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A New Typology of Gamers

Based on Microtransaction Preference, Personality, and Gaming Motivation

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The revenue models of the video game industries have undergone significant changes in recent decades (Hamari et al. 2017). Specifically, in the early 2000s, revenue models (or monetization) in video games underwent a significant shift. In addition to selling games as complete products, publishers also began offering gamers to purchase additional items, bonuses or services within the game itself for a real-money fee, known as "microtransactions." With the rampant spread of microtransaction within games, they have evolved into different types that affect gameplay differently.

The recent growth of microtransaction has been phenomenal, and understanding this phenomenon will enable us to expand our knowledge of the new context of video game industries. Microtransaction should provide an opportunity to understand the evolution of monetization in video game industries and model the dynamics among various gamers in video games. However, it is not clear what motivates gamers to pay for microtransaction, and more importantly, how. Behind this backdrop, this research project aims to identify and define the different types of gamers based on their microtransaction preference in conjunction with their personality and game play motivation. And we examine the differences across gamer types and how they are formed and affect actual game-playing behaviors. Finally, we intend to compare gamer types across countries with different sociocultural components.

Despite the plethora of gamer typologies proposed in different contexts (Manero et al. 2016), no comprehensive gamer typology has been developed in the relatively new context of microtransactions. Laying the foundation for understanding (and thus targeting) different segments of gamers, a typology in this context will facilitate the identification of distinct gamer groups, expanding our knowledge on gamer motivation and behaviors in the context. Moreover, it will practically allow game producers and publishers to tailor their propositions to their target gamers.

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