Call for papers

Youth and Globalization Vol 6 – Issue 2 (November 2024)

Special Issue: VIDEO GAMES EMOTIONS AND GROWING UP

Guest editor: Judit Vari (Judit.vari@univ-rouen.fr)

Timeline

Call for Paper Circulation: October 2023;

Paper’s proposal deadline: December 1st 2023;
An article proposal should include the following: name, affiliation, and professional contact details of the authors, provisional title for the article, research questions, corpus studied and method(s) used, 1-2 pages citing the bibliography. The proposals should be sent to: Judit Vari (Judit.vari@univ-rouen.fr). Feedback will be delivered by early January 2024;

Paper’s submission deadline: March 1st, 2024 (9,000 words max). Papers should be submitted through the platform: https://www.editorialmanager.com/yogo/default1.aspx

First feedback to authors: May 1st, 2024;

Deadline for the submission of the revised version: June 30th, 2024;

Publication: November 2024

Aim and scope of the issue

Research into video games has grown exponentially over the last twenty years, focusing on the effects of video games on the psychosocial development of children and young people. Therefore, the subject of
video games and emotions has already been addressed by social sciences, but mainly from a psychological perspective – sometimes combined with a moralistic vision of video games.

The primary emotion elicited by and sought out through video games would be pleasure, often correlated with violence and loss of self-control (Anderson et al., 2010) or inattention (Gentile et al., 2012). During the 2000s, researchers heavily focused on the issue of violence in video games, attempting to confirm or refute the effects of video games on violent behaviour in the most vulnerable populations, namely children. Video game addiction is a more recent issue approached by researchers and studies have seen significant growth since the 2010s (Vari, 2021).

This search for pleasure may explain the growing usage of mobile phones, consoles and computers among young people as gaming time continuously increases and parents and adults worry about the younger generation being dumbed down. Although problematic video game behaviours do exist, they only represent a minority of practices and often reflect other social problems, such as bullying or academic pressure (Gerber & Scott 2011, Gee 2007).

The vast majority of young people who play video games have practices which vary in intensity and frequency depending on the cultural, social, and family environments they belong to or interact with. Research has shown that through this practice, young people experiment with social or gender boundaries. This is in contrast to common misconceptions, as numerous studies have attempted to demonstrate. Video games, especially online ones, do not isolate teenagers. Instead, they provide a virtual platform for friends to socialise, communicate and exchange ideas (Lenhart et al., 2008; Minassian et al., 2021). However, it appears that this sociability is more regulated for girls than for boys.

Research on video games and emotions has mainly focused on two main lines.

Firstly, this issue has been approached from the perspective of avatar identification, whether in narratology or psychology. Many researchers consider avatar identification essential as it is at the very core of the gaming experience and the enjoyment derived from it (Klimmt, Hefner, & Vorderer, 2009). Identification with avatars could generate a range of emotions among players, fostering the development of social skills such as empathy (Brown and Thomas, 2007; Jerret, 2020). However, it could also prevent groups from identifying with each other or reinforce gender or race stereotypes (Higgin, 2009).

Other studies have also focused on video games as a mediator of emotions among audiences with disabilities, as well as the role of avatars among young people with autism. For instance, in their research, Jennifer Gallup and Barbara Serianni (2017) demonstrate, using a phenomenological approach, how emotional awareness allows young students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to form friendships and develop social skills. Indeed, MMORPGs provide young people with the opportunity to socialise in a safer environment than the real world. The need to cooperate with other players to complete missions and progress in the game requires players, regardless of their background, to form alliances and join guilds to find the necessary support. To achieve this, they must learn to communicate more effectively and can do so through the various features of the game, including emoticons.

Secondly, research on emotions and video games has analysed how the latter develop empathy and bonds of sociability. Indeed, if video games develop playful skills (such as knowing how to understand the rules of the game and quickly find your way around playful mechanisms), it also allows to develop emotional skills (learning to control your emotions in defeat as in victory) and moral skills (knowing how to show fair play for example, promoting cooperation and mutual assistance between team members, etc.).
Some studies of video games, such as those by David W. Simkins and Constance Steinkuebler (2008) or David Waddington (2015) using John Dewey's philosophy, have shown how video games can present ethical dilemmas that can enhance empathy and tolerance, as well as promote an experimental attitude which is key to self-discipline and cooperation skills (Waddington, 2015). Nicolas Auray (2003) argued that online gaming provides a platform not only for learning the role of a third party, but also for constructing one's identity, autonomy, and citizenship. In addition, online gaming serves as a moral experiment where players construct and debate ethical principles on how to play "fairly" or to cheat. Therefore, online gaming puts moral behaviours to the test.

Part of this research also looks into otome games, those romantic games that are still marginalized in scientific research today. For example, Sara Christina Ganzon (2018; 2019) has analysed how otome games involve emotional labour as described by Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983), as victory ultimately depends on one's ability to empathise and choose the right dialogue to achieve the best results in the game.

In addition, there has been little research into how children and young people perceive and manage their emotions, or how adults use such opportunities to teach them ways of being or behaving when experiencing frustration, for example. Furthermore, emotions are often portrayed as universal. However, anthropological research has shown that while emotions may be universal, the ways in which they are expressed differ considerably across cultures. Gaming producers have grasped the need for adaptability, as demonstrated by the customization of narrative structures and dialogues in otome games based on where they are released. Conversely, some games are banned in certain countries because of the representations they convey.

In this issue which focuses on video games and the social skills of the youth and their emotions, special attention is given to the comparative dimension based on field surveys, with sociological, historical, and anthropological aspects. Therefore, the proposed articles could focus on the following issues:

- How do playing styles differ across continents? Do people play the same game in the same way in Japan, France, the United States or elsewhere? Do these styles reflect specific values and social representations? Alternatively, could playing the same game bridge cultural boundaries by sharing similar emotions?
- How do girls and boys engage emotionally with specific games? To what extent do video games reinforce specific emotional dispositions (joy, anger, etc.) depending on the gender and the ethnic and social origin?
- How do young people express their feelings about the aesthetics of games? What are the cultural and social impacts on this perception of aesthetics and young people's emotions? How do video game producers or gaming communities take this into consideration?
- The professionalization of video games, particularly competitive esport, requires emotional control. What form does this emotional control take during tournaments? How do casters and viewers perceive it? How do coaches train players to exercise this control? To what extent do cultural differences play a role?

**Bibliography**


