'You game like a girl': Perceptions of Gender Competence in Online Gaming

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Gaming Like A Girl

Almost half of online video gaming population is thought to be female (Entertainment Software Association, 2019).

YET…significant barriers remain in place for women within gaming environments (Fox & Tang, 2014).

Barriers include perceptions of women's lesser competence in a seemingly masculine domain. (Jensen & Castell, 2010).

Gaming as a masculine domain

Gaming as 'masculine': Expectation States Theory (Fox & Tang, 2014)

Poor Representation or absence within games (Ivory, 2009)

Stereotypical perceptions of female gamers (Beavis & Charles, 2007)

Ambivalent Sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Sexism is composed of 2 components – HOSTILE SEXISM and BENEVOLENT SEXISM

HOSTILE SEXISM: reflects overtly negative beliefs and stereotypes about a gender – aligns with misogyny

BENEVOLENT SEXISM: Beliefs about gender that may appear positive, but actually detrimental to gender equality (e.g. women need to be protected by men).

Stereotype Content Model(Cuddy et al, 2004)

	LOW COMPETENCE	HIGH COMPETENCE
HIGH WARMTH	PITY	PRIDE
LOW WARMTH	DISGUST	ENVY

Study aims and hypotheses

H1: Video clips depicting female utterances will be perceived as less competent & making more errors than male counterparts regardless of skill level.

H2: Highly skilled female players will be perceived as less competence that skilled male counterparts.

H3: Interaction effect for warmth will be observed between gender, utterance and skill.

H4: High hostile and benevolent sexism will be associated with lower perceptions of competence but higher perceptions of warmth in female condition.

Methods: Design

Design: 3 x 2		**IV1: Gender (between)**		
		Male	Female	Neutral
IV2: Skill Level (within)	Expert	DV1: Number of Errors		
	Novice	DV2: Ratings of Competence & Warmth		

Methods: Participants

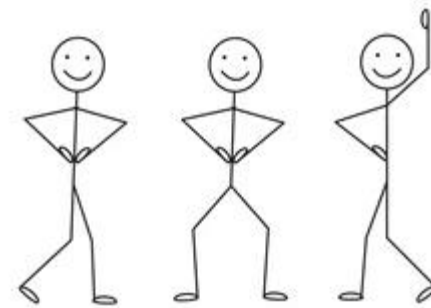385 participants recruited from Australia & UK

Mean age: 26.21 (SD=10.93)

276 female, 107 male, 1 transgender

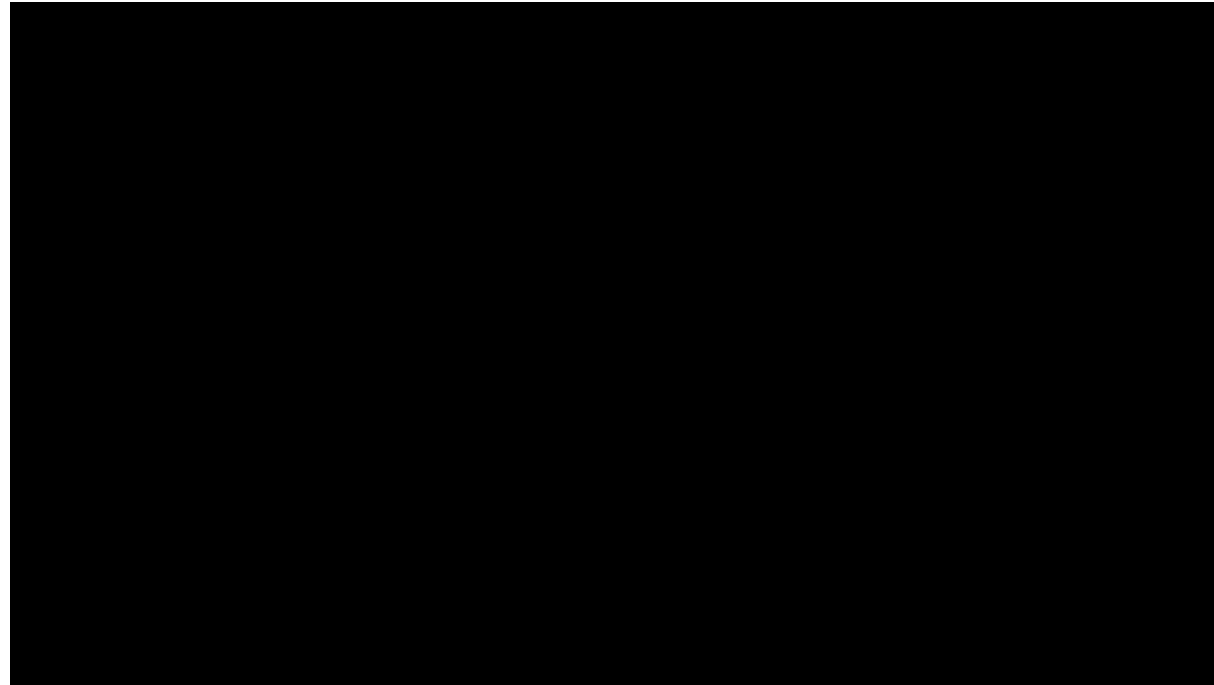131 participants assigned to female utterance condition

127 assigned to male utterance condition

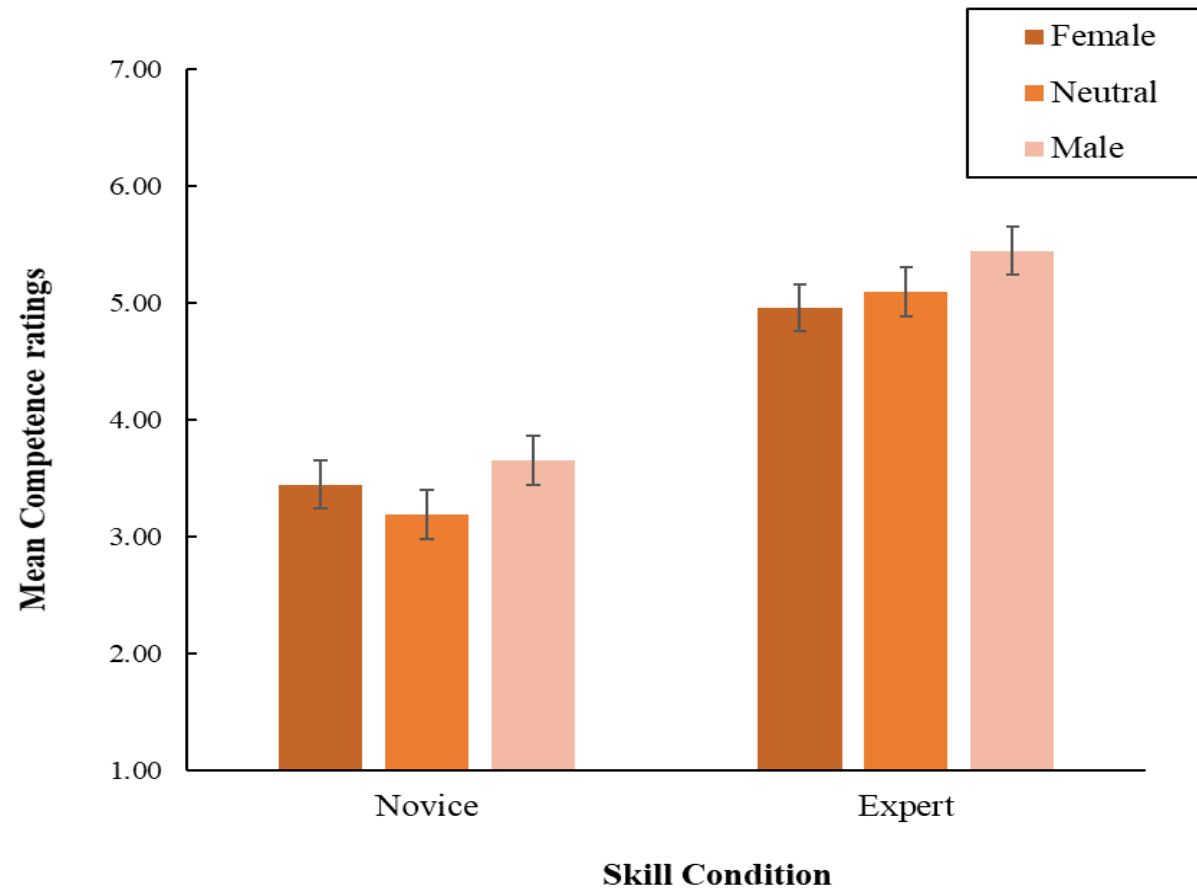127 to neutral utterance condition

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Methods: Procedure

Results

Results

Skill level	Perceptions of Competence			Perceptions of Warmth			Perceptions of Errors		
	Female[a]	Male[b]	Neutral[c]	Female	Male	Neutral	Female	Male	Neutral
Novice	3.44 (1.20)	3.65 (1.15)	3.19 (1.24)	4.53 (1.22)	4.59 (1.09)	3.62 (1.14)	12.5 (6.28)	11.94 (6.17)	13.03 (6.77)
Expert	4.95 (1.14)	5.44 (1.12)	5.09 (1.34)	4.83 (1.08)	5.06 (1.00)	4.15 (1.17)	5.70 (4.23)	5.00 (4.02)	6.25 (5.26)

Ambivalent Sexism and Competence

Variables	Perceptions of competence			Perceptions of warmth			Perceptions of errors		
	β	SE B	B 95% CI	β	SE B	B 95% CI	β	SE B	B 95% CI
Step 1									
Participant gender	-.06	.17	-.20 [-5.2, .13]	-.04	.18	-.14 [-.48, .21]	.03	.83	.03 [-1.610, 1.67]
Step 2									
Gender	-.03	.17	-.11 [-.45, .23]	-.02	.17	-.06 [-.39, .28]	-.34	.88	-.34 [-2.06, 1.39]
Hostile sexism	-.10	.24	-.21 [-.68, .26]	-.22*	.23	-.50 [-.96, -.04]	.05	1.21	05 [-2.32, 2.43]
Benevolent sexism	-.03	.24	-.08 [-.56, .40]	.08	.24	.22 [-.25, .69]	2.05	1.24	2.05 [-.38, 4.48]
Gender condition									
Female vs. Neutral condition	-.07	.19	-.22 [-.60, .16]	-.37*	.19	-1.30 [-1.67, -.92]	.92	.98	.92 [-1.01, 2.84]
Female vs. Male condition	.14*	.19	.47 [.09, .85]	.05	.19	.18 [-.19, .55]	-.83	.98	-.83 [-2.75, 1.09]
Hostile sexism x Female vs. Neutral condition	-.05	.31	-.19 [-.81, .43]	.02	.31	.08 [-.52, .69]	-.03	1.60	-.03 [-3.16, 3.10]
Hostile sexism x Female vs. Male condition	-.02	.34	-.07 [-.73, .59]	.08	.33	.32 [-.32, .96]	.46	1.69	.46 [-2.88, 3.79]
Benevolent sexism x Female vs. Neutral condition	.08	.35	.38 [-.31, 1.08]	.01	.35	.03 [-.65, .70]	-2.22	1.79	-2.22 [-5.73, 1.31]
Benevolent sexism x Female vs. Male condition	.02	.38	.11 [-.64, .86]	-.02	.37	-.11 [-.84,.62]			-.82 [-4.62, 2.98]
R² at step 1	.004			.00			.00		
R² at step 2	.05			.17			.023		
F for change in R²	2.41*			9.74**			1.01		

Key Findings

Findings consistent with previous studies suggesting maleness is associated with greater competence in gameplay.

Role of gender-based stereotypes in interpretation of overall performance vs real time play.

Warmth rated higher in voice conditions than neutral conditions BUT female voices rated as significantly less warm – SCM framework applications in context of online gaming.

Hostile sexism linked with lower perceptions of warmth in all groups compared with theorised stereotyped group.

Limitations

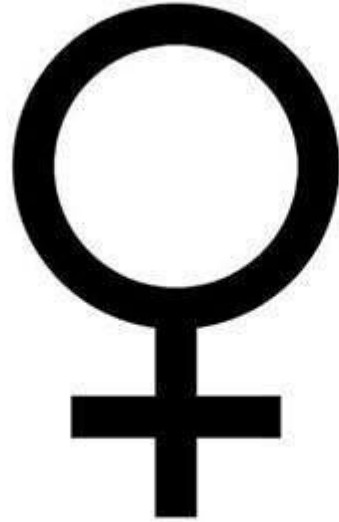Gender Split

Targeted gaming population

Game type: puzzle vs other genre
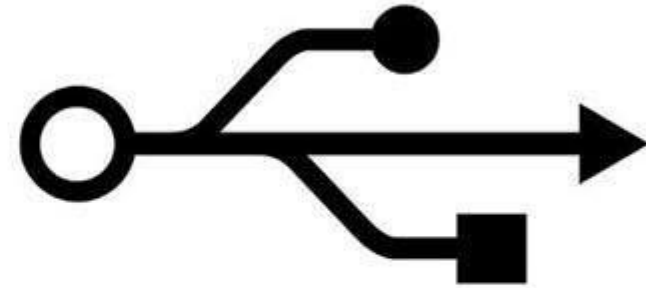
Scripted voiceovers vs natural reaction

Implications

MALE FEMALE GAMER

Thanks for listening!

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