlights the significant impact of interactions with others in online gaming

Strengthen pre-existing relationships (McLean & Griffiths, 2013)

Emotionally sensitive players more online friendships (Kowert et al., 2014)

Social support in gaming significant motivation for female gamers (McLean & Griffiths, 2018)
Females reported being treated differently to male gamers in online gaming (Gray 2012)

Harassment and sexual harassment (Ballard & Welch, 2017; Fox & Tang, 2014)

Sex role stereotyping (Holz Ivory et al., 2014)

Cyberbullying higher amongst female and LGBT participants (Ballard & Welch, 2017)

Linguistic profiling (Kuzenoff & Rose, 2013)

Stereotype threat led to underperformance in games (Kaye & Pennington, 2016)
GROUP ACTIVITY: FEMALE GAMER PROFILE

- Describe the persons gaming identity: serious gamer, non gamer, part-time gamer, female gamer
- Consider the gamer’s behaviour online
- Describe other people’s behaviour towards them
- What impact has this had?
- Which of the profiles match your quotes?
Isabelle is 19 describes herself as shy with a small number of friends. She enjoys gaming daily and spends a large portion of her free time playing online games with others. She has made some friends online but regularly leaves games and clans and changes the games she plays.

Kate is 53 and plays games in the evening time & weekends online. If people ask what her hobbies are, she describes enjoying cooking, talking to friends on social media and going for walks. Her close friends do not know anything about her gaming hobby.

Michelle is 25 was introduced to gaming by her two brothers at age 4. She enjoyed playing games as a child and teenager with them online, even after they all moved away from each other. She has stopped gaming since last year.
What happens and why?

“Toxic Environment”

Instrumental and emotional support

Lack of social support

Impact of negative interactions

Stress and Anxiety

“I now have a new insecurity I don’t need”

Pressure internally and perceived externally

Fear and denying identity

Causes

• Male and female behaviour
• Stereotypes and socialisation
• Females hidden online
• Group behaviour
• Attributed to self

Strategies

• Silence and hiding identity
• Transient existence
• Remain with existing networks
• Accept stress
• Avoid gaming and/or others
The Lonely, Transient, Accepting Female Gamer

- Importance of **social support** for female gamers
- Online gaming was a strategy to develop social support
- Majority reported experiencing negative experiences frequently related to gaming

- Initiated as **stress relief** but led to experience of stress
- Mirrored real life experiences and exacerbated anxiety and stress
- Younger females greater impact (vulnerable)

Acceptance of the behaviour and strategies adopted to deal with others behaviour and manage them.

Identity and self perception impacted
Females reported being treated differently to male gamers in online gaming (Gray 2012)

Empower women and not accepting this as “normal”

Harassment and sexual harassment (Fox & Tang, 2014; McLean & Griffiths, 2018)

Adopting “netiquette”

Organisational responsiveness

People with wide audience reach need to role play appropriate game playing