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FEMALE DATING SIMULATOR GAMERS'MOTIVATIONS AND DEVELOPING PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GAME CHARACTERS

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Abstract

This study tests Chinese female gamers develop parasocial relationships with game characters and explore their motivations for playing a popular Chinese dating game – *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. This thesis contains the parasocial relationships theory, uses and gratifications theory, and reviewing the development of female-oriented dating simulators, which is a type of video game with dating and romantic development relationships as the primary purpose. A survey in China with a sample size of 290 participants were recruited to test the research questions and hypotheses, and 10 people were recruited to pre-test the survey questions. This study found that game exposures related to parasocial relationships with game characters. The study also identified three motivators that influence people to play female-oriented dating simulators: gratification, social interactions, and escapism. These key findings provide direction for future academic research and game developers on the female-oriented video games.

This research is able to provide a better understanding of how two dimensions – Chinese gamers' emotional attachment (parasocial relationships) with male game characters and three motivations (gratification, social interactions, and escapism) – influence the dating video game playing, an new insight has not been examined previously in the previous game genre literature.

Keywords: *dating simulator, parasocial relationships, video games, uses and gratifications*

FEMALE DATING SIMULATOR GAMERS'MOTIVATIONS AND DEVELOPING
PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH GAME CHARACTERS

by

Ruifeng, Qie

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of Chinese female video game players reached 300 million in 2019, and the video game marketing is expanding to the Chinese female group (Ouyang, 2019). With the growing opportunities, many game companies are shifting their attention from male to female. Compared with the violent and competitive personal computer games (PC game) that played by male players, female players are more like to play non-violence and non-competitive games on smart phones (Ouyang, 2019). Recently, one of the most compelling female-oriented mobile game in China is Mr Love: Queen's Choice, which was released in 2017 and published multi-language versions. Currently, the game is now available globally. Since 2019, on the App Store, Mr Love: Queen's Choice scored 4.8 out of 5 stars so far out of over 10 thousand ratings and is #9 in Role-Playing genre (A role-playing game (RPG) is a game in which each participant assumes the role of a character that can interact within the game's imaginary world (Rouse, 2011)). On the Google play, Mr Love: Queen's Choice stands at 4.6 out of 5 stars from almost 10 thousand votes and the game enjoys generally positive feedback (Sandar, 2019).

Mr Love: Queen's Choice is a female-oriented visual novel [1]online dating simulation phone game for global users (Figure 1). In the game, players have opportunities to text, chat, call, or video call with the four main male characters of the game, and other game settings also imitates the real-world scenes (Figure 2). Besides the customized settings, the gamers require to complete different tasks and win assisted tools to interact with game characters consistently (Mr. Love: Queen's Choice, n.d.).

Female-Oriented Dating Simulators

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[1] A visual novel's story is commonly told through text-based conversations with characters, and sometimes with animated videos. Most visual novels have an anime art-style (Roth,2019).

Dating simulators, also called romantic video games (RVGS), is a type of video game with dating and romantic development relationships as its primary purpose. Dating simulators typically feature anime-style graphics and attractive branch storylines. Since the goal of most female-oriented dating simulators is to build romantic relationships with game characters (Taylor, 2007), the game settings and game characters should consistent with cultural identity and aesthetic of female group (Kim, 2009). In the research area, there is little attention to the genre of video games - dating video game, so the thesis tries to fill the gap.

The purpose of the thesis is to apply a quantitative method to understand the female gamers' experiences and motivations for playing the female-dating simulators. A survey method was employed to test the relationships between game exposure and gamers' feeling toward game characters. Additionally, the survey also explored the possible gamers' motivations when playing the game.

Virtual Parasocial Relationships

Video games allow players to interact not only with human players but also with virtual characters (Johnson, et al., 2002). As parasocial relationships theory, the media users may develop a pseudo-relationship through interpersonal interactions (Hartmann, 2008). People can develop relationships with virtual game characters in video game, especially for the dating video game, which particularly emphasize players to develop romantic relationships with in-game characters (Taylor, 2007). Although some scholars have applies the concept of parasocial relationships to video game (e.g., Hartmann, 2008; Klimmt et al., 2006), few studies test its effect in the dating video game experiences specifically.

This study applied a quantitative method to test the relationships between the length of exposure and developing relationships with the in-game characters.

Uses and Gratifications Theory Meets with Video Game

      The Uses and Gratifications theory (UGT) is developed in an attempt to understand what people do with the media, which is an audience-centered theory (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 1994). The purpose of the UGT is to identify motives for media consumption (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 1994). The audience takes the initiative in consuming media to satisfy best their needs and desires, such as choosing to play a video game instead of watching television (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Katz et al.,1974). The initiative selections are connected to audiences' interests, preference, and other characteristics (Blumler, 1979; Levy & Windahl, 1984) that lead to an individual's choice for the type of media and spending time on its content,

      While previous researches have not yet identified motives for the smartphone dating game, they have identified motives for playing arcade video game. For example, Selnow (1984) identified five scales for understanding the motivations for video game usage at arcades, and the research identified motives included provide companionships, learn about people, actions, and escape. In 2003, Sherry & Lucas (2003) examined the motivations for console video gaming. They found six reasons why people play video games: competition, challenge, social interaction, pass time, imagination, and excitement. However, previous research on video games has not focused on the online dating game. Additionally, the research on the female group is much less.

      This study fills the gap and applies a quantitative method to test the results that Selnow (1984) and Sherry & Lucas (2003) obtained in previous studies, in particular, the thesis targets female gamers.

      The first chapter provides some background for the research. The second chapter reviews the previous studies of parasocial relationships theory, uses and gratifications theory, as well as the development of the female-oriented dating video game. And the third chapter presents the

methodology used to test the study. Chapter 4 discusses the results with data and analysis.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications, limitations and suggestions to future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a summary of studies related to parasocial relationships theory, uses and gratifications theory, and female-oriented dating simulator. It also identifies and summarizes relevant literature and research conduct on the three topics. The established studies lead to the development of the research questions.

Parasocial Relationships Theory

Parasocial relationships (PSR) can be defined as a one-side relationship that a media user develops with media persona (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The media user can feel as if they are developing a real relationship with a media character, and the media user actively engages in the unilateral relationship (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010). The previous studies explore the relationship between different types of media users, such as the relationship between characters on television and audiences (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Grant, Guthrie, and Ball- Rokeach (1991) results indicate that viewer-host development of a parasocial relationships in a television shopping service. The parasocial relationships can also develop in other media platforms. For example, Rubin and Step (2000) examine parasocial interaction (PSI) on listening to public radio. Thorson and Rodgers (2006) find that the effects of a political candidates' blog significantly influence viewers' attitudes toward the website but had less effect on the candidates themselves. Additionally, with social media development, the phenomenon of parasocial relationships also presente in multiple new types of media platforms, such as relationship building between social media influencers and their followers (Rasmussen, 2018). Thus, no matter what type of media platforms, the media users are willing to develop a closer relationship with media characters (Hartmann, 2008).

Parasocial relationships (PSR) originated from the parasocial interactive (PSI) that is described by Horton and Wohl (1956) during the television viewing. Later, researchers expand PSI into broader media platforms and shed light on the concept of PSI with long-term identification (Rubin et al., 1985). PSI is a long-term concept, and it is often conflated with PSR in previous studies.

Diddle, Hartmann, and Rosaen (2016) try to clarify the two terms, and they think that PSR could transcend the short-term viewing exposure and more like a long-term involvement with media characters. While PSI is defined as an immediate or short-term experience, and media users can feel they encountered with media performers (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). PSI can be considered as media and psychological phenomenon (Giles, 2002), which deals interactive communication between media users and media figures. For its psychological features, media users actively extend the interactions with media persona after shows or programs end. It also means that PSR can maintain or extend to outside media after PSR has been established (Giles, 2010).

According to Giles (2010), audiences discuss the media persona in the real world is a type of PSI. In the digital age, several platforms provide space for sharing and discussing, which enhance PSI with media figures. Several scholars apply the concept of PSR into video games, such as Hartmann (2008) illustrate that PSR also occurs in interactive settings with less authentic characters such as video game characters. Fewer studies have analyzed its role in dating game experience mainly.

This study focuses on the concept of a virtual PSR to illustrate the interactions between female players and four male game characters in *Mr Love: Queen's Choice,* because it pays attention to a long-term effect of female-oriented dating simulators when relationships are

established through interactions. Despite the growing attention of research on PSR, the concept

of PSR still lacks a clear conceptualization and precise measure of this phenomenon

(Tuchakisnsky, 2010). Tuchakisnsky (2010) focused on two of the relationships of parasocial

relationships, namely, parasocial friendship and parasocial romantic love. Dating simulators take

romantic PSR as the core elements that can provide further support for the PSR theory applied in

the female-oriented love game business.

Virtual Parasocial Relationships

PSR studies expand the research audiences from traditional media users, such as

television audiences, to the online community users (Ballantine & Martin, 2016). Ballantine and

Martin (2016) claim that PSR affects the consumption behavior of participants using an online

community. Studies investigate PSR between celebrities and their fans via social media,

especially on Twitter. Stever and Lawson (2013) found that although there is limited access to

communicate with celebrities through Twitter, the relationship was still parasocial. In summary,

PSR is now more accessible with new technologies development, such as variety of social media

platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and live stream platforms (e.g., Twitch.tv,

YouTube Gaming) (Blight, 2016). Further, some researchers argue that PSR can develop with

virtual characters. Schmid and Klimmt (2011) find that PSR is the most crucial determinant for

following Harry Potter, a virtual novel character, across different cultures. PSR is also used in

video games to examine the game players' interpersonal involvement with their avatar (Jin &

Park, 2009).

Female-oriented dating simulators allow players to play in the first-person perspective

game experiences (Galbraith, 2011) that deeper interactions between a human being and

machine. Under the situation, gamers are more likely to put their emotions into the game. In *Mr*

Love: Queen's Choice, game players default as a young female who controlled by players themselves. At first, the players can name and dress their characters as their tastes. In the storylines, the four male target characters play different roles in the life of young female, such as a spirited leader, an assistant, a manager, a friend, even a potential partner. Meanwhile, with the help of customized storylines, there are many interactives between game players and the four male target characters. In this way, PSR are gradually develop between players and game characters with interactions.

Repeated media exposure and PSI are significantly related to building PSR. Clatterbuck (1979) proposes that under the amount of communication, length of time people acquainted information and the amount of information they acquire about others, would contribute to positive relationship development. In the media context, previous researchers, such as Perse and Rubin (1989), observe that length of time under the exposure of soap operas, which lead to an understanding of audiences' PSR with soap operas characters. Several recent studies also (e.g., McLaughlin & Macafee (2019); Bond, 2018; Hall, 2019) have predicted that greater exposure to a media personality leads to an increase in building PSR. Therefore, the length of game exposure, such as length of time playing the video game, leads to build PSR between players and game characters.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) describes that individuals actively seek out and use specific media to satisfy their social needs (Katz & Foulkes,1962). UGT is one of the first methods to consider the active role of audiences in media seeking, and it is a significant theory that understands the audiences from the audiences' perspectives. In the following years, researchers apply the theory into the radio, television, and newspaper fields. Herzog (1994) uses

the theory to measure the radio audiences' satisfaction to the radio programmers. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) become interested in the different platforms that the audiences chose to meet their gratifications.

Active motivation is one of the essential elements of UGT. The earlier researchers identified motivation, including that information seeking, relaxation, entertainment, social interaction, escape, time-consumption, and companionship (Conway & Rubin,1991). Furthermore, psychological factors also affect the motivations of the audience to look for media platform to meet their specific social needs. In 1991, Conway and Rubin (1991) explore the role of psychological variables in the UGT. Two key takeaways from their research: psychological factor-anxiety, which explain time-consumption, escape, and changing current situation motivations. Psychology factor-PSI help explain the motivations of information seeking, entertainment, relaxation, and pass time motivation. PSI and anxiety as two main psychological factors help explain the motivations of active searching for media to fulfill their social needs (Conway &Rubin, 1991).

Lundberg and Hulten (1968) put forward five elements of the uses and gratifications model:

(1) The audiences consume media are assumed to be goal-directed (McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972).

(2) In the mass communication process, the motivation of audience members consumes media should link need gratifications and media choice.

(3) The media users' needs for consuming media can be substituted through other functional alternatives.

(4) People can self-aware their interests and motives when consuming media.

(5) The research-oriented should explore the audiences themselves rather than value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication.

The goal of uses and gratifications theory research is to explore the extent to which the media fulfills and creates human needs (Johnson, 2014). McLeod, Bybee, and Durall (1982) clarifies audiences' satisfaction can be divided as gratifications sought and gratifications received, the two independent treatments of uses and gratifications theory. Moreover, McLeod and Becker (1981) also separates motives for certain behaviors from basic needs. Basic needs as the root of motives and it is the foundation of psychology and physiology. However, the basic needs are hard to measure by self-reporting than motives. Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained are differentiated during past uses and gratifications researches (e.g., Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980; Levy & Windahl, 1984; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979). McLeod and Becker (1981) defines gratifications sought as the expressed desire for gratifications, while the gratifications obtained can be defined as "perceived personal outcomes (Rubin, Sypher, & Palmgreen, 1994, p. 173).

Uses and Gratifications Meets the Video Game

The uses and gratifications theory has been applied to various mass media and communication technologies. For example, Liang, Lai, and Ku (2007) identifies the use of personalized content services and their effects on user satisfaction. Therefore, UGT can be seen in game playing because playing game is a goal-oriented behavior. Players actively choose a specific game to fit their needs. To date, there have been several attempts on UGT applied to the video game field. Selnow (1984) publishes the first video games research about needs and gratifications met with video games that occurred at arcades in the early 1980s. Selnow uses Greenberg's (1974) seminal study of British Children's television uses and effects. Selnow

expands on a few traits of Greenberg's study into the video game-specific dimensions, which summarized five arcade video game play factors:

(1) game play is preferable to human companionship,

(2) game play teaches about people,

(3) game play provides companionship,

(4) game play provides activity/action,

(5) game play provides solitude/escape.

These five factors are significantly correlated with the amount of game time played (Sherry et al., 2006).

In the following year, the study of uses and gratifications in video games still focus on arcade area. Wigand, Borstelmann, and Boster (1985) invite 447 college and high school students to complete a survey of gratifications from playing video games, going to video arcades and interpersonal communication activity in the arcade. They find that the three gratifications obtained from the playing game: excitement, satisfaction, and tension-reduction. Moreover, Myers (1990) isolates four factors of gameplay: fantasy, curiosity, challenge, and interactivity. The four elements are significantly related to the amount of gameplay. In the next few years, Phillips, Rolls, Rouse, and Griffiths (1995) conduct a survey that measure the motivation of playing video games, including to pass time, to avoid doing other things, to cheer oneself up and just for enjoyment. Moreover, research show that people who have high competitiveness show only slightly more competitive behavior in video games (Vorderer, Hartmann & Klimmt, 2003).

In recent years, video games continue to grow many players and remain a highly popular form of entertainment. Researchers from various domains focus on the new technological video games, and they also deeply opted for the uses and gratifications framework to investigate the

motives of playing various genres and forms of video games (Hamari et al., 2018). For example, general video games (Sherry et al., 2006), online games (Wu et al., 2010), social games (Chen & Leung, 2016), mobile games (Wei & Lu, 2014), online video game streaming (Hilvert-Bruce, Neill, Sjöblom, & Hamari, 2018) and female-oriented dating game (Jingjing, 2019; Taylor, 2007). Typically, men and women have differences in their motivates of playing video games. For women players, they strived for inclusion and affection, while men looked for challenges and competition (Graner, 2004).

Furthermore, traditional game types take less account of female game players' needs and interests. Therefore, *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* directed by female players' gratifications which attracts the amount of female game players. The casual and inclusion game design, visual novel storyline, and artistic features can meet female gratifications (Kim, 2009).

In such circumstances, the study measures the motivation female players' experiences on playing date game and their gratifications obtain from playing the game.

Female-Oriented Dating Simulators and Female Player

Female-oriented dating simulators also called dating simulators, which is a type of game in which players attempt to build romantic relationships with one of the game characters. Dating simulators games' settings are trying to reflect real-world situations. For example, *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* contains multiple settings that are trying to imitate real-world behaviors, such as texting, calling, video facetime, messaging, posting tweets or selfies, making a comment, even recording birthday celebration video. However, comparing with the real world, the game characters try to present an ideal image of partners, love styles, novel storylines and other fictional romantic elements (Taylor, 2007).

Kim (2009) refers to women's games as a category of games that developed and marketed to women and girls in the Japanese gaming industry, similar to the girl's game movement in the United States. Japanese women's games play a significant role and function for female identities. Moreover, Kim (2009) also illustrates the history and main features of female-oriented games. Through two specific games introduced in the study, Kim (2009) believes that female players realize their dominant role in video games. And the kind of study contributes to the importance of gender diversity in gaming culture.

Currently, gender stereotypes remain exist in the game world - female characters are generally depicted in secondary roles more than male characters, such as traditional male-oriented genres (e.g., fighting), female characters depicted as sexualized characters in role-playing games (Lynch et al., 2016). For example, a female player met with dissent by male plays on Twitter in June 2012. A male video game journalist verbally attacked a female video game celebrity and questioned the value of her work. The incident released tensions and reconsidered the attitudes toward women in male-dominated video game cultures (Tomkinson & Harper, 2015). Hartmann and Klimmt (2006) conducts two studies that illustrate the importance of content and personality as two key factors that explain gender differences in game playing. In the two studies, they found that young German women prefer social interaction games, and they dislike violent content and games that display heavy gender stereotypes of game characters.

Storylines is one of the significant elements that attract female players mentioned above. In the traditional adventure games, saving the world is the role of male game characters, while female game characters take less role in the adventure journey. However, in the female-oriented video game, female video games players have their missions in the adventure journey. For example, *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*, the role of the female character is running on her media

production company, so she needs to accomplish tasks or projects to maintain her businesses. The game settings reflect real-world female power in the real business world and show female attitudes toward their jobs as well.

Summary of Literature Review

A substantial amount of research explores PSR and its application into the virtual world and virtual characters in video games. Additionally, UGT can be helpful to understand the gamers' motivation of playing the game. However, past researches were still limited to traditional male-dominated games and casual games (the gamers do not require a major time investment to play, win, and enjoy). Very few studies have focused on the female gamers and female dating simulator game. Therefore, the new directions provide the rationale for the following research questions:

Research Questions and Hypothesis

RQ1: How do gameplay hours affect the relationships' development between female gamers and male game characters?

H1: The length of game exposure will positively correlate with PSR development between gamers and game characters.

RQ2: What is the gamers' motivation to play the game?

H2a. Gratifications will positively affect the intention to play dating simulator games.

H2b. Social interaction will positively affect the intention to play dating simulator games.

H2c. Escapism will positively affect the intention to play dating simulator games.

H2d. Achievement will positively affect the intention to play dating simulator games.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter offers an overview of the research method and introduces the research process in detail. The study explores parasocial relationships between female gamers and four virtual male game characters and tries to ascertain motivations of playing the dating simulators among young Chinese female players. In this research, the quantitative data was collected by WJX.COM, a popular paid online survey distribution platform in China. The questions of the survey combine common theoretical scales with gamers' playing experiences. For measuring the motivations of female gamers, the study applies Selnow (1984)'s five arcade video gameplay factors as supports. Additionally, to test parasocial relationships, the study adapts Tukachinsky's (2010) PSR Scale to measure relationships between players and four in-game male characters.

Sampling and Procedure

This research ran a 10-minute online survey to collect data regarding attitudes toward the game. Quantitative research, such as survey, can solicit a large number of respondents in a short time. In addition, the data can generalize empirical results from the participants to the entire population of dating simulators gamers (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The survey was loaded into a professional online questionnaire platform WJX.COM, which is a paid survey distribution platform in China. A pretest survey with 10 participants was used to examine the reliability of measurement. The formal survey started after the pretest and officially run from May 18th to 24th, 2020.

Potential participants read a brief description of the study and went to the survey via an attached link sent by WJX.COM. The questionnaire was anonymous. The participants were first asked about their age, gender, and length of time of playing *Mr Love: Queen's Choice.* Unqualified respondents were directed to the end of the survey, while qualified respondents

could engage with the remainder of the survey instrument, which include female gamers'

experiences, perceptions of PSR between gamers' and in-game characters, and finally gamers'

motivation measurement. Once finished the survey, qualified respondents received an incentive

offered by WJX.COM. The software SPSS was employed to analyze the data collected from the

survey.

Sampling and Recruitment

This study sought Chinese female adult respondents who had played *Mr Love: Queen's*

Choice at least one month prior to the survey. An initial sample size of approximately 290

participants was planned to be recruited for formal study, and 10 participants were recruited for

pretest. The majority recruitment came from WJX.COM participants database. WJX.COM

distributed the survey to its members to fill it out, and members received $0.07 (￥0.5) as an

incentive after finishing the survey. Participants could access the survey on the mobile phone,

desktop, or laptop. IRB and Pretest

This study was approved by Syracuse University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on

April 17, 2020. The data collection for the pretest was conducted on May 19th, 2020 through the

researcher's WeChat friend circle with a sample of 10 respondents who played the game before.

Based on the feedback from the pretest participants, the researcher revised some questions'

translation and image settings so that can ensure participants understand every statement very

well.

Measurement

Dating Sims Exposure: player's dating sims exposure was measured by the length of time

playing *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. Respondents answered two time-related questions in the

survey: "How long have you been playing or played *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*?", and "How much time do you spend playing *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* in one day?".

Parasocial Relationships (PSR) between female gamers and in-game male characters:

The study adapted Tukachinsky's (2010) PSR Scale (see Appendix A) to measure the parasocial relationships between Chinese female gamers and four male game characters. The scale containeds 24 items on four factors: love-physical attraction (e.g. "I think X is quite handsome/pretty."), love-emotional response (e.g. "I wish X could know my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.") friend-support (e.g. "If X was a real person, I could have disclosed negative things about myself honestly and fully(deeply) to him/her"), and friend-communication (e.g. "If X was a real person I would be able to count on X in times of need (Tukachinsky, 2010).")

The questionnaire dropped more than half of the items because they were similar to other factors that shortened the length of questionnaire and fit the game settings of *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. As a result, nine related items were left (see Appendix B).

Five Factors for Video Game Meets Gratifications Scale (Selnow,1984):

Selnow's (1984) Five Factors for Video Game Meets Gratifications Scale was adapted to measure female gamers' motivations of playing dating simulation game. The scale containes five factors: video games preferred to friends (e.g. "Playing video games is as exciting as being with my friends."), learn about people (e.g. "When I play video arcade games it's like being with another person."), companionship (e.g. "Playing video games helps me forget I'm alone."), action (e.g. "Playing video games makes me part of the action."), and solitude/escape (e.g. "When I go to video game arcades I can get away by myself (Selnow,1984).")

Participants were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the degree to which they identified with the statement when plying the game.

Moreover, more than half items were dropped because they were similar to other factors, and some items were not fit for the features of *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* because the scale was originally designed for the arcade games. Therefore, four factors were left (see Appendix B).

All the items were translated into Chinese by the researcher, a native speaker, and presented randomly in the questionnaire.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents results, key findings, and conclusion. In the part, the study uses the classic analytical method - independent-samples t-test, to test the research questions and hypotheses.

Data Cleaning

There were three screening questions at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure participants were adult, female, and played *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* at least one month. Moreover, unqualified participants would be directed toward the end of the survey.

A total of 290 participants took the survey. 116 valid respondents were 18 years old or above, female, and had played the video game at least one month and received the incentive sent by WJX.COM platforms automatically. The researcher removed the data of unqualified participants. To enhance the validity and trustworthiness, one qualified participant was dropped from the analysis, because it was unrealistic to finish the questionnaire with 2436 seconds that equal to around 40 minutes. The average time for the finishing of the survey was 71 seconds. A final sample size of 115 was used in the following data analysis.

Main Analysis

There were 115 female respondents. Participants age between 19 and 30 years old was 75%, 20% in the age range from 31 to 35 years old, and age over 35 years old was 5%. All female respondents have reported that they have played at least one month in the questionnaires. The results show that around 88% of gamers play one and two hours per day. Also, among 115 female participants, more than 90% of people paid the in-game fee to empower their skills or increase interactions with male game characters. They charged a variant amount of payments from $10 (approximately ￥70) to $100 (around￥700).

Key variables were measured separately with a five-point Likert scale. By and large, respondents reported a mean score of 3.92 (SD=.529) for the relationships with in-game male characters, indicating they agreed that they had developed parasocial relationships with game characters (Figure 3). Moreover, respondents' average score of 3.85 (SD=.472) on motivation measurement meant that they agreed with the uses and gratifications factors that obtain from the video game (Figure 4).

Independent-Samples t-test and P-value

The independent-sample t-test is an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between means in two unrelated groups. In most cases, the independent-sample t-test can reject or accept research questions and hypotheses (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). To do this, a significance level (p-value) that allows reject or accept hypothesis and research questions. Most commonly, this value is set at 0.05. A p-value of 5% or lower is often considered to be statistically significant (usually a difference). In principle, a significant difference result means that the research question or hypothesis is true, and the relationships between two or more variables are caused by something other than chance (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

Key Findings

Parasocial Relationships and Gameplay Hours

For RQ1 and H1, an independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare confidence in gameplay hours of participants and whether they develop parasocial relationships with four male in-game characters. There was a significant difference between scores for different length of gameplay hours for two hours (M = 2.42, SD = .919) and more than two hours (M = 1.83, SD =

.408); t(14.917) = 2.628, p = .019) (Table 1). In sum, the p-value is lower than .05, which confirm RQ1 and H1 are true.

Parasocial Relationships with Four Game Characters

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to test whether participants develop parasocial relationships with one of the game characters. There was a significant difference on factor - physical beauty/handsomeness between game characters #1 – Victor, CEO of production companies (M = 3.95, SD = .661); t(57) = -3.221, p = .002) and game character #3 – Kiro, Kpop Star (M = 4.53, SD = .514); t(37.907) = -3.581, p = .001).

In addition, there was a significant difference on factor – Emotional Intelligence (EQ) between game characters #1 (M = 4.14, SD = .718); and #3(M = 4.53, SD = .624); t(33.931) = -2.060, p = .047) (Table 2).

The result showed that physical beauty/handsomeness and Emotional Intelligence (EQ) play key roles when developing PSR with game characters. Because of the four game characters owes different personalities, to some degree, the female gamers consider physical beauty/handsomeness and Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as main considerations when developing PSR with male in-game characters than other factors, such as occupation and intuition.

Uses and Gratifications with Gameplay Hour

For RQ2 and H2, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare confidence in four motivations of playing the video game and whether participants have these motivations when playing the video game. There was a significant difference was found on motivation – Social Interactions between gameplay play less than 30 minutes (M = 3.00, SD = .535); t(44) = -2.342, p = .024) and two hours (M = 3.76, SD = .883); t(16.341) = -3.218, p = .005) (Table 3).

This finding showed those game players who actively consumed the video game less half an hour and two hours per day were to fulfill a specific need – Social Interaction.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare confidence on other motivation – Escapism. There was significant difference was found between gameplay play less than 30 minutes (M = 3.25, SD = 1.035); t(12) = -2.338, p = .038) and more than two hours (M = 4.33, SD = .516); t(10.758) = -2.565, p = .027) (Table 4). This finding also showed that game players who actively consumed the video game less half hour and two hours per day was to fulfill a specific need – Escapism.

Uses and Gratifications with Monetary Payment

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare gamers' motivations between different amounts of money pay for the video game. A significant difference was found between under ￥50 and range from ￥401 to ￥500.

For H2a– Gratifications, there was significant difference was found between under ￥50 (M = 4.00, SD = .562); t(23) = -2.943, p = .007)   and ranged from ￥401 to ￥500 (M = 4.80, SD = .447); t(7.534) = -3.387, p = .010) (Table 5).

For H2b – Social Interaction. There was significant difference was found between under ￥50 (M = 3.25, SD = .851); t(23) = -3.349, p = .003) and ranged from ￥401 to ￥500 (M = 4.60, SD = .548); t(9.548) = -4.353, p = .002) (Table 5).

For H2c – Escapism. There was significant difference was found between under ￥50 (M = 3.85, SD = .587); t(23) = -2.584, p = .017) and ranged from ￥401 to ￥500 (M = 4.60, SD = .548); t(6.515) = -2.699, p = .033) (Table 5).

In, conclusion, these findings illustrate that game player who actively paid for the video game with a variable amount of money is to fulfill their needs: Gratifications, Social Interaction, and Escapism.

Summary

The survey results showed that gameplay hours closely related to developing parasocial relationships with four male in-game characters. Meanwhile, participants have stronger parasocial relationships with game character #1 and #3. The results supported the researcher's *RQ1* and *H1*. Furthermore, gameplay hour and amount of money spent on video games were associated with uses and gratification theory. Based on the results, the researcher found that participants actively contributed time and money on video games to meet their needs - Gratifications, Social Interaction, and Escapism, which were consistent with the *RQ2*, *H2a*, *H2b*, and *H2c*. However, contrary to the *H2d* - Achievement, was not correlate with gamers' motivation for consuming the video game.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study investigated the Chinese female gamers' parasocial relationships (PSR) with in-game male game characters and their motivations of playing *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. This chapter discusses the contributions, implications, limitations, and future studies based on the findings.

Developments in Parasocial Relationships Theory

Past research investigat the association between media consumption and users' parasocial relationships primarily focused on television and other social media platforms. The goal of this study was to extend this research to the realm of the dating simulator - *Mr. Love: Queen's Choice*.

Theoretically, our findings lend support to Perse and Rubin's (1989), which argue that the length of time people exposure under the amount of communication, the length of time people acquainted information and the amount of information they acquire about others, would contribute to parasocial relationships development. Our study indicates that longer gameplay hours contribute to parasocial relationships development. Moreover, our study also is in accordance with Hoffner and Cohen's (2012) research that gamer and in-game characters' parasocial relationships have an impact on gamers' attitudes and emotional changes.

Additionally, our study finds that female gamers selectively develop parasocial relationships with four male in-game characters after amount of time exposure under the dating simulator. For the four male game characters, #1 – Victor, CEO of production companies and #3 – Kiro, a Kpop Star, both are much more popular than the other two characters, #2 – Gavin, a police officer and #4 – Lucien, a genius scientist. The accidentally finding cannot be established and need to be verified in future study. Still, the result should be noted that game characters'

settings play an essential role in developing gamer - game characters parasocial relationship development when they choose targets to build emotional attachments.

Implications

The appeal of opportunities of female gamers is attracting increasing numbers of male-dominated gaming marketing and gaming industries. However, there are few academic studies that focus on female gamers' demands. This study contributes to both theory and practice.

From the theoretical standpoint, this study successfully combines parasocial relationships theory with the virtual video game, particularly provides a better understanding of how time exposure affects virtual parasocial relationship development, a new insight that has not been examined thoroughly in the previous parasocial relationships literature. The thesis opens up new areas for future research on dating simulation video game.

This study also makes several practical contributions. Its results have implication for gaming practitioners' development. First of all, our research shows that time exposure is a critical factor in developing parasocial relationships. Hence, the developers should highlight the gameplay time and produce an award to motivate users to increase gameplay hours, so that makes a game "sticky."

Another practical contribution of this study's findings is that game characters' settings. The four male game characters clearly play a crucial role in game adoption. Based on our findings, the CEO and Kpop star attract more female gamers than the other two game characters. Therefore, we recommend that managers or developers should consider what factors cause the popularity from the female perspective and, consequently, to the success of developing female-oriented dating video games.

Developments in Uses and Gratifications Theory

This paper also sheds light on why female groups intend to play dating video games. This study focuses on the newest and the most popular video game – *Mr. Love: Queen's Choices*, a dating-drive mobile game. This research developed an integrated survey to investigate younger Chinese female players' motivations. The findings revealed that gratifications, social interactions, and escapism played essential roles in why female group want to join the video game, whereas achievement appeared to play less direct crucial roles.

First, the results revealed that the gratification is a strong determinant of users' intention to play *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. The result was consistent with previous research suggesting that online games meet gamers' gratification leading to their loyalty toward the game (Huang and Hsieh, 2011). This reflects on the number of longer gameplay hours and the amount of money spend on *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. Furthermore, parasocial relationships strengthen the emotional gratification that leading to female gamers' loyalty. Thus, the importance of enhancing enjoyment and parasocial relationships development of the dating video game design becomes apparent.

The second finding from the empirical study that social interactions played a pivotal role in our research topic. Social interactions significantly influence individual time and money spending. When many peers or other people talk or play the same game, it directly contributes to the intention to play the same game (Lu and Wang, 2008). In other words, if their most influential contacts download and play the video game, a user is more likely to decide to download and play the same game. In the case of the virtual social interactions in *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* game communities, researchers find that gamers had a positive attitude toward continued intention to play the game when they meet more peers and other people talk or play

the game. The finding consistent with previous research study about the motivation of joining Facebook (Lin and Lu, 2011).

Another feature of playing the game is escaping from stress. Yee (2006) find that motivation for escapism are correlated with hours of usage per week for both male and female gamers when playing social games. For participants of our study, playing *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* was an enjoyable way to spend leisure time, relax, avoiding responsibilities. Additionally, *Mr Love: Queen's Choice* do not enforce winning or competing, such a casual playing manner may provide desirable places for forgetting about real-life stress and problems.

Implications

From the theoretical standpoint, this study applies uses and gratifications theory to investigate the female players' intentions to play *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. This study can provide a better understanding of gratifications, social interactions, and escapism can influence dating video game playing. This new research insight has not been examined thoroughly in previous studies.

This study also makes several practical contributions. Its findings have opened up other areas for further game development and marketing strategies. First of all, this study showed that enjoyment was a significant effect on the intention of the play game. Hence, the developers of dating games should highlight the joyful atmosphere of their games so that players feel interested, have fun, and fulfill their gratifications needs.

This study's other contribution to game developers was that social network plays a crucial role in game adoption and promotion. Therefore, it is recommended that managers consider cooperating with social media influencers to influence their fans to play the video game. The reason for this is that influencers are authorities in their niche, have a loyal community, and

are more likely to gain trust in their followers (Wróblewski, 2020). Additionally, today's younger generations are more like to trust other influencers' opinions when making decisions (Taher, 2019). Thus, cooperating with social media influencers can help grow gamers' base and spread the game.

Finally, another essential practical implication of this study finding is that they demonstrate the importance of stress-less and competition-less of the dating game development. The respondents indicated that diversion considers a critical reason for playing a video game. This reason may not be surprising in most studies about playing a video game. Casual manner design requires fewer mental resources to process gaming tasks, and it is easier for gamers to develop positive feedback for every achievement. In conclusion, casual game design with a flexible playing style makes gamer cheerful and easygoing.

Limitations and Future Studies

Although several significant results are found, this study is not without limitations and questions that warrant future research. First, the topic researched is about a dating-driven video game - *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*. Although the findings show the critical roles of gratifications, social interactions, and escapism, in the future, other factors that might influence the intention to play female-oriented games could be investigated to extend this topic. Second, questionnaires were used to collect information that may have self-selection bias be present in such online surveys. The paper recommended that future research combines with an in-depth interviewed quantities viewpoint to strengthen the research. Third, the sample used a convenience sample in China. The study cannot be generalized to other geographic locations. It would be attractive to future researchers to study the topics compare with those in other countries.

One of the critical contributions of the literature is exploring a new genre of video games – female dating simulators, so other types of female-oriented video games merit future research. Moreover, one of findings of four male game characters setting selections will also be interesting to explore whether different cultural aspects, such as sex-role stereotypes, occupations, norms will play a role in the development of parasocial relationships. In conclusion, our study sheds new light on the associations between consumption of new types of media and the female psychological world to some degree.

Figures

Figure 1 . *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*

Figure 2. *Mr Love: Queen's Choice*

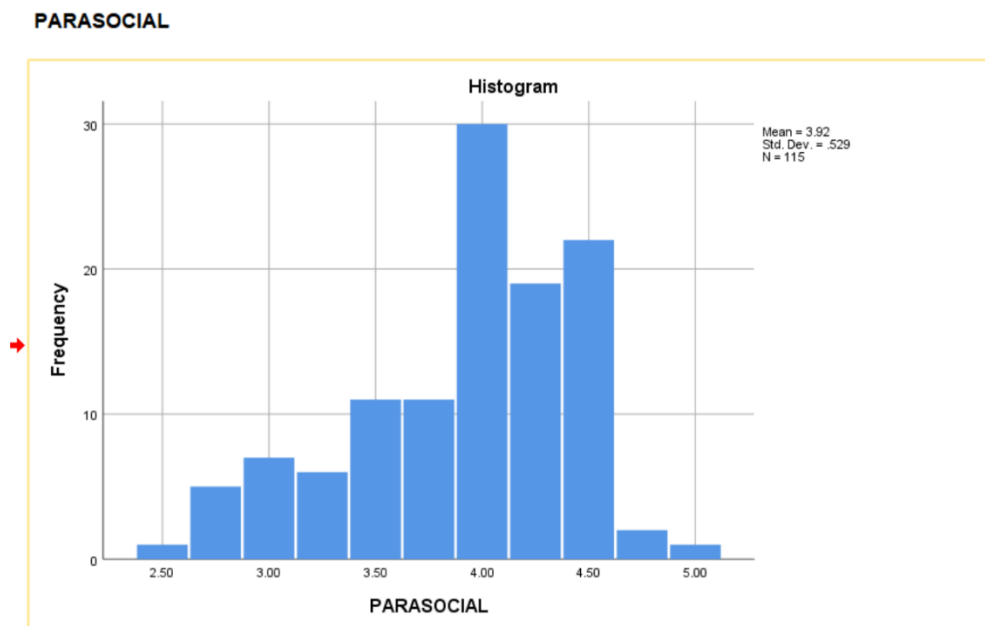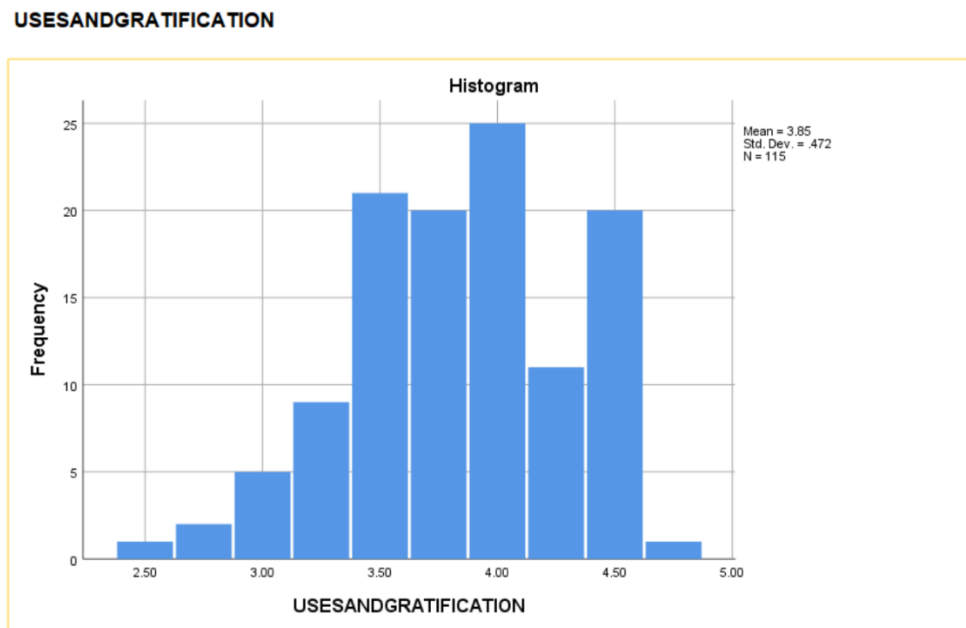Figure 3. Parasocial Relationships Means and Standard Deviations

Figure 4. Uses and Gratifications Means and Standard Deviations

USESANDGRATIFICATION

Tables

Table 1 Parasocial Relationships and Gameplay Hours

Group Statistics

	Playing time per day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I could picture myself in some of the scenes in the game.	3	38	4.03	.753	.122
	4	6	4.33	.516	.211
I thought about parts of my life that were related to what was happening in the game.	3	38	4.03	.944	.153
	4	6	3.33	1.033	.422
The game affected me emotionally.	3	38	4.08	.749	.122
	4	6	3.17	.983	.401
I have felt the emotions the characters were experiencing.	3	38	4.00	.900	.146
	4	6	3.50	1.643	.671
how enjoy the relatoiships	3	38	2.42	.919	.149
	4	6	1.83	.408	.167

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
I could picture myself in some of the scenes in the game.	Equal variances assumed	.090	.765	-.959	42	.343	-.307	.320	-.953	.339
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.260	8.786	.240	-.307	.244	-.860	.246
I thought about parts of my life that were related to what was happening in the game.	Equal variances assumed	.052	.820	1.652	42	.106	.693	.420	-.154	1.540
	Equal variances not assumed			1.545	6.391	.170	.693	.449	-.389	1.775
The game affected me emotionally.	Equal variances assumed	1.845	.182	2.660	42	.011	.912	.343	.220	1.604
	Equal variances not assumed			2.175	5.952	.073	.912	.419	-.116	1.940
I have felt the emotions the characters were experiencing.	Equal variances assumed	6.064	.018	1.118	42	.270	.500	.447	-.402	1.402
	Equal variances not assumed			.728	5.484	.496	.500	.687	-1.219	2.219
how enjoy the relatoiships	Equal variances assumed	4.394	.042	1.530	42	.133	.588	.384	-.187	1.363
	Equal variances not assumed			2.628	14.917	.019	.588	.224	.111	1.065

Table 2   Parasocial Relationships and Four Game Characters

T-Test

Group Statistics

	four male in-game characters	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Physical beauty/handsomeness	1	42	3.95	.661	.102
	3	17	4.53	.514	.125
Personality	1	42	3.93	1.022	.158
	3	17	4.24	.752	.182
Occupation	1	42	3.76	.790	.122
	3	17	3.82	.728	.176
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	1	42	4.14	.718	.111
	3	17	4.53	.624	.151
Intuition	1	42	3.86	.751	.116
	3	17	4.12	.928	.225

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Physical beauty/handsomeness	Equal variances assumed	.491	.486	-3.221	57	.002	-.577	.179	-.936	-.218
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.581	37.907	.001	-.577	.161	-.903	-.251
Personality	Equal variances assumed	2.278	.137	-1.119	57	.268	-.307	.274	-.856	.242
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.272	40.074	.211	-.307	.241	-.794	.181
Occupation	Equal variances assumed	1.560	.217	-.277	57	.783	-.062	.222	-.507	.384
	Equal variances not assumed			-.287	32.082	.776	-.062	.215	-.499	.375
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Equal variances assumed	.026	.873	-1.940	57	.057	-.387	.199	-.785	.012
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.060	33.931	.047	-.387	.188	-.768	-.005
Intuition	Equal variances assumed	4.434	.040	-1.126	57	.265	-.261	.231	-.724	.203
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.029	24.940	.313	-.261	.253	-.782	.261

Table 3 Uses and Gratifications and Gameplay Hour

➜ **T-Test**

Group Statistics

	Playing time per day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gratification	1	8	3.88	.354	.125
	3	38	4.03	.592	.096
Achievement	1	8	4.13	.991	.350
	3	38	4.00	.838	.136
social interaction	1	8	3.00	.535	.189
	3	38	3.76	.883	.143
Escapism	1	8	3.25	1.035	.366
	3	38	3.84	.823	.133

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gratification	Equal variances assumed	.664	.419	-.693	44	.492	-.151	.218	-.591	.289
	Equal variances not assumed			-.960	16.613	.351	-.151	.158	-.485	.182
Achievement	Equal variances assumed	1.486	.229	.372	44	.712	.125	.336	-.553	.803
	Equal variances not assumed			.333	9.228	.747	.125	.376	-.722	.972
social interaction	Equal variances assumed	2.365	.131	-2.342	44	.024	-.763	.326	-1.420	-.107
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.218	16.341	.005	-.763	.237	-1.265	-.261
Escapism	Equal variances assumed	.960	.333	-1.770	44	.084	-.592	.335	-1.266	.082
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.520	8.957	.163	-.592	.390	-1.474	.290

Table 4 Uses and Gratifications and Gameplay Hour

→ T-Test

Group Statistics

	Playing time per day	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gratification	1	8	3.88	.354	.125
	4	6	4.00	.632	.258
Achievement	1	8	4.13	.991	.350
	4	6	4.33	1.211	.494
social interaction	1	8	3.00	.535	.189
	4	6	3.33	1.033	.422
Escapism	1	8	3.25	1.035	.366
	4	6	4.33	.516	.211

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gratification	Equal variances assumed	.296	.596	-.473	12	.645	-.125	.264	-.701	.451
	Equal variances not assumed			-.436	7.331	.676	-.125	.287	-.797	.547
Achievement	Equal variances assumed	.002	.962	-.355	12	.729	-.208	.588	-1.489	1.072
	Equal variances not assumed			-.344	9.561	.738	-.208	.606	-1.567	1.150
social interaction	Equal variances assumed	3.577	.083	-.790	12	.445	-.333	.422	-1.253	.587
	Equal variances not assumed			-.721	7.009	.494	-.333	.462	-1.426	.759
Escapism	Equal variances assumed	2.355	.151	-2.338	12	.038	-1.083	.463	-2.093	-.074
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.565	10.758	.027	-1.083	.422	-2.015	-.151

Table 5 Uses and Gratifications with Monetary Payment

→ **T-Test**

Group Statistics

	How much pay for the game	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gratification	1	20	4.00	.562	.126
	6	5	4.80	.447	.200
Achievement	1	20	3.80	.834	.186
	6	5	4.20	.447	.200
social interaction	1	20	3.25	.851	.190
	6	5	4.60	.548	.245
Escapism	1	20	3.85	.587	.131
	6	5	4.60	.548	.245

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gratification	Equal variances assumed	.008	.929	-2.943	23	.007	-.800	.272	-1.362	-.238
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.387	7.534	.010	-.800	.236	-1.351	-.249
Achievement	Equal variances assumed	4.718	.040	-1.025	23	.316	-.400	.390	-1.207	.407
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.463	12.051	.169	-.400	.273	-.995	.195
social interaction	Equal variances assumed	1.114	.302	-3.349	23	.003	-1.350	.403	-2.184	-.516
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.353	9.548	.002	-1.350	.310	-2.045	-.655
Escapism	Equal variances assumed	.093	.763	-2.584	23	.017	-.750	.290	-1.350	-.150
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.699	6.515	.033	-.750	.278	-1.417	-.083

Appendices

Appendix A Instruments

Parasocial Relationships Scale (Tukachinsky, 2010):

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 7 being "Strongly Agree."

1. If X was a real person, I could have disclosed negative things about myself honestly and fully (deeply) to him/her.

2. If X was a real person, I could have disclosed a great deal of things about myself to X.

3. Sometimes, I wish I knew what X would do in my situation.

4. If X was a real person, I could have disclosed positive things about myself honestly and fully (deeply) to him/her.

5. Sometimes, I wish I could ask X for advice.

6. I think X could be a friend of mine.

7. I find X very attractive physically

8. I think X is quite handsome/pretty.

9. X is very sexy looking.

10. X fits my ideal standards of physical beauty/handsomeness.

11. I want X physically, emotionally, and mentally.

12. For me, X could be the perfect romantic partner.

13. Sometimes I think that X and I are just meant for each other.

14. I wish X could know my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.

15. X influences my mood.

16. I adore X

17. I idealize X

18. If X was a real person I would be able to count on X in times of need.

19. If X was a real person I would give him/her emotional support.

20. If X was a real person he/she would able to count on me in times of need.

21. If X was a real person I would will to share my possessions with him/her.

22. If X was a real person I could trust him/her completely.

23. If X was a real person I could have a warm relationship with him/her.

24. I want to promote the well-being of X.

Five Factors for Video Game Meets Gratifications Scale (Selnow, 1984):

Video games preferred to friends (Factor 1):

Playing video games is as exciting as being with my friends

It's more fun to be playing video games than playing with friends

Playing video games is more exciting than being with people

Playing video games is easier than being with other people

Learn about people (Factor 2)

I go to video game arcades because it teaches me what other people are like

I go to video game arcades because it helps me learn how other people act like

When I play video arcade games it's like being with another person

I go to video game arcades to learn how to act around other people

Companionship (Factor 3)

Playing video games is almost like being with a friend

Playing video games helps me forget I'm alone

Video games are good companions for me

<u>Action (Factor 4)</u>

Playing video games makes me part of the action

When I play video arcade games it lets me do things rather than just watch others do

things

Playing video games gives me something to do when I haven't anything else others to do

<u>Solitude/escape (Factor 5)</u>

When I go to video game arcades I can get away by myself

I go to video game arcades because it lets me think by myself

Appendix B Questionnaire

Q1 How long you have been playing (played) "*Mr. Love: Queen's Choice*"?

Less than one month

One month to three months

More than three months

Q2 What is your age?

Under 18 years old

19 - 30 years old

31- 35 years or older

Over 35 years old

Q3 What is your gender?

Male

Female

Q4 Who is your favorite male character in the game?

#1 Victor

#2 Gavin

#3   Kiro

4 Lucien

Parasocial Relationships Scale

Q5 Please rank each of the following items in order of importance with #1 being the least important object to #5being the most important object.

When you pick your favorite male game character, which factors will you consider?

_____ Physical beauty/handsomeness
_____ Personality
_____ Occupation
_____ Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
_____ Intuition

Q6 Now, using the 1 to 5 scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree with the statement, please tell us how much you agree with the following statements about your experience with playing the game.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I could picture myself in some of the scenes in the game.	○	○	○	○	○
I thought about parts of my life that were related to what was happening in the game.	○	○	○	○	○
The game affected me emotionally.	○	○	○	○	○
I have felt the emotions the characters were experiencing.	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 And now, please indicate below how much you enjoyed the relationship with your favorite male game characters.

A great deal

A lot

A moderate amount

A little

little

I have no idea

Q8 Now consider other characters you don't like. Please list some reasons why you don't like him or them.

Five Factors for Video Game Meets Gratifications Scale

Q9 How much time do you spend playing video games per day?

    30 minutes or less

    One hour

    Two hours

    More than two hours

Q10 Currently, how much money have you spent on the game (¥)?

    under 50

    51 -100

    101-200

    201- 300

    301-400

    401-500

    501- 1000

    More than 1001

Now, using the 1 to 5 scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree with the statement. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability:

Q12 When I play the game, it gives me a lot of pleasure/happiness/excitement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Gratifications	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 I have more achievements than other players in the game (such as, higher levels, specific interactions, rare cards, special services).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Achievement	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 According to the game interactions, I have made a group of friends (virtual friends, real friends).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Social Interaction	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 Playing the game lets me forget some of the real-life problems I have

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Escapism	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 What is your motivation to continue playing the game?

_____

Appendix C IRB Approval

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dennis Kinsey
DATE: April 17, 2020
SUBJECT: **Determination of Exemption from Regulations**
IRB #:   20-114
TITLE: *Female Dating Simulator Gamers' Motivations and Developing Parasocial Relationship with Game Characters*

The above referenced application, submitted for consideration as exempt from federal regulations as defined in 45 C.F.R. 46, has been evaluated by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the following:

1.   determination that it falls within one or more of the eight exempt categories allowed by the organization;
2.   determination that the research meets the organization's ethical standards.

It has been determined by the IRB this protocol qualifies for exemption and has been assigned to category **2**. This authorization will remain active for a period of five years from **April 16, 2020** until **April 15, 2025**.

CHANGES TO PROTOCOL: Proposed changes to this protocol during the period for which IRB authorization has already been given, cannot be initiated without additional IRB review. If there is a change in your research, you should notify the IRB immediately to determine whether your research protocol continues to qualify for exemption or if submission of an expedited or full board IRB protocol is required. Information about the University's human participants protection program can be found at: http://researchintegrity.syr.edu/human-research/. Protocol changes are requested on an amendment application available on the IRB web site; please reference your IRB number and attach any documents that are being amended.

STUDY COMPLETION: Study completion is when all research activities are complete or when a study is closed to enrollment and only data analysis remains on data that have been de-identified. A Study Closure Form should be completed and submitted to the IRB for review (Study Closure Form).

Thank you for your cooperation in our shared efforts to assure that the rights and welfare of people participating in research are protected.

Tracy J. Cromp
Tracy Cromp, M.S.W.
Director

DEPT: Public Relations, Newhouse – 215 University Place   **STUDENT:** Ruifeng Qie

Research Integrity and Protections | 214 Lyman Hall | Syracuse, NY 13244-1200 | 315.443.3013 | **orip.syr.edu**

Department Name:

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication

Protocol Title:

Female Dating Simulator Gamers' Motivations and Developing Parasocial Relationship

with Game Characters

INFORMED CONSENT

My name is Ruifeng, Qie, and I am a graduate student at Syracuse University.

I am interested in learning more about This study tests Chinese female gamers develop

one-side relationships with game characters and explores their motivations for playing a popular

Chinese dating game – *Mr. Love: Queen's Choice*. You will be asked to complete survey. This

will take approximately10 minutes of your time.

I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary. This
means you can choose whether to participate and that you may withdraw from the study at any
time without penalty.

Whenever one works with email or the internet; there is always the risk of compromising
privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree
permitted by the technology being used. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees
can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by third parties.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research please contact Ruifeng, Qie
rqie01@syr.edu.

I am 18 years of age or older, and I wish to participate in this research study.

By continuing I agree to participate in this research study.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Tel: +1315744 8569   **Emai**l: rqie01@syr.edu

EDUCATION BACKGROUND

- **Syracuse University**   2019. June – 2020. August
    Master of Science in Public Relations

- **Indiana University-Bloomington**   2015. August – 2018. May
    Bachelor of Arts and Science in Journalism and Public Relations

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WORKING EXPERIENCES

- **180 Digital Technology co. LTD**   2018. June – 2018.August
    PR intern

- **TV Station of Baotou City**   2018. November – 2019 February
    Trainee journalist

- **People's Government of Baotou City**   2019. February – 2019.May
    Intern of the Propaganda Department

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

- **Seaview Outfitter Annual PR Plan**   2017. September – 2017.December
    Made annual PR plan for a local outdoor retailer store to build the brand and reputation
    Duties involved: responsible for collecting related articles and reports, especially from competitors.

- **Uber Social Media Analysis Report**   2017. May- 2017.June
    Made Social Media PR Plan for Uber Driver Crisis
    Duties involved: collected information from social-media posts and made budget and measure the effectiveness of the plan.
- **Lotus World Music Festival PR Plan**   2017.Junary-2017. May
    Duties involved: led the team to make a PR Plan for Lotus World Festival to attract

    more attention from the Indiana University Students.

Research Interests

Public Relations, Video Game, Smartphone Game, Interactive Media, Social Media

Influencers, Digital Media