A Qualitative Study of Pokémon Go Players’ Behaviors, Motivation & Perception

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine behaviors, motivation, and perception of Pokémon Go players. Previous research studies (Althof et al., 2016; Howe et al., 2016) have shown that playing Pokémon Go increased physical activity levels, but lasted for only 4 to 6 weeks.

Researchers used qualitative analysis methods using categorization based on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers recruited 23 adults who played at least 4 consecutive weeks. After receiving participant’s signed consent form, researchers conducted a semi-structured interview. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Researchers reviewed the transcriptions to develop emergent themes. After a team analysis for triangulation, the researchers came to an agreement on the common themes and drew conclusions from the study.

RESULTS
PHYSICAL HEALTH- 13 out of the 23 participants reported a positive physical health experience with Pokémon Go. These players discussed using the app as a way to be physically active by walking more and spending time outside.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH- Participants that reported a positive emotional health experience described using Pokémon Go as a form of stress relief and an exciting way to get outside and exercise.

SOCIAL HEALTH- Participants used Pokémon Go as a tool to be social with others and reported having more positive experiences when they were playing with others.

METHODS
PARTICIPANTS- Participants were 23 people from the Midwest. 14 were male and 9 were female. The mean age of the group was 22.4 years old and standard deviation was 6.15.

DESIGN- Researchers used qualitative analysis methods using categorization based on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers recruited participants by using snowball and purposive sampling (Atkinson & Flint 2001) by asking them if they have played Pokémon Go. Researchers then conducted interviews that lasted 20-40 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by researchers and later coded.

DISCUSSION
These results show that social interaction is key for exergames to have sustained player use. Players that were still playing at the time reported that they enjoyed playing with others and using the game to hang out with their friends. Results also show that Pokémon Go positively affected physical health and emotional health by providing motivation to get outside and exercise. Players stopped for a variety of reasons including being bored by the game and being too busy to play Pokémon Go. If there is continued use of social interaction and consistent updates to exergames they should remain successful.

REFERENCES

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