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MMS Games and Player Perceptions

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Introduction

Purpose of Research

- To study the impact of modern military shooter video games on the players' perceptions of the world around them.

Participants

- 23 Longwood University students who participated in a Google Forms survey distributed through Facebook, Twitter, and email.

Theoretical Grounding

- Media Framing - The theory that any communicative text is presented from a central axis of thought or point of view. News stories within the media have different spins on the same story depending on political leaning, for example.

Hypotheses

H1: As the hours of play increase within MMS games, so will an individual's perception of American patriotism.

H2: Conservative gamers will identify more with pro-American points of view in MMS games than liberal gamers.

H3: A gamer's age will determine how they perceive American patriotism and imperialism in MMS games.

Methodology

- Our study involved creating and distributing a survey to Longwood University students.
- The survey consisted of a consent form, demographic questions, and three sections of specific questions asking respondents their views on enemy combatants, American patriotism, and American philosophy respectively.
- On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with five statements in each section.
- A 10-point Likert scale was used for the three sections, respondents were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with five statements within each section.

Image courtesy of Activision

Image courtesy of EA

Results

- For H1, the amount of time respondents spent playing video games had a correlative impact on the players' perception of patriotism.
- The data would suggest the media framing theory correct, that MMS games contain particular narratives that drive players to view the United States, its allies, and henceforth its enemies, in a certain way.
- H2 and H3 did not have enough statistically significant data in order to draw any conclusions.

Future Research

- Research could be expanded to examine other impacts of gameplay on individuals perceptions and mindsets.
- For example, what are player's views on certain military events as video games portray them?
- Studies focusing on the impact of MMS games on players could fill a void within currently existing research. Current studies of video games within the shooter genre, especially military-based shooters, typically consist of research involving levels of in-game violence translating to a player's real-world aggression. Future studies could instead focus on how games within this genre portray past, current, or future events to players, and how the players interpret and translate these events to their own lives and experiences.

Conclusion

- Media framing isn't just limited to older forms of media such as television, radio, or books, though this is often how it has been studied.
- How publishers and developers frame situations, conflicts, and factions within these games is important in order to determine how these games influence the players of them.
- There is a wider range of information to study about video games and those who enjoy them besides studies which focus on mere levels of aggression.
- The researchers saw that this theory could also apply to video games in general, and certainly to the MMS genre.
- If news corporations can frame a narrative within their news stories, certainly video game developers and publishers can do the same with their products as well.

References

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