AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Justin D. Cole for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on March 10, 2023

Title: Understanding School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports and Igaming as a Career Choice

Abstract approved:

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Deborah J. Rubel

Over the past 20 years, there has been a steady increase in the popularity of online gaming in the United States culture. There are many factors that have contributed to this spike in popularity, but the most significant are advancements in technology, televised competitions, social media, lucrative cash prizes, product endorsements, and scholarships (Morgan & Cole, 2023). From electronic sports (esports) to internet gaming (igaming), many of today's children, adolescents, and young adults perceive the virtual world of game play as both psychologically and financially rewarding. This has resulted in many young people pursuing professional gaming as a viable career choice. Undoubtedly, as more young people pursue esports and igaming as potential careers, high school counselors will find themselves interacting more with these students and providing them guidance into the world of professional esports and igaming.

These studies examined the high school counselors' perceptions of esports and igaming as potential career choices for their students. The first study examined how high school counselors experience the phenomenon of esports as a career choice. The second study examined how high school counselors experience igaming as a career choice.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was chosen as the qualitative design for both studies. IPA is a hermeneutic circle of research where the researcher is involved in making sense of the experience while the participant reflects on the experience (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Participants were recruited from message board posts on high school counseling social media pages (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter), personal emails, and through the following professional counseling and gaming organizations' websites: American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the National Career Development Association (NCDA), and National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE).

Six participants met the criteria of the study and were interviewed utilizing online video conferencing software (i.e. Zoom). Semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting between 45 and 80 minutes. Upon conclusion, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts analyzed identifying major themes, along with similarities and differences in the experiences of the six participants. Following step-by-step analysis presented by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), a master table was created of the discovered themes. Additionally, strategies were used to increase trustworthiness, including peer debriefing, research positionality reflection, and member checking (Morrow, 2005).

The first manuscript examined how the participants (N=6) experienced esports as a career choice. The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) sense of limited job-specific knowledge, (b) marginalization of students due to stigma, (c) being guided by one's professional identity and values of career counseling, (d) sense of determination to validate esports as a career choice, and (e) addressing feelings associated with navigating the professional relationship with students.

The second manuscript examined how the high school counselors (N=6) experienced igaming as a career choice. The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) underlying absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, (b) anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on school counselors' biases, (c) countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, (d) struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and (e) anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.

The findings of both studies identified the need for more education, information and understanding of opportunities associated with esports and igaming as a career choice. The findings have multiple implications for research that are directed at the overall growth of knowledge in the experience of high school counselors working with students pursuing careers in these two phenomena.

Understanding School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports and Igaming as a Career Choice

by

Justin D. Cole

A DISSERTATION

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APPROVED:

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Dean of the College of Education

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Justin D. Cole, Author

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I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Linda. Thank you for always believing in my ability and encouraging me to be the best version of myself. You have always had faith, even when I felt defeated, lost motivation, and was ready to give up on this endeavor. You motivated me to finish what I set out to accomplish and reminded me that I deserve the best for myself and our family. Thank you for tolerating all of the journal articles, highlighters, pens, notepads, computer equipment and binders strewn about on the dining room table for the past eight years.

I want to thank my mother, Arlea, for teaching me the value of education. From a young age, I watched you pursue your educational goals and accomplish so many things through academia. Your passion for education has touched many lives and afforded your students the opportunity of growth and change through learning. Thank you for taking me to college classes with you. I watched as your pursuit of knowledge opened doors for you and our family. I observed that anything is possible through hard work, perseverance, and dedication. I do not know where I would be without you as my mother. Happy birthday!

To my dissertation committee, thank you for your continued interest in my research topic and encouragement along this long journey. I appreciate your flexibility and understanding as I ebbed and flowed my way through the process. Thank you for never giving up on me.

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Chapter One: General Introduction

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Dissertation Overview

On this particular Saturday, I find myself sitting with my daughter, surrounded by over a thousand spectators at the Shrine Expo Center in Los Angeles, California, just outside the grounds of the University of Southern California. We all came to this venue to root on our teams as they competed in the Clash Royale League World Finals. Some were cheering for SK Gaming and FAV Gaming, the top seeds. Others were in support of W. EDGM. However, my daughter and I were rooting for Team Liquid to pull off the upset. We cheered as KaNaRiOoo was teamed up with Surgical Goblin and provided the first set win in the 2v2 competition. The crowd supporting W.EDGM went crazy when their player, Soloman, was able to get one set back with a 1v1 win over DiegoB. But in the end, Surgical Goblin closed things out for Team Liquid with the solo win over Nuomici. After the final castle crumbled, Team Liquid earned the $150,000 top prize after winning the Clash Royale League World Finals.

On the plane ride back to Colorado, my daughter stated that when she turns 16, she wants to compete in the Clash Royale World Finals. Then she asked me the question that is at the root of this dissertation. She asked, "Dad, how would you feel about me becoming a professional esport athlete?" I remember thinking to myself, "What is that?" and "How would I feel?" Chances are if you have spent some time around an adolescent and asked them what they want their career to be when they get older, you may have heard a few answers with any of the following terms: gamer, esports athlete, YouTuber, Twitch streamer, sports bettor, daily fantasy sports (DFS) pro, or an online poker player.

Today, electronic sports (esports) and internet gaming (igaming) are making a significant impact on society and have become more popular and mainstream. What are esports and igaming

activities? According to Jenny, Manning, Keiper, and Olrich (2016), esports are defined as organized video game competitions between one or more individuals and teams. For the purpose of this study, esports included online gaming professionally across all platforms, including personal computer (PC), mobile devices (i.e. Apple iPhone) and gaming consoles (e.g. PS4 and Xbox). Igaming is the wagering of money or something of value on the outcome of an event or a game, using the internet. Igaming activities include online poker, online casinos, sports betting, and daily fantasy sports.

With the recent Supreme Court ruling to strike down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, the 1992 law that barred state-authorized sports betting, and proposed changes to the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA) of 2006, many states have started the process to legalize online poker and sports betting. As of the date of this dissertation, sports betting and online poker are legal in 36 states, up from 18 in January 2022. Additionally, 10 states are currently in the legislative phase with all bills expected to pass within the next five years (Morgan & Cole, 2023).

Over the past several years, there has been a steady increase in the growth and popularity of these activities; esports and igaming. These activities are growing so popular that many esports athletes have been able to pursue income opportunities through streaming gameplay (i.e. Twitch), competing in tournaments (i.e. Heroes of the Dorm), and even attending college on an athletic scholarship. These opportunities have led to esports and igaming becoming viable career options for youth and opened the doors to multiple postsecondary education options. In 2014, more than 205 million people globally watched or participated in esports (Casselman, 2015).

According to the American Gaming Association (2023), in the first ten months of 2022, Americans wagered $73 billion legally online on multiple sporting events, up 70% year-over-

year. With the growth in popularity, many young people are interested in esports and igaming as recreation, but some are interested in esports and igaming as a career choice. According to Kelly (2015), colleges and universities are beginning to take notice, as five colleges offered esports scholarships for the 2015-2016 academic year: Robert Morris University, University of Pikeville, Maryville University, Southwestern University, and Columbia University. Just eight years since the above-mentioned study, the number of collegiate participants has grown exponentially.

The National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) reports that there are currently over 240 colleges and universities offering over $16 million in athletic scholarships to over 5000 student-athletes (NACE, 2023). Many students that receive scholarships to participate in esports find themselves with educational opportunities and degree pursuits in areas such as: computer programming, game design, marketing, business, communications, sports medicine, and esports coaching and program development.

According to Morgan and Cole (2023), for many students, the opportunity to earn student-athlete scholarships has opened the collegiate doors and provided them the time needed to pursue career options. Students that had not previously felt a sense of belonging or a purpose beyond high school, now find themselves being recruited to be a part of a team. Today, collegiate esports athletes make contributions to athletic departments at universities across the nation as they continue to pursue their education and discover career opportunities along the way. "In addition to being good gamers, they will be good students and will bring an exciting new dynamic to our campus" (University of Pikeville, 2014, para.4).

School Counselors

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2016) reported that students attending school spend an average of 35 hours a week and 180 days per year in the classroom. This time

brings them into constant contact, not only with teachers, but other influential staff members to include school counselors. School counselors play an important role in assisting students with career choices. According to the College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA), school counselors need to better support students during the decision-making process in order to streamline their progress towards postsecondary education and career readiness. School counselors are leaders and advocates who can profoundly influence students' academic achievement, aspirations, decisions, and future plans.

Given the growth and popularity of esports and igaming, it is highly likely that high school counselors will find themselves interacting with students that are considering gaming as a vocational option at some point in their professional counseling career. According to the American School Counselor Association (2018), school counselors promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student.

During the high school years, a discussion on career is important to occupational development. According to Gati and Tal (2008), the role of the school counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives, providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources for vocational exploration. That said, students interested in esports and igaming should have access to these resources.

School Counselors' Perception

While at secondary school, young people begin to explore career options, often considering a variety of occupations, and adapt their subject and work experience choices accordingly (Gysbers, 2008). This is the time in a student's career pathway, that they may begin to explore esports and igaming as viable career options. However, many school counselors may not have a conversation with high school students interested in esports or igaming careers due to

their preconceived ideas that gaming can be problematic and lead to negative behaviors in students. Research has focused on identifying the connection between online gaming and multiple problematic behaviors. According to Desai, Krishnan-Sarin, Cavallo, and Potenza (2010), individuals with problematic gaming behavior have been shown to exhibit inattention, hyperactivity, poor self-control, experience time distortion while playing, and demonstrate increased aggression and diminished empathy if their games of choice contain aggressive content. Additionally, much of the published research in the counseling discipline has focused on school performance, obesity, and aggression. Such preconceived ideas, belief structures, and a review of the limited research may impact the attitudes of school counselors towards esports and igaming as viable career options.

Although school counselors play a vital role in guiding young people to explore a broad range of vocational options, their perceptions of esports and igaming have not previously been examined. Therefore, the focus of this dissertation is to investigate the perceptions of school counselors towards esports and igaming as a career choice for young people. The results can then inform education, training, and recruitment practices.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative research approach provides a holistic account of the participant's meaning. One qualitative research methodology that aims at exploring an individual's experience is interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). "IPA is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, pg. 1).

Phenomenology is a useful research method to help identify themes among individuals experiencing a common phenomenon such as career choice (Creswell, 2013). IPA is a

hermeneutic circle of research where the researcher is involved in making sense of the experience while the participant reflects on the experience (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Phenomenology allows for a more robust exploration of one's experience using open-ended questions and developing a close relationship with the participants. IPA is concerned with exploring a particular experience or phenomena in its own terms and focuses on the significance of an experience by allowing the individual to reflect and make sense of what has occurred (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The researcher followed Smith et al. (2009), Creswell (2013), and Smith and Osborn (2003) as outlines for IPA data collection and analysis. Such outlines include the following: writing relevant subquestions, identifying the researcher worldview, personal bias, conducting semi-structured audio taped interviews and analyzing data for emerging themes. This researcher also utilized several methods to ensure trustworthiness including peer debriefing, writing a personal research positionality statement, and member checks.

The research question for this dissertation is aimed at obtaining a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of school counselors when working with students that are considering esports or igaming as a career choice.

Dissertation Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate scholarly work utilizing the Manuscript Documentation Dissertation format outlined by Oregon State University. This dissertation consists of two journal-formatted manuscripts. Manuscript I (Chapter 2) is a qualitative research study titled, Understanding High School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports as a Career Choice**.** Manuscript II (Chapter 3) is a qualitative study titled, Understanding High School Counselors' Perceptions of Igaming as a Career Choice.

Manuscript I

The first manuscript of the dissertation, Chapter 2, is qualitative research utilizing IPA. This manuscript sought to examine how school counselors experience esports as a career choice. This study's research question was: How do high school counselors perceive esports as a career choice? In this study, school counselors were individuals working in the high school setting and providing career counseling as a part of their daily roles and responsibilities. Participants reported personal and professional experiences with students that were pursuing esports as a career choice. This was part of the inclusion criteria for the study.

Recruitment for this study started with identifying school counseling programs at the secondary school level that are charged with providing career counseling to high schoolers as they explore their career options. Participants were purposefully recruited from message board posts on high school counseling program's social media pages (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter), personal emails, and through the following professional counseling and gaming organizations' websites: American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the National Career Development Association (NCDA), and the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE).

Snowball sampling was also utilized, as one participant identified two school counselors that had extensive experience working with students pursuing esports and igaming as careers. Contact was made via email to screen for inclusion, collect demographic information, and schedule an interview when appropriate. Six participants met the criteria of the study and were interviewed utilizing the Zoom online video conferencing software.

The data analysis resulted in five themes for Manuscript I, Chapter 2. The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) sense of limited job-specific knowledge, (b) marginalization of students due to stigma, (c) being guided by one's professional identity and values of career

counseling, (d) sense of determination to validate esports as a career choice, and (e) addressing feelings associated with navigating the professional relationship with students.

Manuscript II

The second manuscript of the dissertation, Chapter 3, is qualitative research utilizing the methodology of IPA. This manuscript sought to examine how school counselors experience igaming as a career choice. The research question was: How do high school counselors perceive igaming as a career choice?

The six participants in Manuscript II, Chapter 3, were the same participants from the previous manuscript. The recruitment strategies were the same. To reiterate, participants were recruited from message board posts on high school counseling social media pages, personal emails, and through professional counseling and gaming organizations. Snowball sampling was also utilized. Contact was made via email to screen for inclusion, collect demographic information, and schedule an interview when appropriate. The six participants were interviewed utilizing online video conferencing software (i.e. Zoom).

The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) underlying absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, (b) anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on school counselors' biases, (c) countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, (d) struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and (e) anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.

Thematic Relevance

The manuscripts are thematically linked by exploring the school counselor's perceptions of the closely related phenomena. Manuscript I examined how school counselors perceive

esports as a career choice and describes their experiences working with student that are considering esports as a career. Data gleaned from Manuscript I informs Manuscript II. Manuscript II examined how school counselors perceive igaming as a career choice and described the six participants' experiences working with students that are considering igaming as a career.

Both manuscripts address a current lack of research from the perspective of the school counselor in the areas of esports and igaming as career choices. This data is needed to help inform schools on how to provide educational opportunities, and training to support and educate school counselors on the vast occupational opportunities in the area of esports and igaming. There is a gap in the counseling, specifically school and career counseling, literature which needs to be filled.

Organizational Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in accordance with the Manuscript Documentation Dissertation format required by Oregon State University. Chapter 1 introduces the current state of esports and igaming, a brief history of the two phenomena, the rationale for the two studies, and a definition of the relevant terms. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for the justification and implications of this research. Chapter 1 also introduces Manuscript I (Chapter 2) and Manuscript II (Chapter 3). Manuscript I (Chapter 2) outlines research completed with school counselors and discusses their experiences of working with students interested in pursuing esports as a career choice and discusses their perceptions of esports as a career choice. Manuscript II (Chapter 3) outlines research completed with school counselors and discuss their experiences of working with students interested in pursuing igaming as a career choice and discusses their perceptions of

igaming as a career choice. The final chapter, Chapter 4, presents a summary of the manuscripts, findings, and conclusion. Future research within the field is also discussed in the final chapter.

Publication Options

There are three journals in which this researcher will seek publication. These publications are as follows: Career Development Quarterly, Professional School Counseling, and the Journal of Gambling Studies.

The Career Development Quarterly (CDQ) is the official journal of the National Career Development Association (NCDA). According to the NCDA website, the purpose of CDQ is to foster career development through the design and use of career interventions and publish articles on career counseling, individual and organizational career development, work and leisure, career education, career coaching, and career management.

Additionally, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) publishes the Professional School Counseling journal. According to the ASCA website, Professional School Counseling is a rigorous peer-reviewed journal that publishes high-quality manuscripts on theory, research, and best practices for the profession. The journal's foci strengthen the bonds among school counselors and help maintain a shared awareness of the roles, problems, and progress of school counseling across various settings and levels.

Lastly, the Journal of Gambling Studies publishes empirical research that is focused on the many and varied aspects of gambling behavior, both controlled and pathological. I believe that this periodical offers a suitable forum and target audience for such research.

Chapter 2: Manuscript I

Understanding High School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports as a Career Choice

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in the popularity of electronic sports (esports). As a result, many young people have shown an increased interest in pursuing professional esports as a career choice and high school counselors may find themselves discussing career pathways in esports and postsecondary opportunities. This interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study examined the high school counselor's perceptions of working with students that are considering esports as a career choice. Six participants were interviewed about their experiences. The participants described the following five experiential themes: (a) limited job-specific knowledge, (b) marginalization of students due to stigma, (c) being guided by one's professional identity and values of career counseling, (d) a sense of determination to validate esports as a career choice, and (e) addressing feelings associated with navigating the professional relationship with students. The implications of the findings are discussed and ideas for future research into this emerging phenomenon are presented.

Keywords: school, counseling, career, vocation, choice, esports, electronic, sports

Electronic sports (esports) are a new career opportunity for young adults that has grown in popularity over the past two decades. Esports is defined as organized video game competition and like traditional sports, esports include skillful play, organized, both physical and mental, have a broad following and have achieved institutional stability (Jenny, Manning, Keiper, & Olrich, 2016). Such popularity can be measured by both consumer spending and hours spent playing esport games by these young adults.

According to the Price Waterhouse Cooper's website, U.S. esports spending by consumers and advertisers, including media rights and sponsorship revenues, is expected to increase from $221.6 million in 2018 to nearly $516 million in 2023. In his article, Casselman (2015) stated that more than 205 million people globally watched or participated in esports. With the accelerated growth of esports, there has been a corresponding growth in the number of esports athletes, and esports continues to gain popularity as a career option particularly among young people (Kocadagv, 2019; Salo, 2017).

Esports competitions draw tens of thousands of attendees or more, with prize money in the millions, and pro gamers can earn six-figure incomes, not counting sponsorships. This was the case in July 2019, when a 16-year-old, Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf, won first place in the solos competition at the first-ever Fortnite World Cup, winning $3 million in prize money. Arguably, young adults identified with Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf; they saw themselves as the next Fortnite champion as they began to explore career options.

According to Morgan and Cole (2023), young people are increasingly expressing an interest in esports as a career or avenue for collegiate competition. This interest should be fostered and explored within the school environment as a part of career exploration. According to Gysbers (2008), while at secondary school, young people begin to explore career options,

often considering a variety of occupations, and adapt their subject and work experience choices accordingly.

While many young adults may feel drawn towards a career in competitive electronic sports and feel the appeal of occupational opportunities in the esports industry, school counselors may not be aware of the appeal and the opportunities or they may have preexisting negative attitudes towards esports. A lack of research on this topic suggests that careers in esports remains off the radar of school counselors that will be interacting with such students in their role of career counselor.

According to Gati and Tal (2008), the role of the career counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives, of which the young person may not be aware, and providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources for vocational exploration. The role of a school counselor is extremely important. School counselors promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student (ASCA, 2018).

For these reasons, it is imperative that school counselors have a general understanding of available careers and demonstrate a level of competency in order to better support the career choices of their students. School counselors are expected to demonstrate competency in the areas of academic achievement, social and emotional development, and career counseling (Morgan, Greenwaldt, & Gosselin, 2014). One area of focus that can impact overall counselor competencies is the perception they have towards a specific career choice. Literature suggests that the perception of a career choice plays an important role in the counselor's interaction and engagement with the student.

School counselors, like many parents or other adults, may hold negative opinions of

esports and perhaps view esports as not a real career or video game playing as a waste of time or detrimental to one's physical and emotional health (Desai, Krishnan-Sarin, Cavallo, & Potenza, 2010). These opinions may unknowingly have an impact on the attitudes of school counselors working with students who are leaning towards esports as a potential career. According to Francis and Prosser (2013), formal career exploration builds on the informal career information gleaned throughout childhood from family, the media, play, observation, and life experiences.

Although school counselors play a pivotal role in guiding young people to explore a broad range of vocational options, their attitudes towards the esports industry have not previously been examined based on a lack of professional research in counseling publications. There is limited research examining the playing of esports as a career as opposed to a pure leisure activity (Bányai, Griffiths, Király, & Demetrovics, 2018).

The focus of this study was to investigate high school counselors' perceptions of esports as a career option for young people. The question this research study aimed at answering was the following: How do high school counselors experience and perceive working with students interested in pursuing esports as a career choice? This research provided a much-needed discussion on school counselors' perceptions of esports and provided further insights into the experience of the phenomenon.

The research question was examined using a qualitative research methodology, specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The aim of this researcher was to explore the context within which school counselors experience their perceptions of esports as a career option, including their interaction with students who are considering esports as a career choice, their own personal feelings about esports and their overall views of esports. This study provided further understanding of the various perspectives into current deficiencies in the

training and education of school counselors working with students exploring careers in esports.

Methods

This study focused on providing a more holistic understanding of the complex experience of school counselors as they interacted with students considering careers in esports. A qualitative approach best supported this research question due to the potential of providing a holistic account of the participants meaning (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research allows the researcher to develop a relationship and build rapport with the participant.

IPA was selected as the research methodology because the researcher plays a pivotal role in developing a relationship with the research participant and in deciphering and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). This type of connection allows for a more in-depth interview that thoroughly captured the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), IPA examines a particular moment that may be ordinary and focuses on the significance of what has happened by allowing the individual to reflect and make sense of what has occurred.

This researcher followed guidelines for IPA research, data collection and data analysis as outlined by Smith et al. (2009), Creswell (2013), and Smith and Osborn (2003). Additionally, this study included disclosing researcher bias and worldview, conducting recorded, semi-structured interviews with school counselors, analyzing data to uncover five main themes, identifying methods of trustworthiness, and presenting potential research limitations.

Researcher Worldview and Researcher Disclosure

When undertaking any research, it is important to identify a particular perspective from which one views the world. The ultimate effect of worldview is that it couches the research in some way. Thus, it helps ascertain if the research has been done in the correct direction as per the

norms set for that particular type of exploration. A worldview that is often associated with IPA is that of social constructivism. According to Creswell (2013), individuals working within a social constructivist worldview seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of phenomenological research is to rely as much as possible on the participant's views and subjective meanings. Constructivist researchers often address the "essence" of lived experiences.

The principles of social constructivism suggest that this researcher must rely upon the research participant's interpretation of their reactions, relationships, and the world around them. This researcher inquired as to the perception of esports by school counselors and how they feel their perceptions has impacted their role of career counselor when working with students interested in pursuing a career in esports. "The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 111). By conducting semi-structured interviews with the school counselors, this researcher aimed to uncover their perceptions of esports as a career choice to identify common themes. The thematic findings will inform school counselor training and education.

When approaching a study utilizing IPA, the researcher plays several key roles. Interpretative phenomenological analysis gives the researcher a large role in the research process. Therefore, it is imperative to be aware of one's preconceptions (Smith et al., 2009). Several of these roles are building relationships with the participants, conducting, and transcribing the interviews, and ultimately uncovering common themes through data analysis. Creswell (2013) notes that when utilizing phenomenology, researchers must be able to identify a personal frame of mind that could possibly influence the research process.

The personal frame of mind and research positionality of this research was defined prior

to taking on this study. This researcher is a doctoral student in a counselor education and supervision program at Oregon State University and a full-time supervisory Family Advocacy Program social worker for the United States Army. This researcher instructs courses as an adjunct faculty member for the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS). This researcher is active in the UCCS Esport Club as a faculty advisor.

Recently, this researcher developed and implemented several esports clubs at high schools in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This researcher has been competing in esports since 1986. This researcher is aware of their love for video games both personally and professionally, in the past and present. This researcher is the father of four children that all have an affinity for esports.

This researcher has previously reflected on his own personal experiences and noted feelings and assumptions on the phenomenon. This researcher believes that many view the phenomenon as a waste of time and not constructive or significantly contributing to society. This researcher believes that school counselors would like their students to pursue popular and prestigious careers. Additionally, it is the opinion of this researcher that school counselors would like their students to pursue careers that contribute to society. For this reason, school counselors may not take the student's own interests into consideration when choosing career paths.

Lastly, this researcher feels that school counselors may not be aware of developments and opportunities in esports. Prior to data collection, this researcher wrote a statement of positionality to provide clarification to the reader on the researcher's past experiences, biases, and orientations that may have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study (Creswell, 2013).

Participants and Recruitment

According to Creswell (2013), in a phenomenological study the process of collecting

information involves primarily in-depth interviews with as many as 15 individuals. In addition, the homogenous, purposeful sampling common to IPA allows the researcher to identify and interview a specific group of participants that can offer insights into a particular experience.

Participants were selected based on their suitability for this study. Participation in this study was limited to individuals who met all of the following inclusion criteria:

- High school counselor

- Provide career counseling services as part of their current role

- Have personally heard of a student wanting to pursue a career in esports

  or

- Have professionally worked with a student wanting to pursue a career in esports

The study included six participants who were high school counselors that engage in the practice of career counseling as part of their occupational responsibilities. All six knew of a student or worked with a student interested in esports as a career choice. The six participants were from across the United States and represented various geographic regions and demographic categories. Of the six participants, four identified as female and two identified as male. Four participants identified as White, and two identified as Hispanic. All six participants held master's degrees in counseling. One was working on their doctorate degree. The high school counselors were employed in both urban and rural settings. The range of experience working as school counselors was from one to fifteen years.

Purposeful and snowball sampling strategies were utilized to identify potential participants. According to Creswell (2013), purposeful sampling identifies participants who will best maximize the information sought by the researcher. Participants were recruited by direct messaging through the social media accounts (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) of various

high school counseling programs, as well as accounts for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the National Career Development Association (NCDA). Potential participants were asked to contact this researcher via direct messaging, email, or phone. Participants that met the inclusion criteria and consented to being a part of the study were then scheduled for an interview. Snowball sampling was utilized to recruit two high school counselors who were not known to this researcher but were identified by a participant.

Data Collection

According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological research involves collecting data from multiple individuals who have experienced a specific life experience or phenomenon. The goal of IPA is to gain a detailed account of the participant's experience (Smith et al., 2009). The primary means of data collection was through the use of interviews. "Interviewing allows the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of participants' responses, and the investigator is able to enquire after any other interesting areas which arise" (Smith et al., 2009, pg. 57).

The semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted utilizing online conferencing software (i.e. Zoom) primarily due to COVID protocols, ease of access to participants due to geographical location, and flexibility of scheduling the interviews. During one interview, due to the rural location of the participant, internet service was an issue and the Zoom software disconnected multiple times. Ultimately, the interview had to be completed telephonically.

Smith et al. (2009) describes a qualitative research interview as a conversation with a purpose. This conversation developed through two phases. First, participants answered a few demographic questions aimed at generating conversation flow and gathering a deeper understanding of the participants based on the following descriptors: age, gender, race, ethnicity,

and years of high school counseling experience. Participants also provided a brief description of their experience with esports both personally and professionally. During this phase, rapport was built and a level of comfortableness was established prior to moving onto the next phase. Second, the participants engaged in semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were recorded using the video conferencing software. Upon conclusion of the interviews, the Zoom software produced an audio recording file and transcription file. This researcher later revised the transcription file by comparing the document to the audio recording. This comparison produced an accurate, verbatim transcription.

This study sought to understand high school counselors' perceptions of esports as a career choice. Therefore, data collection was aimed at addressing the central research question, "How do high school counselors experience esports as a career choice?" According to Creswell (2013), subquestions are developed to further analyze the central question. Interview questions that arose from the exploration of subquestions included the following:

- How do you experience esports as a potential career for your students?

- How would you describe your experience of your education and training in the areas of esports and career choice?

- How do you describe your experience of societal views of electronic sports?

- How do you experience esports as a part of your own life?

- How do you experience working with students that are considering electronic sports as a career choice?

- How do you experience and perceive the student while discussing esports as a career choice?

- How do you perceive yourself while engaging with students during the discussion of

esports as a career choice?

- How do you describe working with other staff/administration around the topic of electronic sports as a career choice?

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using IPA methodology. In IPA, data analysis is flexible and allows the researcher to glean a deep understanding of the participant's perspective, point of view and personal meaning (Smith et al., 2009). The end goal is to develop a composite description. This composite description is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspects of the phenomenological study and allows for a deepened level of interpretation. According to Smith et al. (2009), the essence of IPA lies in its analytic focus. That focus directs our analytic attention towards our participants' attempts to make sense of their experiences.

In utilizing this method, this researcher began by reading and rereading each transcript. The first step of IPA analysis involves immersing oneself in some of the original data (Smith et al., 2009). This researcher also relistened to the audio recordings in an attempt to rehear and experience the interview in each of the participant's voice. The second step involved noting anything of interest. "This step examines semantic context and language use on a very exploratory level" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 83). Notes were taken in the margins that were descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual. This researcher also read a few paragraphs backwards to get a better feel of the actual words used to describe the phenomenon.

Initially, the notes were first impressions, primary observations, and feelings. Later, this researcher read back through the transcripts pulling out concepts and looking for cross-case similarities and differences between transcripts and descriptive comments. These descriptive

comments have a phenomenological focus and stay close to the participant's meaning (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

The third step involved the development of emergent themes. The goal was to discover connections of the emerging themes between transcripts. The researcher used the technique of abstraction. "Abstraction is a basic form of identifying patterns between emergent themes and developing a sense of what can be called a 'super-ordinate' theme" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009). Once connections were made, the researcher began making tables that allowed for further interpretation and cross-case comparison. This process was repeated for each of the participant's transcripts. Once all the participant transcripts were analyzed and personal experiential themes identified, the process continued by looking for patterns across cases (Smith et al., 2009).

As themes began to emerge, the finishing steps were conducted in an attempt to identify potential cross-case themes. Cross-case themes were worded to best capture the collective experiences of the participants. These themes were discussed with the second author that acted as a consultant throughout the data analysis process. The process then continued into the member checks, peer debriefing, and writing of the findings and discussion.

Trustworthiness of Results

According to Morrow (2005), trustworthiness includes such factors as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers use verification strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. One of these strategies is member-checking. According to Harper and Cole (2012), many qualitative researchers also employ a member-checking process in which the participants ensure a more truthful expression.

In order to accomplish this, participants had the opportunity to verify the fidelity of their

transcripts. Participants were asked to critique the data collected from the initial interviews for accuracy of interpretation and representation of the phenomenon as experienced. Additionally, in an attempt to ensure accurate representation, participants were emailed the findings for their review and encouraged to comment on the content of the research. Several participants responded with feedback. This feedback was used to increase accuracy and applicability by focusing the findings more on the six participants' experience and identifying potential researcher bias in the discussion section.

Another method addressing trustworthiness is the utilization of a peer debriefer. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), the peer debriefer plays the role of "devil's advocate" and keeps the researcher honest by asking difficult questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations. The researcher attempted to make the peer debriefer aware of the investigative process. The process of peer debriefing uncovers areas that the researcher may not have considered. According to Fassinger (2005), peer debriefing not only refers to discussing the study with peers but allowing them to examine all aspects of the study to ensure adherence to standardly accepted procedures.

The peer debriefers for this study were an adjunct faculty member at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) and a current doctoral student at Oregon State University, a tenured professor at Walden University that is familiar with esports as a career choice having authored several textbook chapters on nontraditional career pathways, and a fellow cohort member of this researcher. The peer debriefers were all experienced with qualitative research and specifically familiar with the IPA methodology conducted in this study.

Lastly, this researcher constructed a statement of research positionality. A statement of positionality offers clarity to the reader by providing an overview of the researcher's past

experiences, biases, and further enhances the trustworthiness of the study. To assist in transferability, the researcher provided sufficient information on themselves, research context, processes, participants, and the research/participant relationships (Morrow, 2005).

<center>**Findings**</center>

Following the data collection and data analysis, the next step for this researcher was to develop themes and subthemes that would encapsulate and describe the school counselor's perception of esports as a career choice. The data analysis resulted in five themes. The themes included the following: a sense of limited job-specific knowledge, marginalization of students due to stigma, being guided by one's professional identity and values of career counseling, a sense of determination to validate esports as a career choice, and addressing feelings associated with navigating a professional relationship with students.

Theme #1: Limited Job-Specific Knowledge of Careers in Esports

This theme discussed a sense of limited job-specific knowledge about careers in esports within the school counseling profession. This theme included a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individualized career choices. When discussing their overall experiences, participants described a limited awareness of available opportunities post-secondary education to include collegiate athletic scholarships, monetized competitions, and available specific career opportunities within the realm of esports.

Participants often described this lack of awareness in the context of lack of training and education. Participants noted that their training in career was generalized and that they had not participated in focused training when it came to working with specific career choices. Additionally, the school counselors in this study presented a lack of knowledge of esports as a

career choice due to the newness of the phenomenon and the lack of experience working with this particular nontraditional career choice.

Participant #5 described a belief that the lack of knowledge was rooted in the newness of the phenomenon.

Well, I mean it's brand new. This is something that is, you know, in the 21st century is brand new to the world. You know, things like farming, things like working in banks, that's all been there for a while. Those are established positions. Esports is something that no one really knows a whole lot about. It's brand new, you know if you think about it.

As a result of the newness described by the school counselors, many reported a lack of awareness in competitions, financial opportunities, collegiate athletic scholarships, and post-secondary educational opportunities. School counselors in the study identified that they fill the knowledge gap by engaging their students in conversations on the topic and they learn about the new career opportunities through self-exploration.

Self-exploration was further defined as attending trainings on the topic of nontraditional career choices, reading journal articles, and searching mainstream media for references to esports as a career choice. Participant #4 stated, "I know about esports from my own research. I ask the students a bazillion questions." Similarly, Participant #5 described a sense of self-exploration and self-education by broadening their interests.

I'm learning about this as a career choice, as I'm going through it. I'm learning things about computers and all of that, it's different for sure. It's not something that I'm really the most knowledgeable about, but I understand kids and I understand that this is a great thing for kids to be a part of.

Participants in the study described that the newness of the phenomenon and their overall lack of knowledge was what prompted them to explore the topic of esports as a career choice. One school counselor stated, "That led me to wanting to research this and figure out what this was all about."

In further analyzing participant experiences, a key component was that all six participants communicated a sense of limited job-specific knowledge about non-traditional careers particularly esports. Participant #1 commented, "I think, honestly, I didn't know that there is a career you can have in those fields." This feeling was rooted in the experienced generalizability of the graduate curriculum and the primary focus on theories of career development and the identification and assessment of a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Participant #1 described their graduate experience as follows:

> In all my graduate school classes that focused on career, I do not remember esports being mentioned at all. I think in my education, I'm supposed to be like a professional on career development and getting these kids connected with what they want to do, but the classes that we take are pretty vague and pretty general and don't teach us like how you work with those kids that want to get into esports.

In addition to the generalized curriculum presented in their graduate programs, participants in the study experienced the phenomenon as unique and new due to the advances in technology over the past several years and understood that technology continues to grow in popularity among youth. Participants in the study highlighted this newness of the phenomenon as a contributing factor to their overall lack of knowledge and awareness.

Along with the newness, participants commented that counselors may not be exploring the topic in research and that they have not observed the career of esports explored in the

professional journals or at specific trainings offered by their school districts, professional organizations, and associations. However, four of the six participants in the study had been exposed to esport careers through observing a student's interests and asking questions of students that are interested in pursuing esports as a career.

School counselors in the study also experienced the phenomenon through the establishment of a club or team for competitions. Participant #6 commented, "I have looked into this as far as like school clubs go to help maybe push them into the collegiate space." Similar to the previously quoted school counselor, Participant #2 stated the following:

I know a little bit about esports, and what I do know is actually pretty limited to our school because we just created an esports team, and we did really well. So, I have limited knowledge.

Participant #3 also expressed a similar experience of interacting with students that were interested in careers in esports and having a sense that this interaction led to their overall increase in knowledge on the topic. Participant #3 stated:

I know I feel like you kind of have to have a little familiarity with this, like what's happening in general. I have learned from having kids myself interested in esports. It all helps, having kids myself, working with kids from all over, and just being in those conversations.

Collectively, participants in the study highlighted their understanding of the phenomenon through a sense of purpose, committed to understanding their student's career options, and a willingness to continue learning beyond their graduate programs as lifelong learners. School counselors in the study utilized their available resources, to include student interactions, to further develop their knowledge of available career opportunities for their students.

Theme #2: Marginalization of Students Due to Stigma of Esports

According to the data analysis, there was a sense of marginalization of students among the six participants due to the perceived stigma of esports. This theme included a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports as a result of the nontraditional nature of the career field and commonly held beliefs about esports as a career choice. Participants described experiencing negative views of esports due to several factors. In reviewing the data collected, the participants described several observations, views and beliefs that characterized the marginalization of those students that were pursuing esports as a career pathway.

These areas included the view that esports and video games were mainly for a younger generation and best understood by that population. Participants also identified that even though esports is growing in popularity, there continues to be limited opportunities for students to break through and find the success they are anticipating. Additionally, there was a negative view of esports due to the lack of physical activity and the many differences when compared to traditional sporting activities.

Participants in the study discussed a belief that the pursuit of esports was a career for a younger generation. They experienced a rejection by an older generation when discussing career choice in esports. The consensus was that an older generation simply was not aware of the opportunities that are available to students in the field of esports. Participant #5 was very descriptive in discussing their interactions with students and parents.

> I have had kids that, you know, wanted to be a part of the esports but their parents didn't understand what it was. They didn't quite understand that, you know, there are college scholarships out there and there are a lot of them too, actually.

Similarly, Participant #4 counseled several students that were raised by their grandparents and presented the following experience:

Boomers don't get it. A majority of students in my area are being raised by their grandparents. My niece, that is 10 years old, watches YouTube and my parents don't understand. But I would say the Boomer generation doesn't quite understand.

Participant #2 discussed the idea that esports was rejected as a career choice not only because of age but also because of a societal view and tradition when defining sports. Participant #2 stated, "I feel before society…it wasn't really like widely accepted; anything about video games. As far as doing that for a career or even like a side career thing was not really accepted." Participant #1 described a similar belief when discussing the traditional views they observed growing up with their parents and their views of video games, which are at the root of esports careers. Participant #1 went on to say the following:

I feel like it is very conservative and based on previous traditions, like things don't change…I think when I was growing up, and I know I'm not old, but like esports was just coming up and like my parents, I know at least my dad, didn't consider a video game a sport. Because he thinks sports are what he grew up with and he is very stuck in the past.

The data highlighted the marginalization of the students based on the traditional view of sports and how esports is counter to that traditional definition both in societal views of sports and the physical nature of the sporting activity. Three participants in the study expressed that those students pursuing a nontraditional career path may find themselves feeling ridiculed, rejected, and ostracized.

The basis for such is due to the stigmatization that playing a video game is often dismissed as a sport due to the lack of physicality. Participant #2 commented, "You know that

kind of perception like, how can this be a sport? You're just, you know, you're just playing a game." That activity of playing a game was associated with laziness by three of the six participants. Participant #5 commented that, "One thing is that most people attribute playing video games with being lazy, that you don't want to do anything, that kind of stuff."

Participants further commented that such activities are simply a pastime. Participant #6 suggested the following:

They see the word, you know 'video game', or just 'game' in general and equate that to a random pastime that kids do. It's something for children, it's a waste of time, it's not a legitimate, what's the right word, mostly just a waste.

Several school counselors in the study perceived esports as not a way to make money or pursue as a career; even though a small percentage make it to the professional ranks. Participant #3 stated, "I think society, as a whole, doesn't view it as a sport or a legitimate source of making money. I think a lot of people look at it as those are hobbies and pastimes and a waste of time." Four of the six school counselors in the study, commented that this digital activity was not an acceptable way to make a living. According to Participant #4, "It's a game, so it's just new and normally when something is new there is some pushback. Especially with a middle-class societal norm that is go to college and get a job."

Theme #3: Professional Identity and Values Guide Student Interactions on Esport Careers

Participants expressed a strong belief that their professional identity and core values as a career counselor guided and motivated their positive interactions with students making a challenging career choice. This theme included the important role that the professional counseling identity and values plays in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.

In talking about school counselor values, participants expressed a strong need and desire to meet the student where they were, meaning that they valued the student's interest in the chosen career and that they possessed a strong desire to want the students to pursue a career choice in which they were interested. Participants stated that their role as a career counselor was to support the student and do what was necessary to assist them in succeeding.

School counselors in the study experienced a strong professional identity and reported the feeling that they relied heavily on their professional values and core principles when working with students. Participant #1 described and elaborated on her professional value by stating, "I feel like it is my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I feel like I did not do my job." This plan is at the core of the counselor/student interaction, regardless of the student's career choice in esports. Participant #2 expressed this by stating:

Maybe it is the counselor in me but I don't really have an opinion one way or another. I think it is just a career field that if a student is genuinely interested in then it is my job as someone that's guiding them to do more research into that career field.

Several professional value statements were identified in the data. School counselors in the study valued the student's individual choice of careers, they valued their relationship and connection with each student, and they valued the individual student's affinity, strengths and abilities. Participant #4 talks about this experience, illustrating her professional value statement and work ethic.

I am very aware how I may view things from my point of view in life, but I can't do that and do my job effectively. So, whether it is gaming, whether it is horticulture, I am a captive audience and I wanna know what it is and then what I can do to help facilitate that…but that's not particular to gaming. I just learned, in my career, you cannot have

preconceived notions about a kid walking in your office. Otherwise, I can't do my job

effectively or I don't need to be in this position.

School counselors in the study commented that they valued the student's individual

interest in esports. These school counselors put the desires of their students first and foremost,

even if they themselves were not informed of the career path or fully understanding of the steps

required to enter careers in esports. They worked hard to explore the topic and connect students

with someone who was more informed on the topic of esports.

Participant #1 described a sense of connection with working with students; a connection

with other resources withing the technological field. She considered esports to be a gateway into

other occupational avenues for students in the field of technology.

So, if they are interested in that, I connect them with either our computer science teacher

at the community college and I'm all for it, just because I know our world is becoming

more digital like we already are.

Theme #4: Sense of Rationalization of Careers in Esports

This theme highlighted the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts,

opinions, beliefs, and feelings to rationalize a student's choice of pursuing a nontraditional career

in esports. Furthermore, the theme depicted the gathering and processing of information and

experiences to help bridge the gap between how the career counselors feel about esports and

what they want to do to assist the student in pursuing their career choice.

One of the consistent thoughts and beliefs among the school counselors in this study was

that they experienced a cultural shift in how society views and utilizes technology. This ever-

changing viewpoint, a paradigm shift, allowed these counselors to justify to themselves the

validity of the career choice. Participant #2 stated, "I just think people have a hard time accepting

change and the world is changing." The data analysis identified three perceived contributing factors to this reported change by the school counselors in this study: COVID protocols, growth in popularity of esports, and ease of accessibility.

During the period of data collection, school counselors were impacted by COVID protocols. This was widely experienced by a shutdown of schools and a shift to online, virtual, education. Additionally, students found themselves using computers to compete in electronic sports with their peers, over the internet, as more schools saw the sociological value of esports.

Participant #2 highlighted the value that esports brought to their school by allowing students to compete in an activity. "We started talking, as an administration, about this being an actual activity that students can perform well and it is COVID safe, which is a big part for us this year." Participant #3 added by stating the following:

I know it grew even more over the whole COVID thing because that was the one way that kids were able to connect with each other and adults was through just the electronic sports.

Participant #5 stated, "It was a real bright spot for our school this year. Especially with all of the COVID stuff and all of that." For these six school counselors, COVID illustrated the utilization and value added of esports to a scholastic curriculum and highlighted the growing popularity.

School counselors in the study were aware of the growing popularity of esports. The data suggested that the participants viewed this increase in popularity as a means to add credibility and support of students pursuing a career in esports. Participant #3 viewed esports as a gateway to other career fields, opportunities, and benefits.

I feel like there are a lot of opportunities that are opening up. Maybe not necessarily connected 100% to gaming, but it is opening up a whole avenue of possible

opportunities…the other side of that is that there is a lot of problem solving, a lot of

teamwork, and a lot of collaboration. I feel like it provides all of those things, actually

just like any other kind of activity.

Participant #5 shares his view on how esports is growing globally and feels this adds credibility

to the activity.

There are these huge online communities of people from all different walks of life that

come together and they play a game together…it's almost like a giant arena where there's

a bunch of people that you would never have a chance to meet without this kind of outlet.

At any time, you can be playing with people from China, people from Korea, people from

Jamaica, London, all in the same game. The only other place that you really see that kind

of competition is in something like the Olympics.

Lastly, school counselors in the study discussed accessibility of esports as adding to the

overall acceptance of the activity. Participants identified how certain students can compete

virtually; students that perhaps could not compete in the tradition sense of the sport. Participant

#5 ascertained, "You can be in a wheelchair and play esports. There are endless opportunities to

that." The data analysis suggested that school counselors understand how this level of

accessibility is experienced among students. Here, Participant #6 puts into words the notion of

accessibility by stating the following:

I think typically what I have seen and experienced is that there are those type of kids who

don't fit the mold of football player…or wrestler or something along those lines and they

find their niche with video games.

Participant #1 shares more thoughts about a typology of student and what might attract them to

esports.

So, esports is like interesting to me just because it isn't as physically active as other

sports. But working in a high school, I know that some kids don't like being physically

active or doing those types of sports.

Conversely, Participant #2 describes a more generalized perception of the students that are

interested in esports by stating, "I don't really have a stereotype or perception and I think it could

just be anyone who has a passion for that sport or that game."

Theme #5: Navigating the Professional Relationship with Students Pursuing Esports

The school counselors in this study described their experience of navigating their

professional relationship with students interested in choosing esports as a career choice as

challenging and often creating a dilemma between personal values, professional roles, and

responsibilities. Additionally, this theme includes having to learn to interact with students

discussing the world of nontraditional career choice. The theme involved supporting the students

and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.

Interestingly, all participants in the study used and described the word "support". The

word "support" was present in all of the verbatim transcripts. Participant #1 stated that, "I am in

full support of it." Participant #3 further described support when she stated the following:

I think if a student talked to me about being interested in esports again, I think I would go

about how I can support that student. Like what are our next steps as a team? How can I

help you learn more about what you want to do? How can I help you make your

decision? How can I help you know more in your career choice?

Participant #1 stated, "I always support them in whatever they want to do, but I try and refer

them to someone who knows more."

The school counselors in the sample shared a strong desire to assist students in a career in esports regardless of their own views on the topic. The school counselors consistently placed their personal views aside and discussed making attempts to support students along their career choice pathway.

Participants experienced passion as a key component when counseling students interested in a career in esports. Students had to have a passion. Participant #1 reflected on working with a student this past year by stating the following:

> So, if a kid is passionate about something and they want to make a career out of it then we just go forward and move with a plan and I don't, like I think, tell them that it isn't possible. I think it is great because they have something they are passionate about and that's hard to find with our students.

Participant #4 stated, "I'm hopeful that it keeps growing the way that it does, then you know my kids are able to enjoy the things that make them happy, thing that they are passionate about; passionate and happy.

Overall, when navigating the professional relationship with students pursuing a career in esports, school counselors came from a position of encouragement, genuine excitement, and a desire to see the students succeed at their desired career goals in esports. Participant #3 commented that, "I would love to help them get there. So, you know, joining them on that mission would be incredibly exciting."

Participant #6 summed it up best by stating the following:

> I'm hopeful for him that he's able to achieve those dreams and be able to be one of the first kids that are able to graduate, going to school on an esports scholarship. That would be awesome to be able to say that you know, we had someone that was able to do

that…I'm blessed to be there. I am truly blessed to be given this opportunity in something that is brand new, something that is, you know, up and coming.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how high school counselors experience working with students that are considering esports as a career choice. The following central research question was explored in the study: "How do high school counselors experience esports as a career choice?" Data analysis identified five interpretative themes that gave further meaning to the experience: (a) feeling of limited job-specific knowledge, (b) marginalization of students due to stigma of esports, (c) being guided by one's professional identity and values, (d) sense of rationalization of esport careers, and (e) navigating the professional relationship with students pursuing esports.

By increasing the amount of available knowledge regarding the perception of esports and further developing the discussion on the topic of careers in esports, this research gives important voice to school counselors that find themselves faced with the challenge of working with students that are considering a nontraditional career choice in esports.

Limited Job-Specific Knowledge of Careers in Esports

This theme discussed a sense of limited job-specific knowledge about careers in esports within the school counseling profession. School counselors in this study described feeling ill-prepared when working with students that were considering esports as a career choice. Many associated this with generalized, graduate level career counseling curriculum based on theories and modalities versus specifically working with individualized career choices.

In 2009, the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) called for counselor educators to infuse career development throughout the program

curricula. Even with such a standard, the literature shows that school counselors have reported they did not feel competent in the delivery of career programs (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2014). Two of the six school counselors in the study verbalized a sense of incompetence due to their limited awareness of available opportunities post-secondary education to include the following: collegiate athletic scholarships, monetized competitions, and available specific career opportunities within the world of esports.

Participants were surprised to discover the list of career opportunities in esports. According to Fogel (2018), there is more to esports than simply being a player on a team. One can also become a manager, a broadcaster, a producer, and an event organizer, amongst other important roles. Participants often described this limited awareness in the context of lack of training and education. Additionally, the school counselors in this study presented a lack of knowledge of esports as a career choice due to the newness of the phenomenon and the lack of experience working with this particular nontraditional career choice.

Marginalization of Students Due to Stigma of Esports Careers

There is a sense of marginalization of students among the participants due to the perceived stigma of esports. Research conducted by Goffman (1963) was the first to mention stigma in the context of gaming. Stigma creation has been described as a process which involves the labeling and judgment of certain individuals according to the perceived presence of a negative attribute, resulting in their devaluation, discrediting, and assumed moral failure (Goffman, 1963).

One major contributor to the marginalization of students choosing esports as a career choice was the personal negative thoughts and beliefs of the school counselors in the study. Four out of the six school counselors in the study were more likely to work collaboratively with a

student when they had a positive experience with esports, both personally and professionally. According to Gati and Tal (2008), the career counselor has a pivotal role in bringing a broad range of alternatives to the attention of each individual considering a career choice, and ensuring that the career information is detailed, accurate and fully understood. In essence, the school counselor that is engaged in career counseling as part of their role becomes a gatekeeper to the broad range of occupations available to the individual in the 21st Century.

School counselors in the study also recognized that the student is often marginalized due to career expectations suggesting that students should prioritize career choice based on factors like contributing to society, value to professional growth, and respectability. Research by Williams (2018) supported this perception by suggesting that a great deal of pressure is placed on children to be successful, to have good careers and be respectable, well-educated members of the community.

Additionally, school counselors in the study also believed that students pursuing careers in esports were viewed as lazy and that esports was not actually a sport due to the lack of physicality. This observation was also made by Williams (2018) when he stated that it may come as no surprise that back in the early days of the videogaming scene, videogames were seen as nothing short of a deviance, a waste of time and ultimately, a career destroying addiction.

Professional Identity and Values Guide Student Interactions

School counselors in the study presented strong feelings on the important role that the professional counseling identity and values plays in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice. The role of the career counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives and providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources for vocational exploration (Gati & Tal, 2008).

When discussing career counselor values, participants experienced a strong need and desire to meet the student where they were, suggesting that they valued the student's interest in the chosen career and that they possessed a strong desire to want the students to pursue a career choice that they were interested in. This value and defined role of the school counselor are supported by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).

According to ASCA (2018), school counseling programs promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student. Participants valued such things as affinity for a particular career choice, individual strengths, and abilities of the student. According to Gati and Asher (2001), the counselor is expected to facilitate the decision-making process, encourage, and guide the individual's authentic exploration of alternatives, and support the individual to make the best decision possible for them.

Sense of Rationalization of Careers in Esports

This theme highlighted that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and feelings to rationalize a student's choice of pursuing a nontraditional career in esports. According to Francis and Prosser (2013), the career counselor's own perceptions and views about specific careers could determine the material provided. The light in which the industry is portrayed by the school counselors in the study may influence their career recommendations to young people.

School counselors in the study expressed their value of esports through the lens of mainstream competitions and acceptance through global events like the Olympics. This type of acceptance was found in the literature. In his article, Szablewicz (2016) stated that positive changes in attitude could be seen only quite recently, when in 2008 during the Olympics in

Beijing, two young esports professionals carried the Olympic torch through Hainan on route to Beijing.

Furthermore, school counselors in the study expressed a sense of acceptance of esports due to the ability of students to connect socially and compete online following their school's implementation of mandatory COVID protocols. One recent survey conducted by Lofgren (2017) confirmed that 54% of surveyed users agree that gaming helps them connect with friends and that their playtime is spent playing with other people rather than alone. This connectivity was viewed by several participants in the study as a way to rationalize the importance and relevancy of esports. The reported competitive and social connection between students added value to the activity.

Navigating the Professional Relationship with Students Pursuing Esports

The school counselors in this study described their experience of navigating their professional relationship with students interested in choosing esports as a career choice as challenging and often creating a dilemma between personal values, professional roles, and responsibilities. Four of the six participants described that this was their responsibility and a significant part of their job. Participants in the study stated their responsibility was to provide services to the student and form a positive relationship between the student and counselor. Social relationships play an encompassing role in the lives of high school students, including those between students and teachers, students, and their peers, in addition to their overall feelings about their school's social environment (Eliot et al., 2010; Liu & Lu, 2011; Zullig et al., 2011).

Additionally, this theme included having to learn to interact with students discussing the world of nontraditional career choice. The theme involved supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice. The professional school counselor has a unique

position within the school, charged with providing such services as comprehensive, developmental guidance, individual and group counseling, as well as overall student activism (Van Velsor, 2009).

Participants in the study all used the word "support" when describing their work with students. Participants stated that their role as a career counselor was to support the student and do what was necessary to assist them in succeeding. According to The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA), professional school counselors need to better support students during the decision-making process in order to streamline their progress toward postsecondary education and career readiness (Barker & Satcher, 2000; Bridgeland & Bruce, 2014).

Implications

The collected data and findings have multiple implications both on the micro and macro levels; the individual and systemic. One implication is specific to the growth of knowledge of esports as a career choice. School counselors in the study were fundamentally becoming more aware that esports is growing and that there are multiple post-secondary opportunities, both academically and occupationally, for students pursuing esports as a career.

As the breadth of knowledge grows, so can the educational opportunities for school counselors both in graduate school programs and in postgraduate continuing educational trainings, conferences, and symposiums. The data collected suggests that the school counselors in this study continue to evolve and have an understanding that more careers are created and further developed with the advancements of technology and opportunities in esports. This increase of knowledge and awareness can also aide in the normalization of gaming as a career and move careers in esports into the mainstream.

The collected data can also have implications on the career decision making processes of students that are interested in pursuing a career in esports. Needless to say, there are several obstacles that students must overcome when choosing a career pathway. One of those identified obstacles in the study was that of stigma. This research shed light on the topic of stigma and furthered the discussion on the factors that contribute to such stigmatization and the marginalization of students and could be the foundation for future research.

Limitations

Limitations are present in research studies whether quantitative or qualitative. This study was no exception. Limitations in this study are identified in the following areas: sample size, transferability of results, newness of phenomenon, interview format, positionality of the researcher, and length of the data analysis process.

First, this researcher would have liked to have had more participants. According to Creswell (2013), in a phenomenological study the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews with as many as 15 individuals. This study consisted of six high school counselors. This is a relatively small sample size and more participants could have led to a more thorough description and understanding of the phenomenon.

However, this small sample size was a direct reflection of the challenges on researching such a new phenomenon. This study included gaining access to high school counselors that have worked with students interested in exploring esports as a career choice. Even though esports is increasing in popularity, the number of counselors that have experienced the phenomena was significantly limited.

Due to the small sample size, the results are limited to the six participants in the study and one would be hard pressed to draw conclusions to the general population of school

counselors. Although generalizability of the sample's findings to the larger population is something that is often discussed in quantitative research, qualitative research is not without a similar concept. The topic of transferability is often discussed in qualitative research. Transferability can definitely be identified as a limitation in this study. Contributing to the lack of transferability, was the challenge of finding numerous school counselors that were also interested in exploring the research topic and participating in such research, perhaps due to the newness or stigma of the phenomenon.

The inability to conduct in-person interviews can also be identified as a limitation. Interviews were conducted utilizing online conferencing software. Zoom was utilized primarily due to COVID protocols, ease of access to participants due to geographical location, and flexibility of scheduling the interviews. At times, Zoom felt very impersonal even though this researcher could see and hear the participants.

The interviews took a little bit of time to feel less forced, smooth, but eventually the participants and this researcher became comfortable with the format and participated in a fruitful interview. However, there were a few times that internet connectivity was an issue and the interview had to be restarted or completed using only the audio feature. This limited the expression of the participant and lengthened the interview process. This also may have been seen as a limitation due to the inability to observe their nonverbal communication.

This researcher believes that their positionality as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) limited their exposure to the roles and responsibilities of the high school counselors. This limited exposure contributed to a lack of understanding of the nuances of the lived experience of the school counselors interviewed. This researcher relied on reflexivity, review of literature, and consultation with peers that were employed as school counselors to gain a more

thorough understanding of what it means to be a school counselor. This potential limitation was identified in a member check and further discussed with one participant. This reflection shed light on the differences between professional values, roles and responsibilities of the researcher and the participants.

Lastly, one could argue that the amount of time that elapsed between the phases of data collection and data analysis is a limitation. The main reason that this could be seen as a limitation is due to the ability of the researcher to remain in contact with the six participants. When this researcher had completed the data analysis and the writing of the findings and discussion sections, an attempt was made to contact the participants in order to conduct member-checks. This proved challenging as three of the six participants had moved on to new positions and no longer had access to the school emails used for the initial contacts and the telephone numbers were no longer associated with the participants. As a result, three participants responded to the member-check request. Although, the feedback was positive, constructive in relation to the findings and discussion of the data analysis, this researcher would have liked to have heard back from all of the participants. Upon further thought, maybe this is an unrealistic expectation.

Future Research

The findings of this study form the basis for future research in the area of esports and career choice. The data collected highlighted that esports is a relatively new phenomenon and knowledge of the opportunities for students post-secondary is lacking. Any future research that could add to this knowledge base would be significant. This could include focusing the research on specific factors that contribute to the decision-making process of career choice in esports. For example, early experiences and exposure that influences career choice in esports.

Future research could also be expanded to include school counselors that work in early education and explore career choice. According to Kocadagv (2019), school counselors must inform themselves about esport careers, so that they might be more helpful to students. This researcher recently participated in a career fair at a local elementary school where esports as a career choice was presented to the students. This researcher would like the opportunity to speak to those students and gain their perceptions of esports as a career choice. Additionally, implications for future research would be to explore a more diverse population of school counselors. Bringing more voices into the conversation would add to the depth and understanding of this topic.

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Chapter 3: Manuscript II

Understanding High School Counselors' Perceptions of Igaming as a Career Choice

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Abstract

With the growth in legalization of internet gaming (igaming), now legal in 36 states, and advancements in technology, young people find themselves engaged in the activity on a regular basis. Many have expressed an interest in igaming as a career choice. As a result, school counselors may find themselves experiencing an increase in working with students that are considering igaming not just as a form of recreation (avocation), but as a career choice (vocation). This interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study examined the high school counselors' perceptions of igaming as a career choice. Six participants were interviewed about their experiences. The following five experiential themes emerged from the data: (a) underlying absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, (b) anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on school counselors' biases, (c) countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, (d) struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and (e) anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice. The findings suggest multiple implications for school counselors and counseling education programs.

Keywords: school, counseling, career, vocation, choice, igaming, internet, gaming

In July 2019, I turned on my television and tuned into ESPN to watch the 50th World Series of Poker $10,000 No-Limit Hold'em Main Event. I was not too surprised that it only took a few minutes for the commentator, Norman Chad, to make the following joke at the expense of one of the player's career choice:

> Max started playing professional poker, very young, he was about 19. He loves poker. He loves sports. He loves fantasy. Those are three things that, you know, really don't contribute a single thing to the future of our civilization.

> Max Steinberg, like hundreds of professional poker players, dropped out of college to

pursue a career playing online poker in virtual cardrooms (e.g. PokerStars, America's Card Room, and WSOP.com) and grinding their daily wage through poker, online sports betting, internet casino games (i.e. blackjack), and daily fantasy sports (DFS).

For the purpose of this study, internet gaming (igaming) is defined as making a monetary wager on the outcome of an event or game utilizing the internet (Morgan & Cole, 2023). These activities include, but are not limited to poker, sports betting, online casino games, and daily fantasy sports (DFS). The idea that an individual can wager, legally, on the outcome of an event or game online used to be just that, an idea. Today, these activities have grown to include so many activities that igaming is constantly being redefined as the public finds more ways to wager using the internet. These activities have become so mainstream that we see advertisements on our televisions, social media ads, articles in newspapers and magazines, story lines in movies, and they continue to grow all around us, finding their way into our daily lives.

In April 2019, America was introduced to James Holzhauer as he dominated the game show, "Jeopardy". For 32 consecutive games, James Holzhauer averaged $75,362 per episode and won over $2.4 million dollars. However, what appeared to be more impressive to the 14.5

million in the viewing audience was his listed occupation: Professional Sports Bettor. During a *New York Times* interview, Jacobs (2019) describes the early formative years of a young James Holzhauer as follows:

> In 1989, when he was four, his teacher was astounded by his arithmetic abilities and developed advanced class work just for him. At age seven, he was moved up to a fifth-grade math class, and at his mother's urging he skipped second grade. He consistently got A's on math tests and competed on the Naperville North High School math team. Despite high marks on individual tests, he was a C student overall, as he often skipped class and homework on the grounds that he could use the time more productively, such as playing online poker. Holzhauer memorized obscure baseball and professional wrestling statistics, prompting his parents to reprimand him for 'wasting his life' learning about sports.

In 2008, after graduating college, James Holzhauer moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, to pursue his career in professional sports betting. Today, one does not have to move to Las Vegas as these occupational opportunities are legal and available online in over 36 states (Morgan & Cole, 2023). The amount of revenue these states are collecting through excise taxes is a clear indicator that the popularity of internet gaming is growing and will continue to grow. According to the American Gaming Association (2018), the real-money betting and gaming sector was estimated to be worth $417 billion with igaming accounting for eight percent ($33.8 billion) of total net revenue. However, that figure is set to almost double by the turn of the next decade ($59.79 billion).

In November 2019, Colorado voted on and passed Proposition DD, House Bill 1327, which proposed the legalization of sports betting with tax revenue funding water projects

throughout Colorado. Proposition DD allows the three gaming towns (e.g. Blackhawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek) in Colorado to begin taking wagers on sporting events. Additionally, Colorado now offers sports wagering through mobile apps (e.g. DraftKings, FanDuel, BetMGM, and BetFred) that can be accessed throughout the State of Colorado.

Anecdotal stories suggest that the legalization of igaming has got the attention of high school students throughout the United States. Such stories are told by the parents of children and high school teachers that have witnessed case examples, personally and professionally, of the increase in the number of students interested in these activities. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of children gambling in the preceding year has increased from 65% to 80% (Derevensky & Gupta, 1998). According to several parents, teachers, and counselors known to this researcher, more and more students are engaging in igaming. Many comment that some students have considered online poker, sports betting, and streaming igaming content as viable career options.

Even though igaming has caught the attention of students currently enrolled in high schools throughout the United States, the topic may be unknown to many school counselors that will be interacting with such students in their role of career counselor. There is a paucity of research on the topic on igaming as a career choice. None the less, school counselors may find themselves interacting with students interested in pursuing a career in igaming. According to Gati and Tal (2008), the role of the career counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives, providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources for vocational exploration. One occupational alternative is igaming and forms the basis of this study.

School counselors, like many parents, may hold negative opinions of igaming and perhaps view igaming as not a real career, a waste of time, addictive, and negatively stigmatized.

According to Francis and Prosser (2013), formal career exploration builds on the informal career information gleaned throughout childhood from family, the media, play, observation, and life experiences.

Although school counselors play a pivotal role in guiding young people to explore a broad range of vocational options, their attitudes towards the igaming industry have not been thoroughly examined based on a lack of professional research in counseling publications. Therefore, the focus of this study is to further examine high school counselors' perceptions of igaming as a career choice for young people. The question this research study sought to answer was: How do high school counselors experience igaming as a career choice?

The research question was studied using a qualitative research methodology, specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This study explored the context within which high school counselors' experience of igaming as a career option, including their interaction with students that are considering igaming as a career choice, their own personal with igaming, and their professional feelings about igaming as a career choice. By understanding these perspectives, this study provides insight into current deficiencies and future needs with regard to training and education of school counselors working with students exploring careers in the igaming industry.

Methods

This study focused on providing a more holistic understanding of the complex experience of high school counselors as they interacted with students that are considering careers in igaming. A qualitative approach best supported this research question. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research provides a holistic account of a participant's meaning and allows the researcher to develop a relationship by building rapport with the participant. This type of

connection allows for a more in-depth interview that, more thoroughly, captures the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. IPA was selected as the research methodology primarily because the researcher plays a pivotal role in developing a relationship with the research participant and in deciphering and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013).

According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), IPA examines a particular moment that may be ordinary and focuses on the significance of what has happened by allowing the individual to reflect and make sense of what has occurred. IPA is a hermeneutic circle of research where the researcher is involved in making sense of the experience while the participant reflects on the experience (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

For this study, the researcher followed guidelines for phenomenological research, data collection and data analyzation as outlined by Creswell (2013), Smith et al. (2009), and Smith and Osborn (2003). This included disclosing researcher bias and worldview by authoring a research positionality statement, conducting audio-taped semi-structured interviews with high school counselors, analyzing data to uncover themes, identifying methods of trustworthiness (e.g. member-checking and peer-debriefing), and presenting potential research limitations.

Researcher Worldview and Researcher Disclosure

A research worldview that is foundational to the phenomenological approach and research activities is the social constructivist paradigm. According to Creswell (2013), individuals working within a social constructivism worldview seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participant's views and subjective meanings of various situations. In other words, from a social constructivist view, knowledge is not taught, but created through the experience of interaction between people (Gergen, 2015). Constructivist researchers often address the "processes" of interaction among

individuals and the "essence" of lived experiences. Through the research question, this researcher aimed to understand the perceptions that high school counselors possess regarding igaming as a career choice. This researcher had to rely upon the participant's interpretation of their reactions, relationships, and the world around them. "The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 111).

When approaching a study utilizing phenomenology, the researcher plays several key roles. One such role is in building relationships with the participants, conducting and transcribing the interviews, and ultimately uncovering common themes. Creswell (2013) notes that when utilizing phenomenology, it is important that the researcher be able to identify a personal frame of mind that could possibly influence what is experienced of the phenomenon. This researcher has identified the following potential researcher biases with respect to this study. Many of these biases stem from the personal and professional history of the researcher.

This researcher grew up around playing card games, sports betting, and the casino industry. Currently, this researcher is a doctoral student in counselor education at Oregon State University and a full-time supervisory social worker for the United States Army. This researcher instructs courses as an adjunct faculty member for the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) to include the Gateway Program Seminar (GPS) titled, *Poker Theory and Analytics*.

Additionally, this researcher is active in the Mountain Lion Poker Club at UCCS as a faculty advisor. This researcher chaperones UCCS sponsored club trips to casinos (e.g. Running Aces, Choctaw, and Canterbury Park). The purpose of these trips is to allow the 18-year-old club members to participate in various poker tournaments, due to the legal age in various states.

Prior to data collection, this researcher wrote a statement of positionality to "provide clarification to the reader on the researcher's past experiences, biases, and orientations that may likely shape the interpretation and approach to the study" (Creswell, 2013, pg. 251). However, that said, this researcher is aware of their love for internet gaming both personally and professionally. This researcher has previously reflected on his own personal experiences, noted feelings and assumptions on the phenomenon. This researcher believes that many view the phenomenon as a waste of time, not a consistent source of income and not constructive or a significant contributor to society.

This researcher believes that school counselors would like their students to pursue popular and prestigious careers. This researcher believes that school counselors would like their students to pursue careers that contribute to society. School counselors, in the opinion of this researcher, may not take the student's own interests into consideration when choosing career paths. Lastly, this researcher feels that school counselors may not be aware of developments and opportunities in internet gaming.

Participants and Recruitment

According to Creswell (2013), in a phenomenological study the process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews with as many as 15 individuals. For this study, the participants represented a very similar, homogenous, group of high school counselors. The sample was collected purposefully. This type of sampling is common to IPA and allows the researcher to identify and interview a specific group of participants that can offer insights into a particular experience.

Participation in this study was limited to individuals who met all of the following inclusion criteria:

- High school counselor

- Provide career counseling services as part of their current role

- Have personally heard of a student wanting to pursue a career in igaming

  or

- Have professionally worked with a student wanting to pursue a career in igaming

The study included six participants that were high school counselors that engage in the practice of career counseling as part of their occupational responsibilities. The six participants were from across the United States and represented various geographic regions and demographic categories. Of the six participants, four identified as female and two identified as male. Four participants identified as White, and two identified as Hispanic. The high school counselors were employed in both urban and rural settings. All six earned master's in counseling degrees. One participant was working on their doctoral degree in counseling education. The range of experience working as school counselors was from one to fifteen years.

Purposeful and snowball sampling strategies were utilized to identify potential participants. According to Creswell (2013), purposeful sampling identifies participants who will best maximize the information sought by the researcher. Participants were recruited by direct messaging through the social media accounts (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) of various high school counseling programs, personal emails, as well as posts on accounts for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the National Career Development Association (NCDA). Additionally, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit two high school counselors that were not known to this researcher but were identified by a participant.

Potential participants were asked to contact this researcher via direct messaging, email, or phone. Participants that met the inclusion criteria and consented to being a part of the study, were

then scheduled for an interview.

Data Collection

According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological research involves collecting data from multiple individuals who have experienced a specific life experience or phenomenon. The goal of IPA is to gain a detailed account of the participant's experience (Smith et al., 2009). Interviews were conducted utilizing online conferencing software. Zoom was utilized primarily due to COVID protocols, ease of access to participants due to geographical location, and flexibility of scheduling the interviews. During one interview, due to the rural location of the participant, internet connectivity was an issue and the interview had to be completed via phone.

The interviews consisted of two parts. First, participants answered a few demographic questions aimed at generating conversation flow and gathering a deeper understanding of the participants based on the following descriptors: age, gender, race, ethnicity, and years of high school counseling experience. Participants also provided a brief description of their experience with igaming both personally and professionally.

Second, the participants engaged in semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were recorded using the video conferencing software. Upon conclusion of the interviews, the Zoom software produced an audio recording file and transcription file. This researcher later revised the transcription file by comparing the document to the audio recording. This comparison produced an accurate, verbatim transcription.

This study sought to understand high school counselors' perceptions of igaming as a career choice. Therefore, data collection was aimed at addressing the central research question, "How do high school counselors experience igaming as a career choice?" Interview questions that arose included the following:

- How do you experience igaming as a potential career for your students?

- How would you describe your experience of your education and training in the areas of igaming and career choice?

- How do you describe your experience of societal views of internet gaming?

- How do you experience igaming as a part of your own life?

- How do you experience working with students that are considering internet gaming as a career choice?

- How do you experience and perceive the student while discussing igaming as a career choice?

- How do you perceive yourself while engaging with students during the discussion of igaming as a career choice?

- How do you describe working with other staff/administration around the topic of internet gaming as a career choice?

Data Analysis

In IPA, data analysis is flexible and allows the researcher to glean a deep understanding of the participant's perspective, point of view and personal meaning (Smith et al., 2009). The end goal is to develop a composite description. This composite description is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspects of the phenomenological study and allows for a deepened level of interpretation. Smith et al. (2009) stated the essence of IPA lies in its analytic focus. In IPA's case, that focus directs our analytic attention towards our participants' attempts to make sense of their experiences.

In utilizing IPA, this researcher began by reading and rereading each transcript. This researcher also viewed and listened multiple times to the recorded interviews. The first step of an

IPA analysis involves immersing oneself in some of the original data (Smith et al., 2009). This researcher attempted to reexperience the interview and hear the participant's voice. The second step involved noting anything of interest. "This step examines semantic context and language use on a very exploratory level" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). Notes were taken in the margins that were descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual. This research also read a few paragraphs backwards to get a better feel of the actual words used to describe the phenomenon. Initially, the notes were observations and feelings, but later this researcher read back through the transcripts pulling out concepts and looking for cross-case similarities and difference across transcripts and descriptive comments. These descriptive comments have a phenomenological focus and stay close to the participants' meaning (Smith et al., 2009).

The third step involved the development of emergent themes and finding connections between transcripts. The researcher used the technique of abstraction. Smith et al. (2009) defines abstraction as a basic form of identifying patterns between emergent themes and developing a sense of what can be called a 'super-ordinate' theme. Once connections were made, the researcher began making tables that allowed for further interpretation and cross-case comparison. This process was repeated for each participant's transcript. Once all the participant transcripts were analyzed and personal experiential themes identified, the process continued by looking for patterns across cases (Smith et al., 2009).

As themes began to emerge, the finishing steps were conducted in an attempt to identify potential cross-case themes. Cross-case themes were worded to best capture the collective experiences of the participants. These themes were discussed with the second author that acted as a consultant throughout the data analysis process. The process then continued into the member checks and into the writing of the results.

Trustworthiness of Results

According to Morrow (2005), trustworthiness includes such factors as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers use verification strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. One of these strategies is member-checking. According to Harper and Cole (2012), many qualitative researchers also employ a member-checking process in which the participants ensure a more truthful expression. In order to accomplish this and ensure accurate representation, participants were emailed the findings and discussion for their review and encouraged to comment on the content of the research.

Another method addressing trustworthiness is the utilization of a peer debriefer. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), the peer debriefer plays the role of "devil's advocate" and keeps the researcher honest by asking hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations. The researcher attempts to make the peer debriefer aware of the investigative process. The process of peer debriefing uncovers areas that the researcher may not have considered. According to Fassinger (2005), peer debriefing not only refers to discussing the study with peers but allowing them to examine all aspects of the study to ensure adherence to standardly accepted procedures. This study utilized three peer debriefers. The first peer debriefer was an adjunct faculty member at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and a current doctoral student at Oregon State University. The second was a school counselor and faculty member at Walden University. The third was a member of the researcher's OSU doctoral cohort.

Lastly, this researcher constructed a statement of positionality that offers clarity to the reader by providing an overview of the researcher's past experiences, biases, and further enhances the trustworthiness of the study. A statement of positionality is another example of

reflexivity. To assist in transferability, the researcher provided sufficient information on themselves, research context, processes, participants, and the research/participant relationships (Morrow, 2005).

Findings

Following the data collection and data analysis, the next step for this researcher was to develop themes and subthemes that would describe the high school counselor's perception of igaming as a career choice. The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, (b) anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on own biases, (c) countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, (d) struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and (e) anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.

Theme #1: Underlying Absence of Knowledge About Igaming as a Career

The data analysis described a sense of unawareness or absence of knowledge about igaming as a career. In fact, many of the participants did not recognize the term "igaming" until the researcher provided additional examples and further defined the term. This theme described a void in the collective knowledge around igaming. Counselors in the study experienced a lack of awareness, understanding, and a limited job-specific knowledge about careers in igaming within the school counseling profession. Participants expressed a lack of formal training or exposure to igaming in previous educational endeavors. Participants shared that their counseling graduate curriculum is based on career theories versus educating on specific career choices. When looking for patterns across cases, participants often described this virtual absence of knowledge about

igaming as a career in the context of lack of exposure to igaming, lack of training and education, and the newness of the phenomenon.

Participant #3 described an overall lack of knowledge of careers in igaming and further associated igaming with gambling (which will be discussed in a later theme) when she stated the following:

> I don't know enough about it as a career choice and I don't know…I know that there are a lot of people who do that for a living. I don't know a lot of people who make it in those same experiences. I know of the ones who have done well…but there's probably a lot of people who gamble all the time and maybe don't make a lot of money at it.

Participant #2 shared a sense of vulnerability due to the absence of knowledge on the topic when they shared, "I mean, I'll be honest, I probably feel really incompetent because I don't know a whole lot." When describing her knowledge of igaming as a career choice, Participant #1 commented, "I do not have any (laughs) and I just think of being in grad school and doing those career development classes, and I said earlier how they're kind of vague and more general."

Additionally, participants in the study discussed that the newness of the phenomenon contributed to their virtual absence of knowledge of igaming as a career choice. Participant #5 stated, "The phenomenon of igaming is brand new and is something that no one really knows a whole lot about." Contributing to this absence of knowledge was the scarcity of published research on the topic of careers in igaming. Participants commented that counselors may not be exposed to igaming in research and that they have not observed the career of igaming explored in the professional journals or professional trainings offered by their schools.

Participant #6 discussed a lack of formal training or continuing education on the topic when they shared, "I have not been trained or been to any trainings. As far as articles go, I don't think I've read any articles specific to igaming."

In an attempt to fill the knowledge void, participants highlighted steps they have taken to explore nontraditional careers. Although there is an absence of knowledge, participants described a sense of purpose in the pursuit of knowledge through self-education, stated they were committed to understanding their student's career options, and shared an overall willingness to continue learning beyond their graduate programs as lifelong learners. School counselors utilized their available resources, to include student interactions, to further develop their knowledge of available career opportunities for their students.

Theme #2: Anticipatory Navigation of Student Marginalization Based on School Counselors' Biases

Throughout the analysis of the data, there was a shared lack of exposure to students that had considered igaming as a career choice. Many were aware of other technologically involved careers (e.g. cybersecurity, programming, and esports). However, the participants were left having to imagine what it would be like working with a student that was pursuing igaming as a career choice. This led to a sense of anticipation and an overall feeling that they would have difficulties based on their own preconceived ideas of what igaming entailed.

There was a clear and concise sense of marginalization of students within the sample of the six school counselors due to their perceived stigma of igaming. This theme included a recognition that the student may be marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming as a result of the association with gambling, the potential for addiction, and the overall negative societal views of gambling as a career choice. Participants described their own biases and

reported experiencing igaming as risky, challenging, highly improbable due to a lack of sustainability and profitability. Lastly, school counselors in the study considered igaming as more of a hobby, pastime, and avocation.

For many reasons, participants presented biases towards igaming as a career choice. Participant #6 stated that, "Yes, it is a way to make money, I will grant you that. But my own bias, prejudice, would probably get in the way a little bit." Collectively, participants discussed ways that their prejudices and biases would get in the way. One shared experience was the feeling that there was a strong connection between igaming and gambling. When asked about their less than favorable feelings of igaming as a career choice, Participant #1 commented, "I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling." Participant #2 further stated the following:

> In my opinion, I would say igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society…because
> it is looked at as gambling and taking that risk and gambling kind of has a stigma
> anyways. That could be why it's not as widely accepted.

Participants went on to discuss their feelings that igaming has the strong potential to lead those that are pursuing it as a career choice towards a life of addiction. Participant #3 suggested that:

> I think there's also an addiction connection piece to that fear because every time you
> watch, like, one of those advertisements for the sports betting sites there is also a
> disclaimer that if you need help you can call the number…there's a potential for a hazard
> there, that maybe you don't see with other careers.

School counselors in the study discussed the career prestige bias that some careers are more acceptable than others and that igaming might lack the societal support needed to allow for the acceptance of igaming as a career choice. Participant #4 discussed the idea that igaming was

rejected as a career choice not only because of the addictive component, but also because of both a societal and traditional viewpoint. Participant #4 stated that, "Gambling has been around forever, but I know there might be a religious viewpoint in this area where gaming is wrong, it might be, it might feed on people's weaknesses." Participant #6 stated the following:

> I think society would see somebody who chose igaming as a career as, I don't want to say degenerate, yeah there's a better word I'm looking for. But I think society would see them as maybe, like a burden on society and that person isn't contributing anything to society.

The data highlighted that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming as a result of the association with gambling, the potential for addiction, and the overall negative societal views of gambling as a career choice based on the traditional view of careers and the suggestion that careers do not involve risk and contribute meaningfully to the society as a whole. Three of the six participants expressed that those students pursuing a nontraditional career path, like igaming, may find themselves feelings judged, ridiculed, rejected, and ostracized.

According to four of the school counselors in the study, igaming was not an acceptable way to make a living. Participant #6 expressed that, "You know with igaming you got to have the money up front, put it in and then pray that you make it back or more. You know and then you can lose it. Now it is the opposite of a job. It's just throwing money away."

Theme #3: Countering Personal Bias with Professional Values and Identity as They Ponder Working with Students

In the previous theme, participants clearly held strong biases towards igaming and anticipated the marginalization of students based on their own biases. However, participants also describe a strong belief that their professional identity and core values as a school counselor guided and motivated their interactions with students. Participants described a motivation and

desire to counter their personal biases with their professional values and strong identity. As the participants considered working with students, they described the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students who are considering a nontraditional career choice.

In talking about school counselor values, participants experienced a strong need and desire to meet the student where they were. They valued the student's interest in the chosen career and they possessed a strong desire to want the students to pursue a career choice that they were passionate about. Participants stated that their role as a career counselor was to support the student and do what was necessary to assist them in succeeding. Participants valued such things as affinity for a particular career choice, individual strengths, and abilities of the student.

School counselors in the study experienced a strong professional identity and reported the feeling that they would rely heavily on their professional values and core principles when working with students pursuing igaming careers. Participant #1 described and elaborated on her professional value by stating, "I mean, mine is a helping profession, so I just, I do it to help people and help kids succeed." Participant #2 expressed this by commenting, "It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out."

Several professional value statements were identified in the data. School counselors in the study valued the student's individual choice. Participant #4 jokingly said, "Who am I to rain on that parade?" Later in the interview, they went on to state the following:

I ask myself, do I have the connections, the network, and enough knowledge to help this child attain that. For me as a counselor, I want to expose my students to as many things as possible. As many experiences as possible.

School counselors in the study clearly valued their relationship and connection with each student, and they valued the individual student's affinity, strengths, and abilities. Here Participant #5 talks about this experience, illustrating his professional value statement and work ethic by stating, "I'm all about them being able to, you know, achieve their goals. You know, so if that's a goal that he has, then I will do whatever I can do to help them." Participant #6 added that, "I think my role would consist of helping them be as prepared as they possibly can for when they actually step out into the world and head down that path."

School counselors in the study commented that they valued the student's individual interest in igaming. These school counselors put the desires of their students first and foremost, even if they themselves were not informed of the career path or fully understanding of the steps required to enter a career in igaming. Participant #6 described her feelings and thought processes as follows:

> I'd be nervous because it would be a first. Nervous because it doesn't feel, for some crazy reason, it just doesn't feel like a legitimate career option…So, my nervousness would be about, is it appropriate or professional of me to help them down this path, instead of steering them in a different direction towards a more conventional type of path? The answer is yes.

Participant #1 had no idea that igaming was even a thing and reflected that they didn't even know that they were biased, but the lack of knowing would form the basis for a bias as they imagined the interaction would take them by surprise. Participant #1 stated, "For the esports, I'm familiar with and I know at least some of the steps. But for igaming, I don't know anything and had no idea that was even a thing." When pondering working with a student that was pursuing

igaming as a career choice, Participant #1 highlighted the need to fall back on her professional values and identity in order to counter any of her personal biases.

Theme #4: Struggling to See Igaming as a Viable Career and Emerging Realization of Igaming Career Awareness

This theme suggested that school counselors in the study struggled with seeing igaming as a viable career choice. This struggle was evident in the way that the participants processed not only their biases, as previously mentioned, but compartmentalized their own personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences in an attempt to rationalize, add validity and credibility to a student's choice of pursuing a nontraditional career in igaming. Furthermore, the theme depicted the gathering and processing of information and experiences to help bridge the gap between how the school counselor feels about igaming and what they want to do to assist the student in pursuing their career choice.

One of the consistent observations among the school counselors in this study was that they experienced a shift in how mainstream media marketed and presented igaming. This was experienced on major networks and in various social media advertisements. Participant #1 discussed her exposure and increased awareness further added credibility to the phenomenon when she shared, "I mean that's like broadcasted on ESPN a lot and I know they have all those tournaments."

The data analysis also identified that other contributing factors to this reported validity by the school counselors were rooted in the implementation of COVID protocols and the ease of accessibility. Essentially, COVID protocols forced many schools to move online for learning and recreational activities, like gaming. Participants reported that many of their schools developed online clubs and electronic sporting leagues. Several participants described an exposure and

increased awareness of the available internet games. Participant #3 noticed an increase in the availability of igaming resources, as the number of online gaming sites grew out of necessity. Participant #3 shared the following:

> The whole electronic method of placing bets increased tremendously throughout COVID and I feel like there was again another shift that caused that to happen. Suddenly, it opened the doors on a lot of different levels where you didn't have to necessarily go to a specific place to place a bet. You could do it from your house and you could do it from your couch, in the living room, or anywhere else you had your phone.

During the period of data collection, school counselors were impacted by COVID protocols. This was widely experienced by a shift to online and virtual forms of entertainment. Additionally, school counselors in the study found themselves, personally, using computers to compete in internet gaming and also introduced them to gaming streaming services (i.e. Twitch) that highlighted the various opportunities to engage in igaming.

School counselors in the study described an increased awareness of the growing popularity of igaming through personal encounters with friends and family that engage in the activity; some as a career. Participant #6 described knowing of a friend that made a living playing online poker when he stated the following:

> I have a buddy who played online poker (igaming) and that was how he made money. He played in Las Vegas after having an accident and that was how he made money…it sounded cool, it sounded edgy, it sounded like something I wanted to do just because it sounded fun. I wouldn't have considered it a career; it was just how he made money.

This participant used their experience and personal knowledge to justify their support of igaming as a potential financial earning activity and viable career choice.

Theme #5: Anticipating a Professional Relationship with Students Pursuing Igaming

For many in the study, the experience working with students interested in pursuing a career in igaming was limited. Participants, that did not have experience, were asked to imagine working with a student and to discuss what they anticipated feeling about the professional relationship. Their responses were similar in many ways to the few that had first-hand experience working with students and igaming. The school counselors in the study described their anticipated professional relationship with students interested in pursuing igaming as a career choice as challenging and often creating a dilemma between personal values, professional roles, and responsibilities.

This anticipated dilemma was present in the school counselor's desire to establish a backup plan with the students pursuing igaming. This was rooted in the unpredictability, low probability of earnings, and previously mentioned stigma. Additionally, this theme included having to learn to interact with students discussing the world of nontraditional career choice. The theme involved supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.

When anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing a career in igaming, school counselors in this study often discussed establishing a Plan B. Participant #1 discussed a strong belief that students should have a backup plan.

> I think it is important to have a backup plan. Just because sometimes that doesn't work
>
> out, or I mean, in any career you should probably have somewhat of a backup plan in
>
> case you don't like it as much as you thought you would.

All of the participants in the study used and described the word "support" when describing how they viewed themselves navigating their anticipated relationships with students. Participant #1 described her support as being enthusiastic and encouraging when she said, "I'm not pessimistic like that towards my kids because I'm not here to crush dreams. I'm here to encourage them." Participant #3 showed support with a desire to work collaboratively alongside their student when suggesting, "I would be curious myself and want to dive into the research with the student to kind of get some more information."

Additionally, the school counselors in the sample shared a strong desire to assist students in pursuing a career in igaming regardless of their own less than favorable views of igaming. Participant #6 expressed a trepidatious feeling when she stated the following:

> As far as any advice, I mean their dream is their goals, their life, you know, and so I'm not gonna, I'm not going to stand in the way. But in my head, for sure, I'm going to be second guessing that decision, the entire time.

The school counselors in the study described how they would set their personal views aside and discussed making attempts to support students along their career choice pathway. Participant #4 reported experiencing passion as a consideration when working with students and described balancing their personal feelings of concern with the passion that the student brought regarding their career choice in igaming.

> I would be concerned, but again if the kid is, you know, like this is what they want and they can show me the research, they can show me that they have done the research and that this is a passion for them…who am I to rain on that parade?

Lastly, participants experienced passion as a key component when counseling students interested in a career in igaming. Students had to have a passion and this passion led to

experiencing a stronger connection with the student. Participant #2 reflected on working with a student as follows:

> It's also exciting when they finally figure it out and they're like, oh, this one. I'm actually really passionate about and we start doing more research and you can kind of see the passion. They kind of start to light up and that part's really exciting and really rewarding. It was a lot of hard work, but you get hold of and find their passion.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of high school counselors' experiences of working with students considering igaming as a career choice. The following central research question was explored in the study: "How do high school counselors experience igaming as a career choice? Data analysis identified five experiential themes that gave further meaning to the experience.

The five themes were as follows: underlying absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on school counselors' biases, countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.

One goal of the study was to increase the body of literature on the phenomenon of igaming. By increasing the amount of available knowledge on the school counselors' perception of igaming as a career choice this research gives important voice to school counselors that find themselves faced with the challenge of working with students that are considering a nontraditional career choice in igaming.

Underlying Absence of Knowledge About Igaming as a Career

This theme described how school counselors had very little, if any, knowledge of what constituted igaming and whether this was even a viable career option. The virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career led to an expression of anxiety, a strong sense of confusion, and a feeling of under preparedness when working with students that were considering igaming as a career choice. Many felt that this was due to a generalized approach to career counseling and experienced a graduate level curriculum based on traditional career theories aimed at promoting the decision-making process and career development versus specifically working with individualized career choices.

Much of the literature on the expectations of counseling programs addresses the broad demands by suggesting that professional counseling programs are expected to offer comprehensive, well-balanced, developmental, evidence-based school counseling programs that target social and emotional supportive services, educational and academic planning, and vocational education for all students (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Dugger & Boshoven, 2010; Foster et al., 2005; Martin & Carey, 2012; Martin et al., 2009; Perusse & Goodburgh, 2005). The idea that such programs target all students leads one to conclude that the graduate curriculum is often overgeneralized and focused more on compressive topics.

Additionally, the school counselors in this study presented an absence of knowledge of igaming as a career choice due to the newness of the phenomenon and an unclear definition of what the phenomenon of igaming entails. A review of the limited literature on the topic of igaming mirrors this statement by suggesting that the newness of the industry, interconnective nature of multiple platforms and complex relationships between various stakeholders leads to ambiguity in defining and understanding the fundamentals (Jenny et al., 2016).

Anticipatory Navigation of Student Marginalization Based on School Counselors' Biases

Previous studies have established that a public stigma towards gaming does exist (Hing et al., 2014). Having limited exposure to students pursuing igaming, participants in the study were left anticipating their own biases when working with students in the future. Participants discussed a feeling that the potential was there for students to be marginalized within the counseling profession due to the perceived stigma of igaming, the association with gambling, and the personal thoughts and beliefs of the school counselor.

Participants described that the more negative their thoughts and beliefs related to igaming, the more hesitant they would be to discuss the career choice. Conversely, school counselors in the study were more likely to work collaboratively with a student when they had a positive experience and favorable attitude towards igaming. This observation is supported by the literature on favorable attitudes and career choice. According to Soo et al. (2008), when a person has a favorable attitude toward gaming and when significant others approve of gaming, the person is more likely to engage in a discussion on the topic.

School counselors in the study also recognized that the students could also be further marginalized due to igaming being associated with problematic or pathological gambling and addiction. This observation was also found in the literature. According to Williams (2018), gaming behavior is seen as nothing short of a deviance, a waste of time and ultimately, a career destroying addiction. School counselors, in the study, that held this belief anticipated a more negative experience with the student based on their own biases. However, as the next theme suggests, the six school counselors were able to counter such anticipated negativity by holding true to their professional values and school counselor identities.

Countering Personal Bias with Professional Values and Identity as They Ponder Working with Students

School counselors in the study described strong feelings on the important role that the professional counseling identity and values plays in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice. The role of the career counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives and providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources for vocational exploration (Gati & Tal, 2008).

When discussing school counselor values, participants experienced a strong need and desire to meet the student where they were, suggesting that they valued the student's interest in the chosen career and that they possessed a strong desire to want the students to pursue a career choice that they were interested in. The professional value and defined role of the school counselor are supported by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). According to ASCA (2016), school counseling programs promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student.

Furthermore, participants valued such things as an affinity for a particular career choice, individual strengths, and abilities of the student. According to Gati and Asher (2001), the counselor is expected to facilitate the decision-making process, encourage, and guide the individual's authentic exploration of alternatives, and support the individual to make the best decision possible for them. Participants stated they would rely heavily on their profession values and identity to counter personal biases when working with students pursuing igaming as a career.

Struggling to See Igaming as a Viable Career and Emerging Realization of Igaming Career Awareness

This theme highlighted that school counselors in the study struggled with seeing igaming as a viable career choice. This struggle was evident in the way that the participants processed not only their biases, but compartmentalized their own personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences in an attempt to rationalize, add validity and credibility to a student's choice of pursuing a nontraditional career in igaming. Literature on the topic suggests that the counselor's own views and perceptions play a vital role in making igaming available to students. According to Francis and Prosser (2013), the career counselor's own perceptions and views about specific careers could determine the material provided. The light in which the industry is portrayed by the career counselor may influence their career recommendations to young people.

School counselors in the study expressed their value of igaming through the lens of mainstream competitions, an overall increase in students participating in igaming and the increasing popularity and accessibility of the phenomenon. A review of the literature suggests that as a result of new technologies, and more specifically, access via electronic devices, online gaming is becoming ever more widespread among young people (Blinn-Pike et al., 2010; Canale et al., 2016; Becoña & Becoña, 2018). Along with this widespread growth in igaming among young people comes a sense of acceptability.

Furthermore, the six school counselors expressed a sense of acceptance of igaming due to the ability of students to compete online, especially following their schools implementation of COVID protocols. One recent survey confirms that 54% of surveyed users agree that gaming helps them connect with friends and that their playtime is spent playing with other people rather than alone (Lofgren, 2017). This connectivity was viewed by several participants in the study as

a way to rationalize the importance and relevancy of igaming. According to Adams et al. (2009), gaming in the 21st Century is characterized by greater accessibility through extensive distribution channels unconstrained by national borders and technological innovation outstripping control efforts.

Anticipating a Professional Relationship with Students Pursuing Igaming

As a result of the lack of exposure to students interested in pursuing a career in igaming, participants in this study described how they anticipated building a professional relationship with such students. Their experience of navigating the professional relationship with students interested in igaming as a career choice was rooted in similar interactions with students that showed an interest in career choices that were considered to be nontraditional or controversial.

Participants anticipated the professional relationship to be challenging and would more than likely create a dilemma between personal values, professional roles, and responsibilities. This was a feeling they shared and something that they felt they would have to navigate and overcome. Participants described that this was their responsibility and a significant part of their job; to provide services to the student and form a positive relationship between student and counselor. Literature on the topic suggests that social relationships play an encompassing role in the lives of high school students, including those between students and teachers, students, and their peers, in addition to their overall feelings about their school's social environment (Eliot et al., 2010; Liu & Lu, 2011; Zullig et al., 2011). According to Schulte et al. (2002), when a positive school climate exists, students feel a sense of community, mutual understanding, and trust.

Additionally, this theme included having to learn to interact with students and unconditionally offer support to students pursuing a nontraditional career choice in igaming. The

theme involved anticipating ways to better support the students and assist in making the difficult decision of career choice. The professional school counselor has a unique position within the school, charged with providing such services as comprehensive, developmental guidance, individual and group counseling, as well as overall student activism (ASCA, 2019; Van Velsor, 2009). Participants in the study stated that their role as a school counselor was to support the student and do what was necessary to assist them in succeeding. Research on the topic suggests that professional school counselors need to better support students during the decision-making process in order to streamline their progress toward postsecondary education and career readiness (Barker & Satcher, 2000; Bridgeland & Bruce, 2014).

Implications

The findings of the study identified several implications for the further understanding and growth in the areas of awareness, knowledge of the career choice, the importance of the school counselor's identity, and the recognition of the stigma. The findings can inform future education and training on these topics. Regarding education, the participants in the study expressed the need for more continuing education on the topic of igaming a career choice. As the breadth of knowledge grows, so can the educational opportunities for school counselors both in graduate school programs and in postgraduate continuing educational trainings, conferences, and symposiums in the area of igaming careers.

Participants also identified a need for training in policies and legislation pertaining to igaming, specifically. School counselors in the study had a limited exposure to the various legislature and policy advances on the topic of internet gaming. Legislation at both the Federal and State levels can have an impact on the availability of igaming careers.

Another implication of the findings involves the understanding of the multiple roles of the school counselor. The importance of these roles was evident in the data collected for these studies. According to the American School Counselor Association (2018), school counselors promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student. In order to accomplish this, school counselors must possess a cursory knowledge of the available career choices. One recommendation is that school counselors work collaboratively to share information, provide mentorship and consultation to one another. Among the participants in the study, many stated having a colleague they engaged in conversations and consulted with regarding careers in igaming and other technologically driven occupations.

Limitations

One limitation involved the sample size. This researcher would have liked to have had more participants. This study consisted of six high school counselors. This is a relatively small sample size and more participants could have resulted in a more thorough description and understanding of the phenomenon. However, this small sample size was a direct reflection of the challenges on researching such a new phenomenon as igaming. This study included gaining access to high school counselors that have worked with students interested in exploring igaming as a career choice. Even though igaming is increasing in popularity, the number of counselors that have experienced the phenomena was limited.

In addition to sample size, participants in the study were a purposeful sample. The participants volunteered for the research and showed an interest in the topic being studied. This may have skewed the overall experiences more positively and as the central research question was of interest to the participants.

Furthermore, the findings are specific to the six participants in the study and one would be hard pressed to draw conclusions to the general population of school counselors. Although generalizability is something that is often discussed in quantitative research, the topic can definitely be identified and discussed as a limitation in this study.

Although the data collected is not generalizable or transferable, due to sample size, the results are sufficient enough to offer a deeper understanding of high school counselors' perceptions of igaming as a career choice. According to Polkinghorne (2005), the concern is not how much data were gathered or from how many sources but whether the data that were collected are sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understanding an experience.

Another limitation was the inability to conduct in-person interviews. Interviews were conducted utilizing online conferencing software. Zoom was utilized primarily due to COVID protocols, ease of access to participants due to geographical location, and flexibility of scheduling the interviews. At times, Zoom felt very impersonal even though this researcher could see and hear the participant. The interviews took some time to feel more comfortable and fluid, but eventually the participants and this researcher became at ease with the format and participated in an informative interview. Also, there was one instance that internet connectivity was an issue and the interview had to be restarted and completed via phone. This limited the expression of the participant and lengthened the interview process. This also may have been seen as a limitation due to the inability to observe their nonverbal communication.

Future Research

The findings of this study form the basis for future research in the area of igaming and career choice. The data collected highlighted that igaming is a relatively new phenomenon and knowledge of the opportunities for students post-secondary is lacking. Any future research that

could add to this knowledge base would be significant. This could include focusing the research on specific factors that contribute to the decision-making process of career choice in igaming. For example, early experiences and exposure that influences career choice in igaming. Further research could look at the legalization of online gaming in various States and the impact this has on igaming and career choice.

Future research could also expand to include school counselors that work in early education and study their perceptions of how exposure to online gaming impacts future career choice. According to Turchi (2005), surveys show that an increasing majority of youth participate in igaming with the most popular activities being online poker, betting on sports and online casino games. "In the year 2000, roughly 80% of kids between the ages of 12 and 17 reported online gambling in the past year, an increase from about 65% ten years ago" (Turchi, 2005, p. 46).

Lastly, implications for future research could include the exploration of a more diverse population of school counselors. The six participants in this study were of similar age, gender, ethnicity, and geographically similarly situated. Future research could explore perceptions of school counselors that work in urban versus rural schools settings, perceptions of more seasoned school counselors, or the perceptions of male school counselors working with students considering a career in igaming. Bringing more voices into the conversation would add to the depth and understanding of this topic.

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Chapter 4: General Conclusions

General Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the two dissertation research studies. Both studies examined school counselors' perceptions and experiences with regard to two increasingly popular phenomena. Manuscript I discussed high school counselors' perceptions of esports as a career choice. Manuscript II explored high school counselors' perceptions of igaming as a career choice. Both dissertation research studies utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the qualitative research approach. For both studies, six participants volunteered and met the following criteria: work as school counselors in the high school setting, provide career counseling as a part of their daily roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the six participants reported personal and professional experiences with students that were pursuing esports and/or igaming as a career choice.

Summary of Manuscript I

The first manuscript examined how the participants experienced esports as a career choice. As a result of data analysis, the following five themes were identified: (a) sense of limited job-specific knowledge, (b) marginalization of students due to stigma, (c) being guided by one's professional identity and values of career counseling, (d) sense of determination to validate esports as a career choice, and (e) addressing feelings associated with navigating the professional relationship with students.

The first theme in this study centered around a sense of limited job-specific knowledge. Participants discussed that they lacked knowledge and a thorough understanding of esports. Participants in the study presented that the career choice of esports was a relatively new phenomenon. As a result, the participants experienced limited exposure to the opportunities that were available post-secondary education. Several felt that their graduate level education did not

prepare them for a specific career choice, but rather presented them with career development theories and offered them additional resources to explore when they encountered a student who might be considering a nontraditional career path such as esports. One area, highlighted in the data, was the need for continued education and training in esport careers.

The second theme identified in this study described the participants' experience of marginalization due to a stigma associated with video games. Participants expressed that video games were an activity engaged in by younger people and that older generations may not understand the connection between gaming and career opportunities. The participants framed this conversation from the perspective of tradition. Esports does not fit the traditional definition of career. Furthermore, esports does not subscribe to the tenets of a traditional sport. Esports lack physicality and arguably do not contribute to society as a whole. Therefore, esports was viewed by the participants in the study as more of a hobby than a viable career choice.

The third theme included the important role that the professional school counseling identity and values play in working with students that are choosing a career in esports. Participants in the study had a strong desire to see their students succeed and pursue a career that they were passionate about and happy doing. The participants valued their students and their self-directed path. School counselors in the study commented that they valued the student's individual interest in esports. These school counselors put the desires of their students first and foremost, even if they themselves were not informed of the career path or fully understanding of the steps required to be successful. The participants felt it was their job to unconditionally connect with and support the student's choice.

The fourth theme highlighted the recognition that the participants in the study use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and feelings to rationalize a student's choice of pursuing a

career in esports. Furthermore, the theme addressed the gathering and processing of information and experiences to help bridge the gap between how the school counselors feel about esports and what they want to do to assist the student in pursuing their career choice. Participants in the study discussed how esports played a positive role during the COVID pandemic by bringing together students socially online and engaging them in competition when traditional sports and interactions had ceased.

Participants offered several examples of esports in mainstream media and shared how they, themselves, participated in video games. Lastly, the participants offered how the accessibility of esports added value to the activity. Participants felt that esports may be more accessible to a student that may not otherwise be able to participate in a traditional sport due to limitations. Such accessibility can open career avenues not otherwise considered.

The fifth and final theme in the data described having to learn to interact with students discussing the world of esports. The theme involved supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice. The word "support" was identified across all cases. In addition to support, the professional relationship was described as coming from a position of encouragement, consisted of genuine excitement for the career choice, and a strong desire to see their students succeed at their desired career goals.

Summary of Manuscript II

The second manuscript examined how the high school counselors experienced igaming as a career choice. The following five themes emerged from the data: (a) underlying absence of knowledge about igaming as a career, (b) anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based on school counselors' biases, (c) countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students, (d) struggling to see igaming as a viable career

and emerging realization of igaming career awareness, and (e) anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.

The first theme described an underlying absence in the collective knowledge around igaming. Participants in the study experienced a lack of awareness, understanding, and presented a limited knowledge about careers in igaming. Participants described a lack of exposure to igaming. Initially, two of the six participants had not worked directly with a student that showed an interest in igaming. However, after further discussion, these participants were able to answer affirmatively and described interacting with several students.

This experience suggests that a commonly understood definition of igaming is not readily available to the participants. Participants discussed that their counseling graduate curriculum was based on career theories versus educating on specific career choices. School counselors in the study described this virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career in the context of lack of exposure to igaming, lack of training and education, and the newness of the phenomenon.

The second theme identified in this study described participants' experiencing a belief that the student may be marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming as a result of the association with gambling, the potential for addiction, and the overall negative societal views of gambling as a career choice. Participants described their own biases and reported experiencing igaming as risky, challenging, highly improbable due to a lack of sustainability and profitability. Lastly, school counselors in the study considered igaming as more of a hobby, then a viable way of earning a living.

The third theme identified in this study centered around countering personal bias with professional values and counseling identity as the participants pondered working with students pursuing a career in igaming. Participants in the study stated that their role as a school counselor

was to support the student and do what was necessary to assist them in succeeding. Participants valued a student's affinity for a particular career choice, individual strengths, and abilities of the student.

The fourth theme highlighted the participant's struggle with seeing igaming as a viable career. However, there is an emerging realization that igaming is on the rise. The school counselors in the study had an awareness that the workforce is evolving and as advances are made in technology and with the legalization of online gaming comes new opportunities. Furthermore, the six school counselors expressed a sense of acceptance of igaming due to the ability of students to compete online, especially following their school's implementation of COVID protocols

Lastly, the fifth theme identified in this study described the anticipation of a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice. The six school counselors described their relationship with students as challenging and often creating a dilemma between personal values, professional roles, and responsibilities. School counselors in the study discussed the need to establish a Plan B when working with students interested in igaming as a career. This feeling of anxiety associated with the career choice stemmed from the perceived unpredictability, low probability of earnings, and stigma.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings of both studies identified several areas that overlapped thematically. Smith et al. (2009) suggests the aim is to produce theoretical statements which are true for all cases in the data set. That said, the central themes included a lack of awareness and knowledge of the career choice, the importance of the school counselor's identity, and the recognition of the stigma.

Regarding education, the participants in the study expressed the need for more education on the topic. Many reported that they pursue information and education on the topic through their own study and research. Some have formed connections with educators in the technological field and are able to utilize them as a reference when working with students that are pursuing esports and igaming as a career choice. All agreed that more education, information and understanding of opportunities associated with esports and igaming as a career choice are needed.

The findings have multiple implications for research that is directed at the overall growth of knowledge in the experience of high school counselors working with students pursuing careers in esports and igaming. As the breadth of knowledge grows, so can the educational opportunities for school counselors both in graduate school programs and in postgraduate continuing educational trainings, conferences, and symposiums in the area of esports and igaming careers. Participants also identified a need for training in policies and legislation pertaining to igaming, specifically. One recommendation is that career development classes at the graduate level introduce suggested readings on the topic of navigating nontraditional career choices (e.g. esports and igaming) with students.

Another implication of the findings involves the understanding of the multiple roles of the school counselor. The importance of these roles was evident in the data collected for these studies. According to the American School Counselor Association (2018), school counselors promote and support academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning for every student. In order to accomplish this, school counselors must possess a cursory knowledge of the available career choices. According to Gati and Tal (2008), the role of the school counselor is crucial in bringing attention to occupational alternatives, of which the young person may not be aware, and providing accurate information and direction to relevant resources

for vocational exploration. One recommendation is that school counselors work collaboratively to share information, provide mentorship and consultation to one another. Among the participants in the study, many stated having a colleague they engaged in conversations with regarding careers in esports, igaming and other technologically driven occupations.

Finally, this researcher acknowledges that these studies include only the voices of six school counselors. However, given the results of these two studies, it is clear that a stigma exists for both esports and igaming as career choices for high school students. A perceived stigma, or negative impression, can potentially impact the student-counselor relationship and interaction. According to Soo et al. (2008), when a person has a favorable attitude toward gaming and when significant others approve of gaming, the person is more likely to engage in a discussion on the topic.

Participants in the study agreed that there was some hesitancy to engage in a conversation based on their personal biases towards esports and igaming. One recommendation is to acknowledge and address these personal biases through conversation and collaboratively working with those engaged in the field. This can be accomplished by establishing a relationship with organizations (i.e. National Association of Collegiate Esports) that promote careers in gaming. Such a relationship can be beneficial in providing additional resources to students and school counselors.

In conclusion, the purpose of both studies was to gain a better understanding of high school counselors' perceptions of esports and igaming as a career choice. As the popularity of esports continues to grow and the legalization of igaming expands, school counselors will undoubtedly find themselves interacting with students interested in exploring these two phenomena as potential career choices. Therefore, it is imperative to expand the volume of

research, increase the amount of available knowledge and promote further understanding so that school counselors can be better equipped to address the needs of their students in the area of esports and igaming careers.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oregon State University
Research Office

Human Research Protection Program
& Institutional Review Board
B308 Kerr Administration Bldg, Corvallis OR 97331
(541) 737-8008
IRB@oregonstate.edu
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Date of Notification	April 03, 2021		
Notification Type	Approval Notice		
Submission Type	Initial Application	Study Number	IRB-2021-1003
Principal Investigator	Deborah J Rubel		
Study Team Members	Cole, Justin D; Severn, Kimberly A		
Study Title	Understanding School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports and Igaming as a Career Choice		
Review Level	FLEX		
Waiver(s)	Documentation of Informed Consent		
Risk Level for Adults	Minimal Risk		
Risk Level for Children	Study does not involve children		
Funding Source	None	Cayuse Number	N/A

APPROVAL DATE: 04/02/2021   **EXPIRATION DATE:** 04/01/2026

A new application will be required in order to extend the study beyond this expiration date.

Comments:

The above referenced study was approved by the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that the protocol meets the minimum criteria for approval under the applicable regulations pertaining to human research protections. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring compliance with any additional applicable laws, University or site-specific policies, and sponsor requirements.

Study design and scientific merit have been evaluated to the extent required to determine that the regulatory criteria for approval have been met [45CFR46.111(a)(1)(i), 45CFR46.111(a)(2)].

Adding any of the following elements will invalidate the FLEX determination and require the submission of a project revision:

- Increase in risk
- Federal funding or a plan for future federal sponsorship (e.g., proof of concept studies for federal RFPs, pilot studies intended to support a federal grant application, training and program project grants, no-cost extensions)
- Research funded or otherwise regulated by a federal agency that has signed on to the Common Rule, including all agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services
- FDA-regulated research
- NIH-issued or pending Certificate of Confidentiality
- Prisoners or parolees as subjects
- Contractual obligations or restrictions that require the application of the Common Rule or which require annual review by an IRB
- Classified research
- Clinical interventions

Appendix B

Email for Recruitment of Participants

Dear School Counselor,

My name is Justin D. Cole and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Oregon State University. I am completing this study as a part of my dissertation.

You are invited to participate in this study titled, Understanding School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports and Igaming as a Career Choice. The purpose of this study is to learn how high school counselors perceive esports and igaming as a career choice. Results may improve our understanding of how school counselors can bridge the communication gap and better provide career counseling services to students interested in exploring careers in esports and igaming.

During this study, you will be asked to complete a few demographic questions and participate in two interviews. There will be a minimum of two interviews conducted with each participant. The initial interview will take approximately 60 minutes. The second interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes. For convenience, interviews will be conducted by a video conference via Zoom.

Participation in this study is limited to individuals who meet the ALL of the following inclusion criteria:

- High school counselor
- Provide career counseling services as part of their current role
- Have personally heard of a student wanting to pursue a career in esports or igaming OR
- Have professionally worked with a student wanting to pursue a career in esports or igaming

Your participation in this study could impact the ways in which professional school counselors meet the academic, socioemotional, and career needs of students interested in esports and igaming as career choices. All the information and responses in the interviews are confidential.

If you have questions about this study, please feel free to contact me via email at coleju@oregonstate.edu. You may also contact my Committee Chair, Dr. Deborah Rubel at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu. If you do not meet the criteria for the study, please forward this email along to school counselors or school counseling alumni that you believe may be interested in participating in this study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Justin D. Cole
Doctoral Candidate, Counselor Education and Supervision
Oregon State University
coleju@oregonstate.edu

Appendix C

Research Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Understanding School Counselors' Perceptions of Esports and Igaming as a Career Choice
Principal Investigator: Deborah Rubel, Ph.D.
Study Team Members: Justin D. Cole
Peer Debriefers: Kim Severn

You are being asked to take part in a research study regarding the experiences of high school counselors engaging in career counseling with students that are considering esports and igaming as a career choice. As a participant in this study, you must currently be employed as a high school counselor, engage in career counseling as part of your employment, and have professionally engaged with a student that has expressed an interest in esports and igaming as a career choice. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how high school counselors perceive esports and igaming as a career choice.

What we will ask you to do: You will be interviewed about your experience as a high school counselor engaging in career counseling in the areas of esports and igaming. There will be a minimum of two interviews conducted with each participant in order to reach saturation. The initial interview will take approximately 60 minutes. The second interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes. For convenience, interviews will be conducted by a video conference via Zoom. Interviews will be video and audio recorded (via Zoom). The study will span no more than 3 months and your responses will be kept confidential. Upon hearing from you, we will set up a time for an initial meeting with you where we can review and sign the consent forms and I can answer any questions you may have regarding the research study. If you agree, the first interview may take place the same day at the meeting where consent forms are signed.

Risks and benefits: This research study is not meant to inflict discomfort. There is minimal risk in discussing your experience when working with students choosing esports and/or igaming as a career. However, if you express that talking about the experience is too difficult, we will stop the interview and talk about the discomfort. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions and you can skip any questions that you don't want to answer.

Oregon State University has no program to pay for research-related injuries. If at any time you feel you need emotional support, the researcher will work with you to help identify local clinical counseling referrals. If at any point in the research process you decide you do not want to continue participation in the study, you are free to cease participation immediately.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how high school counselors experience esports and igaming as a career choice. Although there is no guaranteed benefit to participants in the

research study, the opportunity to speak about their experiences may prove to be fulfilling, educational to the field and empowering. Societal benefits of this study include contribution to the understanding of the school counselor's complex work when engaging with students who may be considering nontraditional career paths. The knowledge gained from this can be helpful in identifying any deficits in current counselor education programs related to esports and igaming.

Compensation: There is no compensation for taking part of this study.

Your answers will be confidential. All information obtained during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. All research records will be stored securely and only the Principal Investigator, Dr. Deborah Rubel, and Student Researcher, Justin Cole, will have access to records. Federal regulatory agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies research participants.

In any sort of report we make public or is published, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Results will be reported and summarized so that you cannot be identified.

All research related materials will be retained for a minimum of 3 years post study termination. Audio and/or video recordings will be a requirement of this study to participate. Transcriptions of the audio/video recordings will be retained, however the audio/video recordings will be destroyed. Written consent forms will be collected, scanned, stored electronically, and the original securely destroyed. All transcriptions and electronic copies of consent forms will be kept in a password protected file on a private computer.

No identifying information regarding employees, schools, or students will be used. All names, or other identifying information will be changed or removed in order to protect participant confidentiality and identity. To help ensure confidentiality, participants are asked not to reveal any of their identifying information in the interviews or any identifying information of anyone else they mention including students, other school counselors, administration or other school staff during the interviews.

Oregon State University researchers are mandatory reporters. Researchers will be required to report any information disclosed pertaining to potential child abuse to proper authorities. Researchers will also report any threats of harm to self or others. In the event of details are disclosed by participants constituting potential child abuse, identifying information will need to be given to authorities, and/or Child Protective Services (CPS) and reported to the Oregon State University IRB within the required amount of time.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, there will be no negative consequences. If you decide to take part, you are free to

withdraw at any time. Your decision to participate or not in this study will not affect your relationship with other school staff or the school district.

If you have questions: The student researcher is Justin Cole and Principal Investigator is Dr. Deborah Rubel. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Justin Cole at coleju@oregonstate.edu or at 719-209-9878. You can reach Dr. Deborah Rubel, Associate Professor at Oregon State University, at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu or 541-737-5973.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Oregon State University, Human Research Protection Program, Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 541-737-8008 or access their website at https://research.oregonstate.edu/irb.

Appendix D

Screening Questions

1. Are you a high school counselor?

2. Do you provide career counseling services as part of your current role?

3. Have you personally heard of a student wanting to pursue a career in esports or igaming?

4. Have you professionally worked with a student wanting to pursue a career in esports or igaming?

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Demographic Information

1. What is your age?

2. What is your ethnicity?

3. What is your gender?

4. How many years have you been working as a school counselor?

5. Region of employment?

6. In your years as a school counselor, how many students have expressed an interest in esports or igaming as a career choice?

Interview Questions

1. How do you experience esports as a potential career for your students?

2. How would you describe your experience of your education and training in the areas of esports and career choice?

3. How do you describe your experience of societal views of esports?

4. How do you experience esports and gaming as a part of your own life?

5. How do you experience working with students that are considering esports as a career choice?

6. How do you experience and perceive the student while discussing esports as a career choice?

7. How do you perceive yourself while engaging with students during the discussion of esports as a career choice?

8. How do you describe working with other staff/administration around the topic of esports as a career choice?

9. How do you experience igaming as a potential career for your students?

10. How would you describe your experience of your education and training in the areas of igaming and career choice?

11. How do you describe your experience of societal views of igaming?

12. How do you experience igaming and gaming as a part of your own life?

13. How do you experience working with students that are considering igaming as a career choice?

14. How do you experience and perceive the student while discussing igaming as a career choice?

15. How do you perceive yourself while engaging with students during the discussion of igaming as a career choice?

16. How do you describe working with other staff/administration around the topic of igaming as a career choice?

Appendix F

Manuscript I: Initial Read Through Reflective Notes

Transcript 1

First year working as a school counselor.

Feels inexperienced in the position.

States she does not have a lot of experience with esports.

Uses the word "honestly" and then mentions that she didn't even know this was a career choice or option.

At this point, I feel sort of frustrated with the interview as she is not as knowledgeable on the topic but has strong opinions.

Works collaboratively with the local community college. See the need to connect students with resources.

Esports in the Olympics. I think this adds credibility to esports as a potential career choice.

Uses the work "connection" over and over.

States she was never a computer gamer, but then mentions she played on the Game Cube.

I try very hard to bring out more information. Begin to discuss thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs.

This brings her to discuss her support of her students.

- "I'm in full support of it. Even though I don't like enjoy, like gaming. That doesn't make me not encourage my students to do it or get them connected with someone that can help them."

She discounts esports due to it not being physical active like traditional sports.

She makes assumptions about what the students are experiencing when engaged in esports and states that they may not like other sports because they involve physical activity. Basically, feels that students are lazy and unmotivated.

Feels like esports isn't really a sport.

I feel that she is struggling with the topic and connecting her personal and professional experiences with the subject.

She states that her education is lacking and that her graduate classes were very limited. I know how limiting that education can be.

Discusses researching the topic further.

Starts by saying feel like and then retracks to chose her wording more carefully.

She describes where she grew up as traditional and predominately white with traditional values.

Uses the word traditions…again.

Uses her dad as the example and how he didn't consider video games a sport.

Uses "old ways" and generalizes to America.

She seems to be sort of condescending when discussing her societal and cultural view points. I recall having to hold back my disappointment in her answer and be aware of how I am coming across during the interview.

She discusses passion in career planning.

- "If a kid is passionate about something and they want to make a career out of it then we just go forward and move with a plan and I think it's great because they have something they're passionate about and that's hard to find with our students."

Discusses a back-up plan. Back-up plan is important for her.

I understand what she means by "disheartened". Sad, lacks encouragement…

Says she feels a personal responsibility to the student to encourage them and develop a solid, realistic plan.

- "I feel like it's my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I feel like I did not do my job."

I use the word "burden". She didn't use this word; I insert the word as sort of a summary of what I was feeling.

Transcript 2

This is my second interview and it shows. I feel the difficulty in getting information out. There is a lot of silence and this is sort of frustrating. She also seems to be hesitant to discuss the topic. I try my best to get things moving. I give a very detailed description of what esports are. More detailed than I did with other interviews. I think this is due to my feeling nervous and her silence.

She is aware of the collegiate scholarships. She makes it clear that she does not have an opinion about the specific career choice, she is just interested in supporting the student in the direction they are interested in.

Again, I am feeling frustrated because of her short and succinct answers.

I ask here "what are some reasons…" and I was hoping this would bring out more detailed answers. She does begin to open up about her views on generations and their becoming more accepting of certain career fields. Makes general statements about technology and youth.

I try to be encouraging her by reiterating that there are no right or wrong answers.

She seems a little uneasy about the topic and makes comfort with the topic by describing the "steps" involved.

- "I guess my initial reaction is okay like Do you know the steps that it takes to do that? Do you, who can you talk to, to try and get more information, you know, do you know how to edit? Do you know how to set up cameras? Do you know how all the steps?"

- "If that's what they want to do and like I said before, I guess it's my job to ask the questions of, you know, the steps. Who should we talk to, to get more information about this, but my perception of the student doesn't necessarily change just because they want to pursue this as a career path."

I am sort of impressed with her personal experience with the topic of esports. She has many family members that are experienced in gaming and playing games for money. They stream, watch channels, and know the personalities associated with the various games.

She says, "I treat him like a 'normal' athlete". She marginalizes the experience as abnormal.

She does air quotes and highlights the word normal.

She qualifies the participants of the games as athletes.

I am very impressed again with her knowledge of the games involved in esports. But she minimizes her experience and says she would feel incompetent in discussing esports and would gather more information from her colleagues that are engaged in the high school team.

She seems to go from knowing to saying she doesn't know. I do not understand the juggling that she is doing.

Transcript 4

She provides an extensive job history and experience in the field of school counseling.

Very descriptive. Has a strong counselor identity.

Discusses esports from the perspective of professional and personal experience.

She is very talkative. I am able to give her a very descriptive definition of esports and igaming. She responds to the topic by listing a history of exposure to gaming consoles and is very familiar with the tools.

Talks about generational exposure. I am very impressed with her ability to articulate the topic.

I sort of have a difficult time following along. I am thankful that the interview is being recorded so I can go back and review the dialogue.

She has a tendency to go down rabbit holes. Very expressive.

Her connection is in and out and I find that frustrating at times. She cuts in and out.

Discusses the connection between esports and technology education in the classroom.

Correlates the interest in esports to students that show an affinity for STEM and coding and other career pathways.

She has a genuine desire to ask questions of her students' career choices, regardless of the career choice. She wants to know the true reason behind the student's decision making.

She has a need to pursue information and connect students to resources and explore the motivation behind the career choice.

I really like her and feel a connection to her.

She has a clear understanding of her role and a passion for assisting students in pursuing their career choice.

She apologizes for going down rabbit holes. I explain that this is all good information.

The connection finally drops and I have to call her on the phone. I am sort of frustrated at this point, because I have not conducted an interview over the phone and then had to figure out how to use my software in a way that would transcribe our verbal conversation.

At first this was a little disruptive, but overall it worked out perfectly as a solution to the connectivity issues.

Provides a great dialogue on the marginalization of students based on a societal view of what a career is. She is very expressive and appears to have given this topic much though previously. She then compares the concept of esports to more mainstream endeavors like snowboarding in the Olympics. Although it isn't for everyone, it is attainable by some. Very optimistic.

Come to find out she is a gamer.

She plays a few games on her mobile device. Talks a lot about Hayday and other farming simulators. Talks about Smurfs and a game where she farms with Smurfs. I am liking her even more 😊

I keep thinking that this is uncommon in my experience. To have someone this connected to games, at this stage in life. Maybe there isn't much to do in rural Oklahoma?

She builds Legos, plays online poker and plays Bejeweled. Definitely a gamer.

She keeps saying egames instead of esports. Not sure why this bugs me?

I insert the term esports several times, but she continues with egames.

She clearly loves her job and sees her role as a counselor to take a nonjudgmental approach to career counseling and has a very inquisitive nature.

Transcript 5

He is a 26 year-old, white male that has been working as a high school counselor for 4 years. Right away he details his qualifications and experience in the field.

I feel like this interview is going to be challenging due to his experience and what feels like a reluctance to want to be participating; even though he volunteered.

He has experience with the esports team directly. He states he is a coach for the team and has competed nationally with the team.

He is hopeful in the growth of esports.

He states that he is learning as he goes. Admits a vulnerability.

Very supportive of his students. I feel a connection with him because much of what he is talking about has been my experience in working in the area.

Especially, around working with other teachers and staff.

He makes a connection between esports and the lack of physical activity. He has a clear opinion about the topic.

Has 30 players on the team.

He discussed the opportunities at the collegiate level and has an awareness of scholarship availability.

He sees the value of esports socially.

He makes several references to validating esports due to its level of inclusion. I have often mentioned this myself when discussing the value of esports and the way it connects people from different walks of life.

I totally agree with his views. I like this guy.

As we start talking more and more, we both become relaxed and start to flow. This conversation feels very natural.

He states that video games is more of a hobby versus a way to make money.

He labels his students as shy and introverted. He describes and is able to articulate the ability that the students have to "come alive" on the screen.

It is interesting to me that he seems to identify more as a high school esports coach versus a school counselor.

He clearly takes a lot of pride in his involvement with the team and the individual student-athletes.

He says "my kids" a lot. He has a sense of ownership and responsibility for the choices of his students.

Overall, I feel that this is a good interview and I was able to get much detail from him by asking follow-up questions.

Transcript 6

He presents very knowledgeable on the topic from the start. He has a great deal of experience working in the career counseling field.

He works for a smaller school in but has had a large percentage of students that have shown an interest in esports career pursuit.

Understand the limitations of the career pathway based on small numbers.

He seems to be thinking about his answers. Long pauses. Slow and measured responses.

Provides limited information on his perceptions and I find myself having to ask several follow-up questions.

He provides this interviewer with positive feedback. He says, "great question".

He is really searching for responses. Says "um" repeatedly.

I use reflection to try to get him settled into the responses.

He shifts when taking about his own experience with gaming. He has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to gaming.

He has a very strong professional identity and he clearly supports the choices of this students.

Very energetic and the rhythm of the interview seems to be gaining and flowing better.

Appears more relaxed and less anxious about his responses.

He is very expressive and has a strong opinion on the topic.

Very likeable.

Smooth transition into talking about igaming. However, he is initially confused on the definition, so we spend some time reviewing the definition and giving examples.

He sees the connection between esports and igaming.

Discusses igaming from the perspective of gambling.

Presents negative and bias on igaming.

Appendix G

Manuscript I: Transcript Read Through Coded Notes

Transcript 1

Unaware of career opportunities in the area of esports.

Does not have knowledge of esports as a career choice.

Has an awareness of esports as several opportunities available to students including competitive gaming.

Awareness of few career choices in the technology field.

Has colleagues in the field and states a willingness to connect students to resources in the field.

Views esports as mainstream due to inclusion in Olympics. Views pursuit as acceptable perhaps?

Personal connection to esports as a child, but not as an adult. Interest more suited for younger ages.

Expresses a strong acceptability and support of all student regardless of career choice.

Sees value in career counseling and subscribes to a value based perspective.

Esports viewed as less traditional and less physically active.

Perhaps invalidating the activity as not a sport due to lack of activity.

Puts counselor role first and uses role to connect student with career interests and opportunities.

Education focused on the process of career counseling and not specific career choices.

Vague education and non-specific. More process and goal oriented.

Explores resources on own and is self-sufficient in gaining experience and knowledge.

Reads articles and journals on the topic. Explores multiple sources of information.

Sees esports through the popular culture view of traditional sports and that esports is less acceptable as an activity because it is not mainstream.

Esports is not a sport based on cultural views and traditions.

Not being a sport can make it less desirable to pursue and less popular. Lacks support from older generation.

Plan is key to career choice. As long as a student has a plan, counselor appears to be supportive of choice and can assist in completing the plan through steps and objectives.

First time passion is mentioned as a factor in career choice. Passion and a plan are keys to success and gaining support.

Great mission statement for career counseling. Role of counselor is to be supportive and desire to see their students be successful post high school.

- "I don't think it's enough for them to graduate, I want them to be successful after they leave our school."

Back-up plan needed to when looking at career choice in esports.

A Plan-B when your first choice is not viable or realistic perhaps.

Feeling disheartened with the choice and less optimistic.

Experiences the phenomena as a negative feeling due to choice and viability/realistic expectations.

Feeling sad when potential is not manifested.

Counselor has a view of what is optimal and matches potential.

Shows a ranking of career choices and some being more achievable than others.

Role of counselor explored in this statement.

- "I feel like it's my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I feel like I did not do my job."

Esports not seen as a career choice by administration or discussed.

Administration is supportive of the advocation but not as a vocation.

Transcript 2

Knows of scholarships and post-secondary opportunities. Aware of opportunities.

Views counselor role as being supportive of the student and their choice. Supportive and openminded.

No formal training on the topic.

Comments on a paradigm shift and that esports is becoming more accepted on the macro level. Belief in change.

Sees esports as part of technological advancement.

Associates esports with a younger generation and as they enter the workforce they bring change.

Sees career choice as a series of steps to be completed to be successful.

Experiences the phenomenon through her son and boyfriend. Limited personal experience as she is not a gamer.

Leans more towards esports as a hobby or a pastime.

Unbiased towards student. Relies more on the steps and completing various steps.

No stereotype of students pursuing esports as a career choice.

Esporters are not just athletes that are interested in sports games. Many genres of games allow for more participation by a variety of students.

Incompetent. Lack of knowledge.

- "I probably feel really incompetent because I don't know a whole lot."

Pursues education on topics when unaware. Sees her role as a school counselor to gain education in the area of esports.

COVID led to use of technology to foster more social connection.

Experiencing the phenomenon as part of a bigger competition and increased social connection during COVID.

Staff is supportive following popularity and success.

Transcript 3

She's experiencing this phenomena after having a broad experience in education and she's communicating that she is an open person – this is how she presents her background . Experiencing a new phenomena in light of her openness and wealth of experience as a person

Experiencing self as a very exp school counselor.

Having some uncertainty about what it is.

Perceiving it as an increasing phenomena.

Seeing esports as connected to many other potential technology careers.

Seeing career overall as complex and evolving. Identifying the need to stay open and explore

Perceiving esports as a viable career.

Experiencing viability as a complex construct not just 'a living'

Seeing viability of gaming as related to what else you can do with it.

Seeing the viability of gaming as a means to keep young people engaged in education.

Normalizing the phenomenon of esports

Navigating being a different generation and accepting the importance of a new way of experiencing life and communication.

Experiencing Covid as an accelerant of pre-existing change in attitude and use of tech and specifically gaming.

Demonstrating a lack of formal training on the topic.

Equating training in technology to and overall understanding of esports and other technological career choices.

She states an overall philosophy of career counseling to include an open ended and optimistic view of careers. States flexibility as a value and a willingness to meet the student where they are.

Highlighting the value of a professional skill set that is inclusive of career paths regardless of personal viewpoints.

Society downplays role of esports due to the inability to classify it as a "real" traditional sport.

Playing online is not the same as playing in real life.

Many staff/administrators are supportive of esports taking place on campus and support students participating in clubs and extracurricular activities.

Stressing the validity and viability by the rate of growth and increasing size of competitions. See the growth in popularity.

Seeing the potential for growth and opportunities.

Validity of esports is tied to success of current team and students.

An evolution in society in the use of technology for leisure and entertainment adds to an acceptance of the behavior as a social norm.

Highlighting the view of a "younger" generation and behavioral use of technology on a daily basis.

Technology has changed the way we interact on a daily basis.

Societal shift on the acceptance of all things tech. A paradigm shift.

Experiencing technology as a necessity.

Engaging in gaming as a leisure activity, a hobby, something done for fun.

Experiencing gaming through her children.

Classifying esports/gaming as having both positive and negative aspect.

Equating time spent on an activity as positive or negative. Mentions health and how this could have physical/mental impact.

Experiencing COVID as an accelerant of pre-existing change in how we communicate and interact on a daily basis.

Experiencing the phenomenon as a combination of good and bad behaviors.

Highlights problem-solving and teamwork as positive aspects of gaming.

Valuing the helping aspect of the work being done.

- "My job is helping them reach their goal, depending on whatever that goal might be. So if it is about going into esports or towards gaming, then I'm going to help them make connections with experiences that can help them take that next step."

Seeing her role as making connections between the career choice and current resources in the field.

Connecting as a key to success. Sees the value in connecting students to resources.

Experiences the phenomenon as in line with her role and activities of the profession.

Seeing career counseling as a series of steps.

Experiencing the phenomenon as part of a bigger picture that encompasses many avenues and opportunities for her students.

No different than other career choices. As long as certain steps are completed.

Highlights the need to match students to career choice based on affinity, strengths, and abilities.

Certain students have a set of skills that would best be served by a particular career choice.

Experienced several students and career choice. Uses experience to remain open to choice.

Listens to interests.

No judgment or preconceived notions.

Connection between career and experience. Make sure students are involved academically in the career pursuit.

Meet students where they are.

Students are complex and diverse. Many interests and many aptitudes.

No stereotypes as interests in gaming is diverse.

More involvement across ages and genders.

Openminded to the diversity of career choice and individuals.

Perceives phenomenon as fun getting to know each individual choice and exploring interests with students. Learning together. Helping guide and direct towards a goal.

Support student through the process.

Mentions step model toward career decision making.

Staff excited for students. Very supportive as a group.

Transcript 4

Places a great emphasis on connecting, building rapport and bonding with her students. Getting to know their perspective.

Has a personal experience with the phenomenon. Used gaming as part of her social circle.

Difficult time understanding the attraction/draw to esports and streaming through YouTube.

Has had a vast experience working with students that have shown an interest in esports and streaming content.

The phenomenon is experienced as a result of the pandemic and the need to find new ways to connect to each other through the use of technology.

Sees esports as growing in popularity and is aligned with computer sciences at the secondary level. Administration is supportive of the growth and new opportunities.

The phenomenon is a younger generational construct.

Society has a strong view on what a career produces. Phenomenon may not have a product that is understood by a certain generation and not align with societal views of career.

When people don't understand a new concept they are less likely to support it.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon by gaming throughout her early years and currently as a way to connect with students.

Does not believe that today's gamers fit into a stereotypes as introverted

Believes that there is a breakdown in traditional stereotypes that gaming students are introverted, lack physical activity, or aren't that smart.

Gamers today are involved in several activities and bring a series of characteristics that go against traditional stereotypes.

Very curious and nonjudgmental.

Aware of biases and own perspective and is aware not to have this influence working with students pursuing esports as a career choice. Nonjudgmental is key to counselor role.

No preconceived ideas.

Mentions the age of administration and suggest this is the reason that they are so supportive of esports as a career choice.

The younger staff and administration is more open.

Supportive of students if they are truly interested and passionate about topic; a goal.

Transcript 5

Experiences the phenomenon as a new pathway.

Not a lot is known about the phenomenon due to the newness.

Experiences the phenomenon as growing and allowing more opportunities for students to pursue a career that makes them happy and they are passionate about.

No formal training or education on the phenomenon. Learning through participation and first hand experience.

Watches educational webinars offered by esports organizations.

Experiences administration as open-minded and very supportive of esports and student activities.

Esports is inclusive and allows many to participate that may not be able to participate in other physical activities.

Opens a career pathway to those that might have physical or social limitations.

Perceives most parents as lacking understanding and an unfamiliar with the many collegiate opportunities.

Many parents do not see it as a sport or physical activity that warrants recognition.

Experiences a negative stigma from many parents and associates esports and playing video games as being lazy.

Experiences the phenomenon as a global community, a social network.

The phenomenon is becoming more socially acceptable and better understood as a career choice.

Esports provides another career option for those that have certain limitations.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon through playing video games.

Personal experience and knowledge.

Experiences anxiety due to the newness of the occupational choice and the limited openings.

Feels that it could be difficult to break through and be successful.

Strong emotional connection to the students. Wants them to be successful.

Expresses hope for students that are interested in pursuing esports as a career choice.

Perceives the phenomenon as being available and accessible to anyone.

Describes esport athletes as shy and introverted.

Comments that COVID has negatively impacted sociability of students and put barriers on in-person communication and connection.

Sees students pursuing careers in esports as problem solvers and analytical.

Wants students to be passionate about career choice.

Sees working with esports as a unique opportunity and a blessing to be working with students that are pursuing something new and up-and-coming.

Transcript 6

Experiences the phenomenon as challenging and difficult to break through due to limited number of opportunities.

Limited opportunities.

Experiences society views of the phenomenon as a hobby, pastime, not a real sport or a "real" way to make money.

- "I think society as a whole doesn't view it as a sport or a legitimate source of making money. I think a lot of people look at it as those are hobbies and pastimes and a waste of time."

Society is more supportive of a predictable and established career pathway.

Society has a preconceived idea that esports is a hobby, waste of time, and not legitimate because it involves video games. Attributes this to a lack of knowledge and lack of understanding.

Has a personal connection to the phenomenon as a gamer. Has gaming experience.

Views working with the student as intriguing.

Looks forward to collaborating with the student and working together towards accomplishing goals.

Sees the students as brave for choosing a nontraditional career path.

Experiences the phenomenon as an opportunity for students that do not fit in physically or are mainstream.

Esports gives them an alternative to participate in an activity.

Experiences the phenomenon with mixed emotions. Excitement but also hesitancy due to the uniqueness and competitiveness of the career pathway.

Mentions back-up plan; Plan B.

Unaware of the steps needed to be successful in esports.

Views the administration as viewing esports as not a valid career pathway.

Attributes lack of support to age of the staff/administration and an acceptance of more traditional options.

Appendix H

Manuscript I: Transcription Coded Notes with Abstraction

Transcript 1

Unaware of career opportunities in the area of esports. Lack knowledge

Does not have knowledge of esports as a career choice. Lack knowledge

Has an awareness of esports as several opportunities available to students including competitive gaming? Awareness of competition

Awareness of few career choices in the technology field. Relates esports to technology

Has colleagues in the field and states a willingness to connect students to resources in the field. Wants to connect students to others who can help

Views esports as mainstream due to inclusion in Olympics. Views pursuit as acceptable perhaps? Experiences validity of esports related to visibility as Olympic sport

Personal connection to esports as a child, but not as an adult. Interest more suited for younger ages. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people

Expresses a strong acceptability and support of all student regardless of career choice. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity

Sees value in career counseling and subscribes to a value-based perspective. Values career counseling

Esports viewed as less traditional and less physically active. Views esports as potentially negative or not a sport due to lack of activity

Perhaps invalidating the activity as not a sport due to lack of activity. Views esports as potentially negative due to lack of specific skill set.

Puts counselor role first and uses role to connect student with career interests and opportunities. Counselor identity leads them to support student

Education focused on the process of career counseling and not specific career choices. Training is general

Vague education and non-specific. More process and goal oriented. Training is general

Explores resources on own and is self-sufficient in gaining experience and knowledge. Learns about new career opps by self

Reads articles and journals on the topic. Explores multiple sources of information. Learns about new career opps by self

Sees esports through the popular culture view of traditional sports and that esports is less acceptable as an activity because it is not mainstream. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports

Esports is not a sport based on cultural views and traditions. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports

Not being a sport can make it less desirable to pursue and less popular. Lacks support from older generation. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports

Plan is key to career choice. As long as a student has a plan, counselor appears to be supportive of choice and can assist in completing the plan through steps and objectives. Follows training on general career counseling

First time passion is mentioned as a factor in career choice. Passion and a plan are keys to success and gaining support. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed

Great mission statement for career counseling. Role of counselor is to be supportive and desire to see their students be successful post high school. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed

- "I don't think it's enough for them to graduate, I want them to be successful after they leave our school."

Back-up plan needed to when looking at career choice in esports. Plan B is needed for risky careers including Esports.

A Plan-B when your first choice is not viable or realistic perhaps. Plan B is needed for risky careers including Esports.

Feeling disheartened with the choice and less optimistic. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Experiences the phenomena as a negative feeling due to choice and viability/realistic expectations. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Feeling sad when potential is not manifested. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Counselor has a view of what is optimal and matches potential. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Shows a ranking of career choices and some being more achievable than others. Some are more acceptable some careers and student interests are marginalized.

Role of counselor explored in this statement.

- "I feel like it's my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I feel like I did not do my job." Can I do my job by focusing on this.

Esports not seen as a career choice by administration or discussed. Administrative context marginalizes as career

Administration is supportive of the advocation but not as a vocation. Administrative context marginalizes as career

Transcript 2

Knows of scholarships and post-secondary opportunities. Aware of opportunities. Awareness of financial opportunities.

Views counselor role as being supportive of the student and their choice. Supportive and openminded. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

No formal training on the topic. Training is lacking.

Comments on a paradigm shift and that esports is becoming more accepted on the macro level. Belief in change. Experiences validity of esports related to cultural change and acceptance.

Sees esports as part of technological advancement. Relates esports to technology.

Associates esports with a younger generation and as they enter the workforce, they bring change. Views esports as for younger people.

Sees career choice as a series of steps to be completed to be successful. Follows training on general career counseling.

Experiences the phenomenon through her son and boyfriend. Limited personal experience as she is not a gamer. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people

Leans more towards esports as a hobby or a pastime. Views esports as potentially negative.

Unbiased towards student. Relies more on the steps and completing various steps. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

No stereotype of students pursuing esports as a career choice. Esports is open to many student types.

Esporters are not just athletes that are interested in sports games. Many genres of games allow for more participation by a variety of students. Esports is open to many student types.

Incompetent. Lack of knowledge. Lack knowledge.

- "I probably feel really incompetent because I don't know a whole lot."

Pursues education on topics when unaware. Sees her role as a school counselor to gain education in the area of esports. Learns about new career opportunities by self.

COVID led to use of technology to foster more social connection. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Experiencing the phenomenon as part of a bigger competition and increased social connection during COVID. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Staff is supportive following popularity and success. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Transcript 3

She's experiencing this phenomenon after having a broad experience in education and she's communicating that she is an open person – this is how she presents her background. Experiencing a new phenomenon in light of her openness and wealth of experience as a person Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity

Experiencing self as a very exp school counselor. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Having some uncertainty about what it is. Lacks knowledge.

Perceiving it as an increasing phenomenon. Understands popularity.

Seeing esports as connected to many other potential technology careers. Relates esports to technology.

Seeing career overall as complex and evolving. Identifying the need to stay open and explore Follows training on general career counseling

Perceiving esports as a viable career. Awareness of opportunities.

Experiencing viability as a complex construct not just 'a living' Awareness of opportunities.

Seeing viability of gaming as related to what else you can do with it. Awareness of opportunities.

Seeing the viability of gaming as a means to keep young people engaged in education. Experiences validity of esports related to continuing education.

Normalizing the phenomenon of esports Awareness of popularity.

Navigating being a different generation and accepting the importance of a new way of experiencing life and communication. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

Experiencing Covid as an accelerant of pre-existing change in attitude and use of tech and specifically gaming. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Demonstrating a lack of formal training on the topic. Training is lacking.

Equating training in technology to and overall understanding of esports and other technological career choices. Relates esports to technology.

She states an overall philosophy of career counseling to include an open ended and optimistic view of careers. States flexibility as a value and a willingness to meet the student where they are. Values career counseling

Highlighting the value of a professional skill set that is inclusive of career paths regardless of personal viewpoints. Follows training on general career counseling.

Society downplays role of esports due to the inability to classify it as a "real" traditional sport. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports.

Playing online is not the same as playing in real life.

Many staff/administrators are supportive of esports taking place on campus and support students participating in clubs and extracurricular activities. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

Stressing the validity and viability by the rate of growth and increasing size of competitions. See the growth in popularity. Understands popularity.

Seeing the potential for growth and opportunities. Awareness of opportunities.

Validity of esports is tied to success of current team and students.

An evolution in society in the use of technology for leisure and entertainment adds to an acceptance of the behavior as a social norm. Relates esports to technology

Highlighting the view of a "younger" generation and behavioral use of technology on a daily basis.

Technology has changed the way we interact on a daily basis. Relates esports to technology

Societal shift on the acceptance of all things tech. A paradigm shift. Relates esports to technology

Experiencing technology as a necessity. Relates esports to technology

Engaging in gaming as a leisure activity, a hobby, something done for fun. Relates esports to a hobby or pastime.

Experiencing gaming through her children. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

Classifying esports/gaming as having both positive and negative aspect.

Equating time spent on an activity as positive or negative. Mentions health and how this could have physical/mental impact. Views esports as potentially negative due to lack of activity.

Experiencing COVID as an accelerant of pre-existing change in how we communicate and interact on a daily basis. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Experiencing the phenomenon as a combination of good and bad behaviors. Views esports as potentially negative due to lack of activity.

Highlights problem-solving and teamwork as positive aspects of gaming. Awareness of opportunities.

Valuing the helping aspect of the work being done. Follows training on general career counseling.

- "My job is helping them reach their goal, depending on whatever that goal might be. So, if it is about going into esports or towards gaming, then I'm going to help them make connections with experiences that can help them take that next step."

Seeing her role as making connections between the career choice and current resources in the field. Follows training on general career counseling

Connecting as a key to success. Sees the value in connecting students to resources. Wants to connect students to others who can help.

Experiences the phenomenon as in line with her role and activities of the profession. Values career counseling.

Seeing career counseling as a series of steps. Follows training on general career counseling.

Experiencing the phenomenon as part of a bigger picture that encompasses many avenues and opportunities for her students. Awareness of opportunities.

No different than other career choices. As long as certain steps are completed. Follows training on general career counseling.

Highlights the need to match students to career choice based on affinity, strengths, and abilities. Follows training on general career counseling.

Certain students have a set of skills that would best be served by a particular career choice. Follows training on general career counseling.

Experienced several students and career choice. Uses experience to remain open to choose. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Listens to interests. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

No judgment or preconceived notions. Values career counseling.

Connection between career and experience. Make sure students are involved academically in the career pursuit. Wants to connect students to others who can help.

Meet students where they are. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Students are complex and diverse. Many interests and many aptitudes. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

No stereotypes as interests in gaming is diverse. Awareness of opportunities.

More involvement across ages and genders. Awareness of opportunities.

Openminded to the diversity of career choice and individuals.

Perceives phenomenon as fun getting to know each individual choice and exploring interests with students. Learning together. Helping guide and direct towards a goal. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Support student through the process. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Mentions step model toward career decision making. Follows training on general career counseling.

Staff excited for students. Very supportive as a group. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Transcript 4

Places a great emphasis on connecting, building rapport and bonding with her students. Getting to know their perspective. Follows training on general career counseling.

Has a personal experience with the phenomenon. Used gaming as part of her social circle. Personal experience with esports.

Difficult time understanding the attraction/draw to esports and streaming through YouTube. Views esports as potentially negative.

Has had a vast experience working with students that have shown an interest in esports and streaming content. Awareness of popularity.

The phenomenon is experienced as a result of the pandemic and the need to find new ways to connect to each other through the use of technology. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Sees esports as growing in popularity and is aligned with computer sciences at the secondary level. Administration is supportive of the growth and new opportunities. Relates esports to technology.

The phenomenon is a younger generational construct. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

Society has a strong view on what a career produces. Phenomenon may not have a product that is understood by a certain generation and not align with societal views of career. Marginalizes esports due to its lack of productivity.

When people don't understand a new concept, they are less likely to support it. Lack of knowledge.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon by gaming throughout her early years and currently as a way to connect with students. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

Does not believe that today's gamers fit into a stereotype as introverted Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Believes that there is a breakdown in traditional stereotypes that gaming students are introverted, lack physical activity, or aren't that smart. Awareness of attempts to marginalize students and stigma.

Gamers today are involved in several activities and bring a series of characteristics that go against traditional stereotypes. Supportive of students.

Very curious and nonjudgmental. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Aware of biases and own perspective and is aware not to have this influence working with students pursuing esports as a career choice. Nonjudgmental is key to counselor role. Values career counseling.

No preconceived ideas. Supportive of students.

Mentions the age of administration and suggest this is the reason that they are so supportive of esports as a career choice. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

The younger staff and administration are more open. Personal experience with esports but views it as for younger people.

Supportive of students if they are truly interested and passionate about topic, a goal. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Transcript 5

Experiences the phenomenon as a new pathway. Awareness of opportunities.

Not a lot is known about the phenomenon due to the newness. Lacks knowledge.

Experiences the phenomenon as growing and allowing more opportunities for students to pursue a career that makes them happy and they are passionate about. Awareness of opportunities.

No formal training or education on the phenomenon. Learning through participation and firsthand experience. Lacks training.

Watches educational webinars offered by esports organizations. Learns about new career opportunities by self.

Experiences administration as open-minded and very supportive of esports and student activities. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Esports is inclusive and allows many to participate that may not be able to participate in other physical activities. Awareness of inclusivity.

Opens a career pathway to those that might have physical or social limitations. Awareness of inclusivity.

Perceives most parents as lacking understanding and an unfamiliar with the many collegiate opportunities. Parents lack knowledge.

Many parents do not see it as a sport or physical activity that warrants recognition. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports.

Experiences a negative stigma from many parents and associates esports and playing video games as being lazy. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports.

Experiences the phenomenon as a global community, a social network. Awareness of popularity.

The phenomenon is becoming more socially acceptable and better understood as a career choice. Awareness of popularity.

Esports provides another career option for those that have certain limitations. Awareness of inclusivity.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon through playing video games. Personal experience with esports.

Personal experience and knowledge. Personal experience with esports.

Experiences anxiety due to the newness of the occupational choice and the limited openings. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Feels that it could be difficult to break through and be successful. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Strong emotional connection to the students. Wants them to be successful. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Expresses hope for students that are interested in pursuing esports as a career choice. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Perceives the phenomenon as being available and accessible to anyone. Awareness of inclusivity.

Describes esport athletes as shy and introverted. Marginalized esports participants due to characteristic traits.

Comments that COVID has negatively impacted sociability of students and put barriers on in-person communication and connection. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Sees students pursuing careers in esports as problem solvers and analytical. Marginalized esports participants due to characteristic traits.

Wants students to be passionate about career choice. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Sees working with esports as a unique opportunity and a blessing to be working with students that are pursuing something new and up-and-coming. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Transcript 6

Experiences the phenomenon as challenging and difficult to break through due to limited number of opportunities. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Limited opportunities. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Experiences society views of the phenomenon as a hobby, pastime, not a real sport or a "real" way to make money. Marginalizes esports due to difference from physical sports.

- "I think society as a whole doesn't view it as a sport or a legitimate source of making money. I think a lot of people look at it as those are hobbies and pastimes and a waste of time."

Society is more supportive of a predictable and established career pathway.

Society has a preconceived idea that esports is a hobby, waste of time, and not legitimate because it involves video games. Attributes this to a lack of knowledge and lack of understanding. Marginalizes esports due to lack of productivity.

Has a personal connection to the phenomenon as a gamer. Has gaming experience. Personal experience with esports.

Views working with the student as intriguing. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Looks forward to collaborating with the student and working together towards accomplishing goals. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Sees the students as brave for choosing a nontraditional career path. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Experiences the phenomenon as an opportunity for students that do not fit in physically or are mainstream. Awareness of inclusivity.

Esports gives them an alternative to participate in an activity. Awareness of inclusivity.

Experiences the phenomenon with mixed emotions. Excitement but also hesitancy due to the uniqueness and competitiveness of the career pathway. Feels mixed emotions because choice may not be realistic.

Mentions back-up plan, Plan B. Plan B is needed for risky careers including esports.

Unaware of the steps needed to be successful in esports. Lacks knowledge.

Views the administration as viewing esports as not a valid career pathway. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

Attributes lack of support to age of the staff/administration and an acceptance of more traditional options. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

Appendix I

Manuscript I: Significant Participant Quotes

Transcript 1

Line 27-28: I think, honestly, and me included, like, I don't know, I didn't know that there is a career you have in those fields.

Line 105-109: In all of like my grad school classes that focused on career I don't remember esports being mentioned at all. And I think in my education, it's still like being a counselor I'm supposed to be like a professional on career development and getting these kids connected with what they want to do, um but the classes that we take are pretty vague and pretty general and don't teach us like how you work with those kids that want to get into esports.

Line 78-80: So, esports is like interesting to me just because it isn't as like physically active as other sports, but working in a high school I know that some kids don't like being physically active or doing those types of sports.

Line 137-142: And I feel like it's very conservative and based on previous traditions like things don't change so boys play basketball, football, baseball. Um, those are the sports like those are the most popular things. And I think when I was growing up, and I know I'm not old, but like eSports with just coming up. And like my parents I know at least, my dad didn't consider like a video game a sport, because he thinks sports are what he grew up in, in very stuck in the past.

Line 85-87: I'm in full support of it. Even though I don't like enjoy, like gaming. That doesn't make me not encourage my students to do it or get them connected with someone that can help them.

Line 196-197: I get a little disheartened, and have to figure out a way to have help them develop a more solidified plan.

Line 210-211: I feel like it's my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I fell like I did not do my job.

Line 36-40: I don't know if that's specific for like streaming games, whatever they do on there. But we do have an Esports team that's been successful this year, I don't, and then we have a computer science program, but that feels like coding and stuff, I have had probably one or two students that have expressed interest in like game development.

Line 48-51: So, if they are interested in that, I connect them with either our computer science teacher or the Community College and I'm all for it, just because I know our worlds becoming digital like we already are.

Line 52-53: the only knowledge that I really give them that I've heard it may be going into the Olympics and that we have our team.

Line 53-55: I always support them in whatever they want to do but I try and refer them to someone who knows more.

Line 85-87: I'm in full support of it. Even though I don't like enjoy, like gaming. That doesn't make me not encourage my students to do it or get them connected with someone that can help them.

Line 112-113: So, any information that I want to get I have to get on my own.

Line 167-169: So, if a kid is passionate about something and they want to make a career out of it then we just go forward and move with a plan and I don't like I think it's great because they have something they're passionate about and that's hard to find with our students.

Transcript 2

Line 5-7: I know a little bit about eSports, and what I do know is actually pretty limited to our school because we actually just because created a gaming esports team, and we actually did really well. So I have limited knowledge.

Line 59: I did know that there are scholarships available just like traditional athletes.

Line 81-83: I feel before society, kind of, there were, it wasn't really like widely accepted anything about video games, as far as doing that for a career or even like a side career thing was not really accepted.

Line 90-94: We are more technologically advanced than we have been and it's time that we start preparing futures and careers that are along those lines. And I think that's part of the reason why you know older generations are getting older and younger generations are getting older and the younger generations now kind of maneuvering, the workforce for us.

Line 60-63: Maybe it's the counselor in me but it's I don't really have an opinion one way or another, I think it's just a career field that if a student is genuinely interested in then it's my job as someone that's guiding them to do more research into that.

Line 90: I just think people have a hard time accepting change and the world is changing.

Line 170-171: I don't really have a stereotype or perception and I think it could just be anyone who has a passion for that sport or that game.

Line 210-212: we started talking about oh this is an actual activity that students can perform well and do well in its COVID safe, which is a big part for us this year.

Line 177-178: : I mean, I'll be honest, I probably feel really incompetent because I don't know a whole lot, but I'm kind of just on that journey anyways this is my first year ever working in a high school.

Transcript 3

Line 77-79: I don't. I know I feel like you kind of have to have a little familiarity with, with this like what's happening in general. And so having kids myself and, but working with kids all from all over just being in those conversations.

Line 103-105: You know that kind of perception like, how can this be a sport you're just, you know, whatever, you know, you're just playing a game there?

Line 289-293: I think it just, if a student talked to me about being interested in esports again I think I would I go about how I can support that student like what are our next steps as a team like how can I how can I help you learn more about what you want to do, and will that help you make your decision and you know in your career choice.

Line 62-64: I feel like there, there are a lot of opportunities that are opening up. Maybe not necessarily connected hundred percent to gaming but it is opening up whole avenue of possible opportunities.

Line 80-82: I know it grew even more over the whole COVID thing because that was the one way that kids were able to connect with each other and adults was through just the electronic sports.

Line 118-119: I almost feel like there are so many more people that actually game then maybe don't game that it's maybe it could be growing that way to.

Line 173-176: The other side of that there's a lot of problem solving, a lot of teamwork, a lot of collaboration so I feel like it provides all of those things, actually, just like any other kind of just like any other kind of activity.

Line 93-95: How one interest can open up all of these other doors as well, but I feel like philosophically approaching it from that standpoint and letting students know that there's this flexibility in career choices.

Line 183-184: So if it is about going into esports or towards gaming, then I'm going to help them make connections with experiences that they can that can help them take that next step.

Line 244-247: Students will come in at any point and, and I'm always amazed about what they, their interests are, and most the time it doesn't align to whatever preconceived notion I might have any way. So, I kind of just like to meet them where they are and help them with those steps, if that makes sense.

Line 279-280: and I think that's the fun part about being a counselor is to learning, you know, learning about the students, and what their interests are and helping them get directed.

Transcript 4

I know about esports from my own research. I ask the students a bazillion questions.

When I heard students say they wanted to do esports as a career, my first thought was, "Are you serious?" That was my first thought about 5 years ago.

My main concern is why do you want this? Is it the instant gratification? Is it the likes? Is it something that is a new trend? Is it something that all the cool kids are doing?

Line 151-153: Boomers don't get it. A majority of students in my area are being raised by their grandparents. My niece that is 10 watches YouTube and my parents don't understand. But I would say the boomer generation doesn't quite understand.

Line 157-158: But it's hard to beat societal constructs of what a career is especially when you start talking about egames and igaming.

Line 161-163: It's a game so it's just it's new and normally when something is new, there's some pushback there because especially with a middle-class societal norm is go to college get a job right.

That led me to wanting to research this and figure out what this was all about.

Line 205-208: I'm very aware of and how I may view things from my point of view in life but I can't do that and do my job effectively and so whether it's gaming, whether it's horticulture, I am a captive audience and I wanna know what it is and then what I can do to help facilitate that.

Line 211-212: But that's not in particular to gaming but I just learned in my career you can't have preconceived notions about a kid walking in your office. Otherwise, I can't do my job effectively or I don't need to be in this position.

Line 101-105: That is gaining more interest, and I've always heard I want to be a gamer, and I, they're big heavy into having their YouTube channels and watching other people play like recording it and watching. And like they know who plays these games. They know their names, they know how much they earn, they know they know enough, they know, like they know egames, the way I know Dave Matthews Band songs, I mean it's like, you know?

What is the intention behind this? Why do you want to do this?

Line 194-195: It's a variety of students, from a variety of backgrounds and they are involved in all sorts of things.

Transcript 5

Line 19-23: Well, I mean it's brand new. This is something that is, you know, in the 21st century is brand new to the world. You know things like farming things you know like working in banks that's all been there for a while, those are established positions esports is something that no one really knows a whole lot about. It's, it's brand new, you know if you think about it, when I was when I was a kid, I would have never thought of playing video games for a living.

Line 44-47: I'm learning about this as a career choice, as I'm going through it. I'm learning things about computers and all of that, it's um it's different for sure. And it's not something that

I'm really. I'm, I'm not the most knowledgeable about it, but I understand kids I understand that this is a great thing for kids to be a part of.

Line 94-97: I had kids that you know wanted to be a part of Esports but their parents didn't understand what it was. They didn't quite understand that, you know, there's college scholarships out there and there's a lot of them to actually.

Line 100-103: For the most part the reception was good but there are those people that are more traditional you can't call it a sport blah blah blah blah blah. You know and to those people it's it, they just don't understand it. You know, it's like when people say golf isn't a sport. They just don't understand the skills needed for those games.

Line 108-109: One thing is that most people attribute playing video games being lazy, that you don't want to do anything, that kind of stuff.

Line 44-47: I'm learning about this as a career choice, as I'm going through it. I'm learning things about computers and all of that, it's um it's different for sure. And it's not something that I'm really. I'm, I'm not the most knowledgeable about it, but I understand kids I understand that this is a great thing for kids to be a part of.

Line 69: Esports just became a sanctioned activity.

Line 81-83: So they're very supportive of things that most people consider you know to be something that's not athletic, so more activity based.

Line 130-132: You know they see this as like something people actually do, they're really this good a this that they are getting paid to play video games just like a professional athlete.

Line 110-115: There's these huge online communities of people from all different walks of life that come together and they play a game together. That's really what it is. It's almost like a giant arena where there's a bunch of people that you would never have a chance to meet without, Without this kind of an outlet. You know because you at any time you can be playing with people from China, people from Korea, people from Jamaica, London, all in the same game. The only other place that you really see that kind of like competition is something like the Olympics.

Line 83-84: You can be in a wheelchair and play eSports right. There's endless opportunities to do that.

Line 91-92: It was a real bright spot for our school this year, especially with all the COVID stuff, and all of that.

Line 29-31: I'm hopeful that it keeps growing the way that it does that we then you know my kids now are able to enjoy the things that that make them happy, things that they're passionate about, passionate, and happy.

Line 52-55: For the most part it's just been just doing what I feel is right by my kids…to give them the best opportunity possible.

Line 169-171: There is some anxiety that comes with it because you know, because this is brand new, there's not really a whole lot of teams, means that competition for some of these positions can be rather steep.

Line 172-175: It's different, you know, watching them grow up and do all that because the kids that really started this eSports team were my first class that I had when I started at Sierra High School. So there's kind of an emotional connection between me and those kids. At least between me anyways like those are my babies in my eyes.

Line 179-183: I'm hopeful for him that he's able to achieve those dreams and be able to you know be one of the first kids that able to graduate, going to school for on an esports scholarship that that would be awesome to be able to say that you know that we had someone that was able to do that.

Line 255-256: I'm blessed to be there. I am truly blessed to be given this opportunity, and something that's brand new, something that is you know up and coming.

Transcript 6

Line 28-29: My first thought is it's gonna be tough. I don't know a ton about the field I know some. And from what I do know. It seems like it's a pretty small community.

Line 40-43: , I have not looked into that as a career option I have looked into it as far as like school clubs go to help, maybe push them into the collegiate space, but I have not looked into it.

Line 55-57: I think society as a whole doesn't view it as a sport or a legitimate source of making money. I think a lot of people look at it as those are hobbies and pastimes and and waste of time. And so, like why are people getting paid for this.

Line 61-65: I would venture to say probably an established path, chosen path, that has been around for, you know, more than a few years. So you know any of the different markets, degrees, engineering computers, whether it's real estate or military or whatever something like that is kind of an established path that's that. You know, people can take an Esports doesn't seem to fit the mold or unless it's new it's newer and new enough that it hasn't made its way into the mold yet.

Line 70-73: They see the word You know video game, or just game in general, and equate that to a random pastime that kids do. It's something for children, it's a waste of time it's not a legitimate, what's the right word, like, mostly just a waste

Line 118-120: Having an interest in love for these kinds of things. I would love to help them get there. And so, you know, joining them on that mission would be incredibly exciting.

Line 128-130: I think typically what I've seen and experiences there's those kids who don't fit the mold of football player or a choir student or, you know, pro wrestler or something along those lines and they find their niche with video games.

Line 106-108: I think if I had a student, honestly came up and that was their serious, no messing around answer. I think I'd be impressed. I think I would be intrigued.

Line 154-156: I mean, there would be a part of me that was that would think we can try this but let's also come up with a backup today.

Appendix J

Manuscript I: Participant Experiential Themes (PET) Tables

Esports Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lack of knowledge • Limited awareness of competition • Training is lacking • Limited awareness of potential scholarship opportunities • Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	Line 27-28: I think, honestly, and me included, like, I don't know, I didn't know that there is a career you have in those fields. Line 105-109: In all of like my grad school classes that focused on career I don't remember esports being mentioned at all. And I think in my education, it's still like being a counselor I'm supposed to be like a professional on career development and getting these kids connected with what they want to do, um but the classes that we take are pretty vague and pretty general and don't teach us like how you work with those kids that want to get into esports.

Esports Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Views esports for younger people • Potentially negative due to lack of physical activity • Potentially negative due to lack of specific skill set • Ranking of career choices	Line 78-80: So, esports is like interesting to me just because it isn't as like physically active as other sports, but working in a high school I know that some kids don't like being physically active or doing those types of sports. Line 137-142: And I feel like it's very conservative and based on previous traditions like things don't change so boys play basketball, football, baseball. Um, those are the sports like those are the most popular things. And I think when I was growing up, and I know I'm not old, but like eSports with just coming up. And like my parents I know at least, my dad didn't consider like a video game a sport, because he thinks sports are what he grew up in, in very stuck in the past.
3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Counselor identity leads to support student • Values professional identity • Values student interest as a part of professional identity	Line 85-87: I'm in full support of it. Even though I don't like enjoy, like gaming. That doesn't make me not encourage my students to do it or get them connected with someone that can help them.

Esports Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 196-197: I get a little disheartened, and have to figure out a way to have help them develop a more solidified plan. Line 210-211: I feel like it's my job for them to have a plan after high school and if they don't have a solid plan, I fell like I did not do my job.
4) A sense of attempting to justify the validity of esports as a career choice	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Relates esports to technology • Experiences validity of esports related to visibility as an Olympic sport • Notices a cultural change with regard to technology use	Line 36-40: I don't know if that's specific for like streaming games, whatever they do on there. But we do have an Esports team that's been successful this year, I don't, and then we have a computer science program, but that feels like coding and stuff, I have had probably one or two students that have expressed interest in like game development. Line 48-51: So, if they are interested in that, I connect them with either our computer science teacher or the Community College and I'm all for it, just because I know our worlds becoming digital like we already are.

Esports Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 52-53: the only knowledge that I really give them that I've heard it may be going into the Olympics and that we have our team.
5) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Desire to connect students to others in the field • Learns about new career opportunities by self	Line 53-55: I always support them in whatever they want to do but I try and refer them to someone who knows more. Line 85-87: I'm in full support of it. Even though I don't like enjoy, like gaming. That doesn't make me not encourage my students to do it or get them connected with someone that can help them. Line 112-113: So, any information that I want to get I have to get on my own. Line 167-169: So, if a kid is passionate about something and they want to make a career out of it then we just go forward and move with a plan and I don't like I think it's great because they have something they're

Esports Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Awareness of financial opportunities • Training is lacking • Limited awareness of potential scholarship opportunities • Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	Line 5-7: I know a little bit about eSports, and what I do know is actually pretty limited to our school because we actually just because created a gaming esports team, and we actually did really well. So I have limited knowledge. Line 59: I did know that there are scholarships available just like traditional athletes.
2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Views esports for younger people • Potentially negative due to lack of physical activity • Classifies video gaming as a hobby • Sees esports as an activity that someone does regularly for enjoyment rather than work	Line 81-83: I feel before society, kind of, there were, it wasn't really like widely accepted anything about video games, as far as doing that for a career or even like a side career thing was not really accepted.

Esports Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 90-94: We are more technologically advanced than we have been and it's time that we start preparing futures and careers that are along those lines. And I think that's part of the reason why you know older generations are getting older and younger generations are getting older and the younger generations now kind of maneuvering, the workforce for us.
3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Counselor identity leads to support student • Values professional identity • Values student interests as part of the professional dyad	Line 60-63: Maybe it's the counselor in me but it's I don't really have an opinion one way or another, I think it's just a career field that if a student is genuinely interested in then it's my job as someone that's guiding them to do more research into that.
4) A sense of attempting to justify the validity of esports as a career choice	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Relates esports to technology • Notices a cultural change with regard to technology use • COVID changed societal view of how we use technology on a daily basis • COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology	Line 90: I just think people have a hard time accepting change and the world is changing. Line 170-171: I don't really have a stereotype or perception and I think it could just be anyone who has a passion for that sport or that game.

Esports Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 210-212: we started talking about oh this is an actual activity that students can perform well and do well in its COVID safe, which is a big part for us this year.
5) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Learns about new career opportunities by self • Values student interests as part of the professional dyad	Line 177-178: : I mean, I'll be honest, I probably feel really incompetent because I don't know a whole lot, but I'm kind of just on that journey anyways this is my first year ever working in a high school.

Esports Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lacks knowledge • Limited awareness of potential undergraduate opportunities • Lack of knowledge of financial opportunities • Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	Line 77-79: I don't. I know I feel like you kind of have to have a little familiarity with, with this like what's happening in general. And so having kids myself and, but working with kids all from all over just being in those conversations.
2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Views esports for younger people • Negative stigma due to its lack of physical activity when compared to traditional sports	Line 103-105: You know that kind of perception like, how can this be a sport you're just, you know, whatever, you know, you're just playing a game there?

Esports Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Counselor identity leads to support student	Line 289-293: I think it just, if a student talked to me about being interested in esports again I think I would I go about how I can support that student like what are our next steps as a team like how can I, how can I help you learn more about what you want to do, and will that help you make your decision and you know in your career choice.
4) A sense of attempting to justify the validity of esports as a career choice	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Relates esports to technology • Understands popularity of video games • Sees esports as a gateway into other career fields • Views esports as a way to gain access to undergraduate education	Line 62-64: I feel like there, there are a lot of opportunities that are opening up. Maybe not necessarily connected hundred percent to gaming but it is opening up whole avenue of possible opportunities. Line 80-82: I know it grew even more over the whole COVID thing because that was the one way that kids were able to connect with each other and adults was through just the electronic sports. Line 118-119: I almost feel like there are so many more people that actually game then maybe don't game that it's maybe it could be growing that way to.

Esports Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 173-176: The other side of that there's a lot of problem solving, a lot of teamwork, a lot of collaboration so I feel like it provides all of those things, actually, just like any other kind of just like any other kind of activity.
5) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Values student interests as part of the professional dyad • Desire to connect students to others in the field • Genuine desire to want students to do what they are passionate about • Meet students where they are • Wanting students to be successful in a chosen career path	Line 93-95: How one interest can open up all of these other doors as well, but I feel like philosophically approaching it from that standpoint and letting students know that there's this flexibility in career choices. Line 183-184: So if it is about going into esports or towards gaming, then I'm going to help them make connections with experiences that they can that can help them take that next step. Line 244-247: Students will come in at any point and, and I'm always amazed about what they, their interests are, and most the time it doesn't align to whatever

Esports Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			preconceived notion I might have any way. So, I kind of just like to meet them where they are and help them with those steps, if that makes sense. Line 279-280: and I think that's the fun part about being a counselor is to learning, you know, learning about the students, and what their interests are and helping them get directed.

Esports Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	I know about esports from my own research. I ask the students a bazillion questions.
2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Does not understand the attraction of esports to the student population • Sees esports for a younger population • Stigmatizes esports due to a lack of producing something for the greater society	When I heard students say they wanted to do esports as a career, my first thought was, "Are you serious?" That was my first thought about 5 years ago. My main concern is why do you want this? Is it the instant gratification? Is it the likes? Is it

Esports Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			something that is a new trend? Is it something that all the cool kids are doing? Line 151-153: Boomers don't get it. A majority of students in my area are being raised by their grandparents. My niece that is 10 watches YouTube and my parents don't understand. But I would say the boomer generation doesn't quite understand. Line 157-158: But it's hard to beat societal constructs of what a career is especially when you start talking about egames and igaming. Line 161-163: It's a game so it's just it's new and normally when something is new, there's some pushback there because especially with a middle-class societal norm is go to college get a job right.
3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Counselor identity leads to support student • Values the professional identity • Values the role of the career counselor	That led me to wanting to research this and figure out what this was all about. Line 205-208: I'm very aware of and how I may view things from my point of view in life but I can't do that and do my job effectively and so whether it's

Esports Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			gaming, whether it's horticulture, I am a captive audience and I wanna know what it is and then what I can do to help facilitate that. Line 211-212: But that's not in particular to gaming but I just learned in my career you can't have preconceived notions about a kid walking in your office. Otherwise, I can't do my job effectively or I don't need to be in this position.
4) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Unconditional support of students • Wanting students to be successful in a chosen career path • Very curious and nonjudgmental	Line 101-105: That is gaining more interest, and I've always heard I want to be a gamer, and I, they're big heavy into having their YouTube channels and watching other people play like recording it and watching. And like they know who plays these games. They know their names, they know how much they earn, they know they know enough, they know, like they know egames, the way I know Dave Matthews Band songs, I mean it's like, you know? What is the intention behind this? Why do you want to do this?

Esports Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lacks knowledge • Limited awareness of potential undergraduate opportunities • Lack of knowledge of financial opportunities • Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	Line 19-23: Well, I mean it's brand new. This is something that is, you know, in the 21st century is brand new to the world. You know things like farming things you know like working in banks that's all been there for a while, those are established positions esports is something that no one really knows a whole lot about. It's, it's brand new, you know if you think about it, when I was when I was a kid, I would have never thought of playing video games for a living. Line 44-47: I'm learning about this as a career choice, as I'm going through it. I'm learning things about computers and all of that, it's um it's different for sure. And it's not something that I'm really. I'm, I'm not the most knowledgeable about it, but I understand kids I understand that this is a great thing for kids to be a part of.

Esports Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

| 2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports. | This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field. | • Negative stigma due to its lack of physical activity when compared to traditional sports
• Parental view of esports is negative
• Marginalizes students due to negative view of characteristics needed to be successful
• Sees esports athletes as introverts | Line 94-97: I had kids that you know wanted to be a part of Esports but their parents didn't understand what it was. They didn't quite understand that, you know, there's college scholarships out there and there's a lot of them to actually.

Line 100-103: For the most part the reception was good but there are those people that are more traditional you can't call it a sport blah blah blah blah blah. You know and to those people it's it, they just don't understand it. You know, it's like when people say golf isn't a sport. They just don't understand the skills needed for those games.

Line 108-109: One thing is that most people attribute playing video games being lazy, that you don't want to do anything, that kind of stuff. |
| 3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice. | This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice. | • Counselor identity leads to support student
• Explores new career opportunities through self-education and exploration | Line 44-47: I'm learning about this as a career choice, as I'm going through it. I'm learning things about computers and all of that, it's um it's different for sure. And it's not something that I'm really. I'm, I'm not the most knowledgeable about it, but I |

Esports Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			understand kids I understand that this is a great thing for kids to be a part of.
4) A sense of attempting to justify the validity of esports as a career choice	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Experiences esports as a new career pathway • Growing in popularity • An additional career option for student • Views esports as inclusive to those not able to participate in other physical activities • Awareness of growth in popularity	Line 69: Esports just became a sanctioned activity. Line 81-83: So they're very supportive of things that most people consider you know to be something that's not athletic, so more activity based. Line 130-132: You know they see this as like something people actually do, they're really this good a this that they are getting paid to play video games just like a professional athlete. Line 110-115: There's these huge online communities of people from all different walks of life that come together and they play a game together. That's really what it is. It's almost like a giant arena where there's a bunch of people that you would never have a chance to meet without, Without this kind of an outlet. You know because you at any time you can be playing with people from China, people from Korea, people from Jamaica,

Esports Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			London, all in the same game. The only other place that you really see that kind of like competition is something like the Olympics. Line 83-84: You can be in a wheelchair and play eSports right. There's endless opportunities to do that. Line 91-92: It was a real bright spot for our school this year, especially with all the COVID stuff, and all of that.
5) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Wants students to be happy • Desire for students to be passionate • Engages in playing video games to stay connected to youth • Feels anxious due to potential for failure • Feels sadness • Feels blessed to work with students pursuing a new career pathway	Line 29-31: I'm hopeful that it keeps growing the way that it does that we then you know my kids now are able to enjoy the things that that make them happy, things that they're passionate about, passionate, and happy. Line 52-55: For the most part it's just been just doing what I feel is right by my kids…to give them the best opportunity possible. Line 169-171: There is some anxiety that comes with it because you know, because this

Esports Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			is brand new, there's not really a whole lot of teams, means that competition for some of these positions can be rather steep. Line 172-175: It's different, you know, watching them grow up and do all that because the kids that really started this eSports team were my first class that I had when I started at Sierra High School. So there's kind of an emotional connection between me and those kids. At least between me anyways like those are my babies in my eyes. Line 179-183: I'm hopeful for him that he's able to achieve those dreams and be able to you know be one of the first kids that able to graduate, going to school for on an esports scholarship that that would be awesome to be able to say that you know that we had someone that was able to do that. Line 255-256: I'm blessed to be there. I am truly blessed to be given this opportunity, and something that's brand new, something that is you know up and coming.

Esports Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) A sense of limited job-specific knowledge about nontraditional careers particularly esports within the counseling profession.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lacks knowledge • Limited awareness of potential undergraduate opportunities • Lack of knowledge of financial opportunities • Generalized training in the area of specific career requirements	Line 28-29: My first thought is it's gonna be tough. I don't know a ton about the field I know some. And from what I do know. It seems like it's a pretty small community. Line 40-43: I have not looked into that as a career option I have looked into it as far as like school clubs go to help, maybe push them into the collegiate space, but I have not looked into it.
2) A sense of marginalization of student within the counseling profession due to stigma of esports.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in esports due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Esports are too challenging and difficult to break through • Not a realistic career option • Marginalizes esports due to the differences from physical sports • Society wants predictable and established career pathways that give back to the greater good	Line 55-57: I think society as a whole doesn't view it as a sport or a legitimate source of making money. I think a lot of people look at it as those are hobbies and pastimes and and waste of time. And so, like why are people getting paid for this.

Esports Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			Line 61-65: I would venture to say probably an established path, chosen path, that has been around for, you know, more than a few years. So you know any of the different markets, degrees, engineering computers, whether it's real estate or military or whatever something like that is kind of an established path that's that. You know, people can take an Esports doesn't seem to fit the mold or unless it's new it's newer and new enough that it hasn't made its way into the mold yet. Line 70-73: They see the word You know video game, or just game in general, and equate that to a random pastime that kids do. It's something for children, it's a waste of time it's not a legitimate, what's the right word, like, mostly just a waste.
3) Professional identity and values of career counselor guides and motivates positive interaction around a challenging career choice.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Counselor identity leads to support student • Explores new career opportunities through self-education and exploration	Line 118-120: Having an interest in love for these kinds of things. I would love to help them get there. And so, you know, joining them on that mission would be incredibly exciting.

Esports Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

4) A sense of attempting to justify the validity of esports as a career choice	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Views esports as inclusive to those not able to participate in other physical activities • Awareness of growth in popularity	Line 128-130: I think typically what I've seen and experiences there's those kids who don't fit the mold of football player or a choir student or, you know, pro wrestler or something along those lines and they find their niche with video games.
5) Navigating the professional relationship with students	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Sees working with students intriguing • Sees students as brave for pursuing a nontraditional career pathway	Line 106-108: I think if if I had a student, honestly came up and that was their serious, no messing around answer. I think I'd be impressed. I think I would be intrigued. Line 154-156: I mean, there would be a part of me that was that would think we can try this but let's also come up with a backup today.

Appendix K

Manuscript II: Initial Read Through Reflective Notes

Transcript 1

She compares igaming to professional sports and feels that students won't be good enough.

Uses the term "back-up" plan. Feels it is more important in igaming than in esports.

No training on the topic. Again references her vague graduate studies.

Again she fits igaming into a traditional profession sports and highlights how unrealistic this is.

She laughs and I laugh.

She asks me a question about poker being igaming. She wants to be sure she is accurate and on point.

She uses the word gamble. Her voice changed.

Igaming = gambling

- "I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling."

She shares a personal story about playing poker when her family gets together for the Holidays and that she would go to casinos to watch her boyfriend play blackjack.

I ask her about the goal of a career. She talks about making money as a primary goal.

This is a difficult part of the interview because she seems defensive and guarded on the topic. Maybe it is because of her lack of knowledge or inability to freely talk on the topic.

She wants her students to be successful.

Uses the word "nerve racking". She clearly cares about her students and wants the nest for them.

Igaming = risk

She takes a very analytic perspective to career choice.

Pessimistic, worried, nerve-racking when a student wants to go into something that she doesn't know a lot about.

- "I just get nervous for my kids a lot."

She calls them "my kids" like a sense of ownership.

She also wants to be successful in her position. She mentions the desire to be proud.

She is proud when they show up to school and when they get into college.

Transcript 2

Is the career doable and stable? Experiences the phenomenon through a series of steps that must be accomplished.

- "Any time a student brings any career to me. I just want to make sure that it's doable, and maybe stable would be the right word."

Careers are a source of income and is igaming a sustainable and stable source of income.

Questioning the viability of the career.

No personal experience with the phenomenon.

Experiences the phenomenon through family interactions and classifies this action as a hobby.

Experiences the phenomenon as a negative/taboo in society.

- "Igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society."

Does not feel that igaming on the whole is discussed much or is as popular as esports.

Questions legality.

Taboo = gambling = stigma = huge risk

Gives examples of other career choices that are not acceptable in our society or "looked down upon".

Very supportive of the student's choice.

- "I will be on the students page as much as I can be as long as they're not harming themselves or others."

Offers support to the student as part of the counselor role.

Unconditionally accepts student's choices as part of the counselor role.

- "It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out."

Experiences exhaustion in career counseling.

Exciting and rewarding when the connection between passion and career is made.

Sees career as a function of contributing to society and earning an income. Questions the phenomenon as maybe not encompassing these characteristics.

Makes a connection between igaming and income. Makes the statement that igaming may not be suitable for low-income individuals.

Igaming is inconsistent with the push for college and post-secondary education.

Puts student's wishes first and foremost.

Sees role of counselor as a n advocate for student's that make less desirable career choices.

Transcript 3

Lack of knowledge of career. Unaware.

Makes the connection between igaming and gambling. Makes the connection between gambling and addiction.

Igaming = addiction.

Requires a special skill set. A type of personality.

No formal training or education on the topic.

Experiencing the phenomena through a pandemic viewpoint. That COVID increased the usage of technology and mobile applications.

Sees society as neutral on the topic.

Sees the need to consult with others when confronted with uncertainty.

Work collaboratively with the student to gain more knowledge on the topic. Complete steps towards success.

- "I would be curious myself and want to dive into the research with the student, to kind of get some more information and just be a guiding factor into that student's ideas; So, it's more of a team approach for sure."

Sees administration as open-minded and supportive of students when the students are passionate about a project.

Transcript 4

When asked about her experiences with igaming, she is quickly able to present several reflection questions she would pose to her students that would assist in their thought processes and perhaps validate their career choice.

She expressed that much of her thoughts are rooted in a middle-class upbringing. She defines this as focusing on long-term financials to include health care, retirement, and the ability to provide a living wage.

Would rather her students choose plumbing.

She appears to struggle when talking about gambling as a career choice and the various views that surround the topic from a society view, religiosity view, and generational view.

I agree with her that there is a stigma around gambling in our culture.

She then tells a story about her family and their involvement in gambling. She says her experience allows her to be more openminded. I can see her approach to this topic is open and counterculture.

She puts the student's desire top pursue igaming over the potential risks (i.e. addiction). She feels that she can have an in-depth discussion on the traits that go along with successful igaming.

I agree that there are traits that lead one toward success in this area and career choice.

She is very expressive.

She has a strong opinion about the topic.

She sometimes feels that her surroundings do not support various career choices because they are rooted in religion and conservative politic vies and values.

This seems to be a theme around the societal views of igaming and gambling.

Transcript 5

He is a 26 year-old, white male that has been working as a high school counselor for 4 years. Right away he details his qualifications and experience in the field.

I feel like this interview is going to be challenging due to his experience and what feels like a reluctance to want to be participating; even though he volunteered.

Does not have much experience or exposure to igaming.

He states that he is learning as he goes. Admits a vulnerability.

Very supportive of his students.

Especially, around working with other teachers and staff.

As we start talking more and more, we both become relaxed and start to flow. This conversation feels very natural.

He states that video games are more of a hobby versus a way to make money.

He clearly takes a lot of pride in his involvement with the individual student-athletes.

He says "my kids" a lot. He has a sense of ownership and responsibility for the choices of his students.

Does not see igaming in his daily activities.

He states that he has no knowledge of igaming personally or professionally.

He later states that he has seen commercials for sports-betting and online poker.

Appears to be a reluctance to discuss igaming.

Says he does not support the activity itself, but supports his students.

I am not sure why he slowed down his responses when we shifted to igaming. I wish I would of asked him more directly about what I was sensing during the interview or at least clarifies some of my feels or perceived observations.

Transcript 6

He presents very knowledgeable on the topic from the start. He has a great deal of experience working in the career counseling field.

Understand the limitations of the career pathway based on small numbers.

He seems to be thinking about his answers. Long pauses. Slow and measured responses.

Provides limited information on his perceptions and I find myself having to ask several follow-up questions.

He provides this interviewer with positive feedback. He says, "great question".

He is really searching for responses. Says "um" repeatedly.

I use reflection to try to get him settled into the responses.

He shifts when taking about his own experience with gaming. He has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to gaming.

He has a very strong professional identity and he clearly supports the choices of this students.

Very energetic and the rhythm of the interview seems to be gaining and flowing better.

Appears more relaxed and less anxious about his responses.

He is very expressive and has a strong opinion on the topic.

Very likeable.

Smooth transition into talking about igaming. However, he is initially confused on the definition, so we spend some time reviewing the definition and giving examples.

He sees the connection between esports and igaming.

Discusses igaming from the perspective of gambling.

Presents negative and bias on igaming.

Appendix L

Manuscript II: Transcript Read Through Coded Notes

Transcript 1

Views igaming as challenging and highly improbable. Again, mentions having a back-up plan or Plan B.

Again, sees career as being accomplished in a series of steps or objectives. Unfamiliar with the steps required for igaming but assumes there are steps to being successful.

No formal training on igaming as a career choice. Reflects back to school course work and lack of specific career field being discussed. Vague overview of career choice and decision making.

More respected due to prevalence on television.

Uses the word "gamble" and comments that this is more mainstream as a societal practice.

Associates the behavior with gambling. Begins to discuss the negatives of gambling. Personal connection with the behavior.

- "I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling."

Goal directed. Goal to make money. Just like other sports.

Hope. Desire for students to have affinity for career choice.

Supportive. Role of counselor to be supportive.

Back-up plan due to risk of career choice.

Does not believe that students can be successful pursuing professional sports or entertainment. Realistic viewpoint based on probability.

Conflicted between personal and professional viewpoints.

Conflicted. Feelings of stress and increased responsibility to the student.

Compassion for students.

Desire to see students be successful. Not knowing about success rates in igaming. Confusion.

Empirical approach to career decision making process.

Emotional connection to students.

Emotional connection: pride.

Belief that many (administration and staff) would be supportive of igaming but has not observed this.

- Correlates addiction to igaming due to the gambling aspect. "I know gambling addiction is a big thing. And making sure that they're safe with it, since they are teenagers, they're

susceptible to that adrenaline rush."

Transcript 2

Is the career doable and stable? Experiences the phenomenon through a series of steps that must be accomplished.

- "Any time a student brings any career to me. I just want to make sure that it's doable, and maybe stable would be the right word."

Careers are a source of income and is igaming a sustainable and stable source of income.

Questioning the viability of the career.

No personal experience with the phenomenon.

Experiences the phenomenon through family interactions and classifies this action as a hobby.

Experiences the phenomenon as a negative/taboo in society.

- "Igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society."

Does not feel that igaming on the whole is discussed much or is as popular as esports.

Questions legality.

Taboo = gambling = stigma = huge risk

Gives examples of other career choices that are not acceptable in our society or "looked down upon".

Very supportive of the student's choice.

- "I will be on the students page as much as I can be as long as they're not harming themselves or others."

Offers support to the student as part of the counselor role.

Unconditionally accepts student's choices as part of the counselor role.

- "It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out."

Experiences exhaustion in career counseling.

Exciting and rewarding when the connection between passion and career is made.

Sees career as a function of contributing to society and earning an income. Questions the phenomenon as maybe not encompassing these characteristics.

Makes a connection between igaming and income. Makes the statement that igaming may not be suitable for low-income individuals.

Igaming is inconsistent with the push for college and post-secondary education.

Puts student's wishes first and foremost.

Sees role of counselor as a n advocate for student's that make less desirable career choices.

Transcript 3

Lack of knowledge of career. Unaware.

Makes the connection between igaming and gambling. Makes the connection between gambling and addiction.

Igaming = addiction.

Requires a special skill set. A type of personality.

No formal training or education on the topic.

Experiencing the phenomena through a pandemic viewpoint. That COVID increased the usage of technology and mobile applications.

Sees society as neutral on the topic.

Sees the need to consult with others when confronted with uncertainty.

Work collaboratively with the student to gain more knowledge on the topic. Complete steps towards success.

- "I would be curious myself and want to dive into the research with the student, to kind of get some more information and just be a guiding factor into that student's ideas; So, it's more of a team approach for sure."

Sees administration as open-minded and supportive of students when the students are passionate about a project.

Transcript 4

Feels that igaming is more suited for a student that possesses a quantitative mindset.

A student pursuing igaming as a career choice must be personable, sociable, and understand psychology.

Mentions a bias coming from a middle-class perspective. This dictates the conversation she has with students and focuses around lifestyle, benefits, and retirement.

Happiness is important in career choice.

Career choice comes down to three key areas: happiness, strengths, and success. Can igaming provide one with all three?

Views the phenomenon through the gambling lens and believes that the culture might lean towards being something more negative. Personally, she does not have any issue with igaming or the career choice.

Igaming = gambling = addiction

Sees igaming as a "cool" career choice.

Experiences the phenomenon as a series of questions for the student and understanding the attributes it takes to make igaming a viable career choice.

Concerned that student's choice for igaming will not be supported by those around them (i.e. parents) and worries for them.

Need for a Plan B.

Sees part of her job as knowing what is an option for them and exposing them to various careers early and often.

Exposure and experience are keys to career choice.

Does not experience much support from staff and administration in the area of igaming and career choice.

A lot of society/political pressure to offer certain careers over others and feels igaming struggles on many levels to gain acceptance socially and politically.

Transcript 5

Experiences the phenomenon as a new pathway.

Not a lot is known about the phenomenon due to the newness.

Experiences the phenomenon as growing and allowing more opportunities for students to pursue a career that makes them happy and they are passionate about.

No formal training or education on the phenomenon.

Experiences administration as not supportive due to stigma.

Problematic due to association with gambling and possible addictive nature.

Many do not see it as a viable career option due to risk.

Lacks contribution to society.

Experiences a negative stigma from many in society.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon through friends and colleagues.

Personal experience and knowledge.

Experiences anxiety due to the risk associated with the phenomenon.

Feels that it could be difficult to break through and be successful.

Lacks profitability.

Needs a plan B.

Strong emotional connection to the students. Wants them to be successful.

Expresses hope for students that are interested in pursuing igaming as a career choice.

Perceives the phenomenon as taking a special set of skills and not for everyone.

Sees students pursuing careers in igaming as risk takers and adrenaline seekers.

Wants students to be passionate about career choice.

Transcript 6

Experiences the phenomenon as gambling. Negative viewpoint towards igaming as a career choice.

Would have a difficult time support the decision and would be hesitant.

Sees career as putting in time and making a salary or wage.

Little risk.

Igaming is risking money up front without a guaranteed outcome.

Experiences the phenomenon personally through a friend that participates in igaming as a career.

Considered it more fun than a career. Hobby.

Society has negative image of igaming.

Society sees career as contributing to the society as a whole and igaming does not seem to meet this criterion.

Igaming is individual and society views career as contributing on the macro level.

Equates igaming with addiction. More possibility of problem behavior.

Career pathways require a clear and concise plan for success.

Feelings of nervousness working with a student pursuing igaming as a career choice. Personal bias.

Feels igaming conflicts with professional role and goal of career counseling.

Sees counselor role as preparing students for every aspect of their career choice. Having a clear plan.

Sees the phenomenon of igaming as growing in popularity and becoming more of a reality.

Experiences two students that would be likely to pursue igaming. These are the adrenaline junkies and the super analytical/organized. Oranges and Golds, from the Four Lenses.

Feels that the administration would not be that supportive of igaming as an extracurricular activity on campus.

When working with a student that is considering igaming as a career choice, the counselor feels skeptical due to lack of knowledge on the topic and feeling unprepared to properly counsel the student.

Appendix M

Manuscript II: Transcript Coded Notes with Abstraction

Transcript 1

Views igaming as challenging and highly improbable. Again mentions having a back-up plan or Plan B. Plan B is needed for risky careers including igaming.

Again, sees career has being accomplished in a series of steps or objectives. Unfamiliar with the steps required for igaming, but assumes there are steps to being successful. Follows training on general career counseling.

No formal training on igaming as a career choice. Reflects back to school course work and lack of specific career field being discussed. Vague overview of career choice and decision making. Training is general.

More respected due to prevalence on television. Experiences validity of igaming related to visibility on television and mass media.

Uses the word "gamble" and comments that this is more mainstream as a societal practice. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Associates the behavior with gambling. Begins to discuss the negatives of gambling. Personal connection with the behavior. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

- "I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling."

Goal directed. Goal to make money. Just like other sports.

Hope. Desire for students to have affinity for career choice. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Supportive. Role of counselor to be supportive. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Back-up plan due to risk of career choice. Plan B is needed for risky careers including igaming.

Does not believe that students can be successful pursuing professional sports or entertainment. Realistic view point based on probability. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Conflicted between personal and professional view points. Awareness of conflict between personal and professional values.

Conflicted. Feelings of stress and increased responsibility to the student. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Compassion for students. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Desire to see students be successful. Not knowing about success rates in igaming. Confusion. Feels mixed emotions because choice may not be realistic.

Empirical approach to career decision making process. Follows training on general career counseling.

Emotional connection to students. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Emotional connection: pride. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Belief that many (administration and staff) would be supportive of igaming, but has not observed this. Lack of knowledge

Correlates addiction to igaming due to the gambling aspect. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

- "I know gambling addiction is a big thing. And making sure that they're safe with it, since they are teenagers they're susceptible to that adrenaline rush."

Transcript 2

Is the career doable and stable? Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Experiences the phenomenon through a series of steps that must be accomplished. Follows training on general career counseling

- "Any time a student brings any career to me. I just want to make sure that it's doable, and maybe stable would be the right word."

Careers are a source of income and is igaming a sustainable and stable source of income. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic

Questioning the viability of the career. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

No personal experience with the phenomenon. Lacks knowledge.

Experiences the phenomenon through family interactions and classifies this action as a hobby. Relates igaming to a hobby or pastime.

Experiences the phenomenon as a negative/taboo in society. Awareness of attempts to marginalize students and stigma.

- "Igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society."

Does not feel that igaming on a whole is discussed much or is as popular as esports. Lacks popularity in culture.

Questions legality. Views igaming as potentially negative due to lack of legality in various states.

Taboo = gambling = stigma = huge risk Awareness of attempts to marginalize students and stigma.

Gives examples of other career choices that are not acceptable in our society or "looked down upon". Awareness of attempts to marginalize students and stigma. Shows a ranking of career choices and some being more achievable and more acceptable than others. Student's interests are marginalized.

Very supportive of the student's choice. Counselor identity leads them to support the student.

- "I will be on the students page as much as I can be as long as they're not harming themselves or others."

Offers support to the student as part of the counselor role. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Unconditionally accepts student's choices as part of the counselor role. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

- "It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out."

Experiences exhaustion in career counseling. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Exciting and rewarding when the connection between passion and career is made. Values career counseling.

Sees career as a function of contributing to society and earning an income. Questions the phenomenon as maybe not encompassing these characteristics. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career. Marginalizes igaming due to its lack of productivity.

Makes a connection between igaming and income. Makes the statement that igaming may not be suitable for low-income individuals. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Igaming is inconsistent with the push for college and post-secondary education. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

Puts student's wishes first and foremost. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Sees role of counselor as a n advocate for student's that make less desirable career choices. Values career counseling. Counselor identity leads them to support student.

Transcript 3

Lack of knowledge of career. Unaware. Lacks knowledge.

Makes the connection between igaming and gambling. Makes the connection between gambling and addiction. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Igaming = addiction. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Requires a special skill set. A type of personality. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

No formal training or education on the topic. Training is lacking.

Experiencing the phenomena through a pandemic view point. That COVID increased the usage of technology and mobile applications. COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology.

Sees society as neutral on the topic. Experiences validity of igaming related to cultural change and acceptance.

Sees the need to consult with others when confronted with uncertainty. Wants to connect students to others who can help.

Work collaboratively with the student to gain more knowledge on the topic. Complete steps towards success. Follows training on general career counseling.

- "I would be curious myself and want to dive into the research with the student, to kind of get some more information and just be a guiding factor into that student's ideas; So, it's more of a team approach for sure."

Sees administration as open-minded and supportive of students when the students are passionate about a project. Wanting students to do what they want and succeed.

Transcript 4

Feels that igaming is more suited for a student that possesses a quantitative mindset. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

A student pursuing igaming as a career choice must be personable, sociable, and understand psychology. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Mentions a bias coming from a middle-class perspective. This dictates the conversation she has with students and focuses around lifestyle, benefits, and retirement. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Happiness is important in career choice. Follows training on general career counseling.

Career choice comes down to three key areas: happiness, strengths, and success. Can igaming provide one with all three? Follows training on general career counseling.

Views the phenomenon through the gambling lens and believes that the culture might lean towards being something more negative. Personally, she does not have any issue with igaming or the career choice. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Igaming = gambling = addiction Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Sees igaming as a "cool" career choice. Views igaming as potentially positive.

Experiences the phenomenon as a series of questions for the student and understanding the attributes it takes to make igaming a viable career choice. Follows training on general career counseling.

Concerned that student's choice for igaming will not be supported by those around them (i.e. parents) and worries for them. Feels anxious and sad because choice may not be realistic.

Need for a Plan B. Plan B is needed for risky careers including igaming.

Sees part of her job as knowing what is an option for them and exposing them to various careers early and often. Values career counseling.

Exposure and experience are keys to career choice. Follows training on general career counseling.

Does not experience much support from staff and administration in the area of igaming and career choice. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

A lot of society/political pressure to offer certain careers over others and feels igaming struggles on many levels to gain acceptance socially and politically. Views igaming as potentially negative due to lack of social support. Some careers are more acceptable. Shows a ranking of career choices and some being more achievable than others.

Transcript 5

Experiences the phenomenon as a new pathway. Views igaming as potentially positive due to newness and opportunities.

Not a lot is known about the phenomenon due to the newness. Marginalizes igaming due to lack of knowledge.

Experiences the phenomenon as growing and allowing more opportunities for students to pursue a career that makes them happy and they are passionate about. Views igaming as potentially positive due to newness and opportunities.

No formal training or education on the phenomenon. Training is lacking.

Experiences administration as not supportive due to stigma. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

Problematic due to association with gambling and possible addictive nature. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Many do not see it as a viable career option due to risk. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Lacks contribution to society. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career. Marginalizes igaming due to its lack of productivity.

Experiences a negative stigma from many in society. Awareness of attempts to marginalize students and stigma.

Has a personal connection with the phenomenon through friends and colleagues. Personal experience with igaming.

Personal experience and knowledge. Personal experience with igaming.

Experiences anxiety due to the risk associated with the phenomenon. Feels anxious and sad because choice may not be realistic.

Feels that it could be difficult to break through and be successful. Feels anxious and sad because choice may not be realistic.

Lacks profitability. Feels anxious and sad because choice may not be realistic.

Needs a plan B. Plan B is needed for risky careers including igaming.

Strong emotional connection to the students. Wants them to be successful. Follows training on general career counseling.

Expresses hope for students that are interested in pursuing igaming as a career choice. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Perceives the phenomenon as taking a special set of skills and not for everyone. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Sees students pursuing careers in igaming as risk takers and adrenaline seekers. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Wants students to be passionate about career choice. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Transcript 6

Experiences the phenomenon as gambling. Negative viewpoint towards igaming as a career choice. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Would have a difficult time support the decision and would be hesitant. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Sees career as putting in time and making a salary or wage. Marginalizes igaming due to nontraditional career. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career.

Little risk. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Igaming is risking money up front without a guaranteed outcome. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Experiences the phenomenon personally through a friend that participates in igaming as a career. Personal experience with igaming.

Considered it more fun than a career. Hobby. Marginalizes igaming due to nontraditional career. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career. Relates igaming to a hobby or pastime.

Society has negative image of igaming. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career.

Society sees career as contributing to the society as a whole and igaming does not seem to meet this criteria. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career.

Igaming is individual and society views career as contributing on the macro level. Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career.

Equates igaming with addiction. More possibility of problem behavior. Views igaming as potentially negative due to the risk associated with gambling.

Career pathways require a clear and concise plan for success. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Feelings of nervousness working with a student pursuing igaming as a career choice. Personal bias. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic.

Feels igaming conflicts with professional role and goal of career counseling. Counselor identity leads them to feel conflicted in working with igaming students.

Sees counselor role as preparing students for every aspect of their career choice. Having a clear plan. Follows training on general career counseling.

Sees the phenomenon of igaming as growing in popularity and becoming more of a reality. Awareness of popularity.

Experiences two students that would be likely to pursue igaming. These are the adrenaline junkies and the super analytical/organized. Oranges and Golds, from the Four Lenses. Marginalizes igaming due to inaccessibility by some.

Feels that the administration would not be that supportive of igaming as an extracurricular activity on campus. Administrative context marginalizes as career.

When working with a student that is considering igaming as a career choice, the counselor feels skeptical due to lack of knowledge on the topic and feeling unprepared to properly counsel the student. Feels anxious or sad because choice may not be realistic. Lack of knowledge.

Views happiness as very important in choosing a career. Values student interest as a part of self and professional identity.

Appendix N

Manuscript II: Significant Participant Quotes

Transcript 1

Line 289-290: I do not have any (laughs). And I think just being in grad school and doing those career development classes, and I said earlier how they're kind of vague and more general.

Line 300-301: But for the sport I'm familiar with I know at least some of the steps but for igaming, I don't know any.

Line 320: I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling.

Line 341-342: I mean, mine is a helping profession, so I just, I do it to help people and help kids succeed.

Line 352-256: So I think the conversation I would have with the student, is like I'm in full support of whatever you want to do, let's just look at the logistics of this happening. It could be possible that you do really well here, but it's also just like any professional sport risky, in a way that maybe doesn't have the way you want it to. But it doesn't hurt to try. So, let's have a backup plan in case something doesn't work out.

Line 313-315: I mean that's like broadcasted on ESPN a lot and I know they have all those tournaments. And they have, like, a lot of places you can gamble and, and play those games, and get involved in similar igaming things.

Line 267-269: And I'm all in support of it, but I think it's important to have a backup plan. Just because sometimes that doesn't work out, or I mean, in any career you should probably have a somewhat of a backup plan in case you don't like it as much as you thought you would.

Line 367-369: I'm not pessimistic like that towards my kids because I'm not here to crush dreams, I'm here to encourage them.

Line 373-375: But it would be for me a little nerve wracking knowing that student has that as their first plan.

Transcript 2

Line 297: In my opinion. I would say, igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society.

Line 316-317: Because it is looked at as gambling and taking that risk and gambling kind of has a stigma anyways. That could be why it's not as widely accepted up.

Line 374-375: But I don't know if society would see that as being a contributing member to society.

Line 254-257: I just want to make sure that it's doable, and

maybe stable would be the right word. So I'll ask them the same questions as, well how like what are the steps to make like do that as a career.

Line 262-264: Make sure that it is sustainable and stable enough to where they could provide for themselves and live off of that income, because ultimately that's what careers are supposed to do.

Line 339-346: I will be on the students page as much as I can be as long as they're not harming themselves or others. So my perception of them doesn't necessarily change, it would be more like, you probably the student, you probably know more than I do, I will follow your lead. But I'm going to support you and we'll kind of navigate through how to get this done together. Because I don't I wouldn't want them to feel like they're alone, and then have any support and making this choice because who knows maybe their parents or, or their guardians are not as willing to accept that as a choice. It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out.

Line 353-357: I don't know it's exhausting but it's also exciting when they finally figure it out and they're like, oh, this one I'm actually really passionate about and we start doing more research and you can kind of see you see the passion and then kind of start to light up and that part's really exciting and really rewarding was a lot of hard work, you get hold of find their passion.

Transcript 3

Line 360-364: I don't know enough about it as a career choice and I don't know, I don't know, I know that there are a lot of people who do that for a living. I don't know a lot of people who make it in those same experiences. I know we know of the ones who, who have done well you know and they've said that that's what they've done but there's probably a lot of people who gamble all the time and maybe don't make a lot of money at it.

Line 364-366: I think there's also an addiction connection piece to that fear because there are every time you watch like one of those advertisements for those there's also a disclaimer to that if you need help.

Line 385: So there's a potential for a hazard there that maybe you don't see with other careers.

Line 466-467: Would I would be curious myself and want to run dive into the research with the student to kind of get some more information.

Line 405-409: The whole electronic method of placing bets and that increased tremendously through throughout COVID and so I feel like there was again another shift there that caused that to happen and the suddenly opened the doors on a lot of different levels where you didn't have to necessarily go to a specific place to place a bet you could you could do it from your house and you can do it from your couch, in the living room, or anywhere else you have your phone.

Line 416-417: I don't have necessarily a specific perception about that one way or another.

Line 452-456: I would definitely reach out to the experts like I wouldn't try to like have all the answers by any by any means, and we would do some research and we talked to experts we could set up a meeting we could, I would get to have the students develop some questions and so the student could do some research and we could do a zoom meeting with a professional in the field.

Line 466-467: Would I would be curious myself and want to run dive into the research with the student to kind of get some more information.

Transcript 4

Line 277-279: Gambling has been around forever, but I know there might be a religious viewpoint in this area where gaming is wrong, it might be, it might feed on people's weaknesses.

Line 297: Who am I to rain on that parade?

Line 304-305: I ask myself if, do I have the connections, the network, enough knowledge to help this child attain that.

Line 318-319: for me as a counselor, I want to expose my students to as many things as possible as many experiences as possible.

Line 279-281: People that are addicted to gambling and all the social ails that might, that could or might happen. I don't have that belief. I'm not, I'm not, I wasn't raised in that type of thinking.

Line 305-307: Can I give them sort of a scenario or relay a scenario that we can kind of play around with and say yeah this is something you really wanna do or do you have a Plan B.

Line 263-265: Okay, so one happiness. What makes you happy, what's going to make you happy?

Line 292-297: I would have to take it on the individual student, knowing that and knowing your personality if I have somebody that already shows tendencies towards addiction like obsession and different things like that I would kind of I would be concerned but again if it but if the kid is you know like this very, this is what I want and can show me the research, can show me that this is they have done it this is this is a passion for them who am I to rain on that parade.

Transcript 5

Line 314-315: I'm all about them being able to, you know, to achieve their goals. you know, so if that's a goal that he has you know then whatever I can do to help them.

Transcript 6

Line 273-275: I have not I can't say I've been trained or been any trainings. As far as articles go I don't think I've read any articles specific to igaming.

Line 237-239: I just think of gambling just, it's not it doesn't sound like a job to sound good career or profession, it just sounds like lifelong gambling.

Line 252-254: If it's this you know igaming you gotta have the money up front. Put it in and then pray that she made it back, or more, you know, and then you can lose it and now it's the opposite of a job. It's just throwing money away.

Line 287-290: I think society would see somebody who chose gaming as a career. I don't want to say degenerate.

There's. Yeah, there's a better word I'm looking for but somebody who's not a maybe closer to a like a burden of society, right and that person isn't contributing anything.

Line 314-318: I think that would depend on a couple things. One, did they come with a plan right if they're a sports bettor. How are they going to learn more about whatever sports they're trying to bet on what what are their sources of information, how much they already know. You know if they're going to be a poker player, how often that they played, you know they played high anything high stakes, or is that just a dream of theirs what experiences do they come with.

Line 328-333: I'd be nervous because it would be a first, second, nervous because again it doesn't feel for some crazy reason it just doesn't feel like a legitimate career option. It is a way to make money I will grant you that but my own bias, prejudice would probably get in the way a little bit. And so my nervousness would be. Is it appropriate or professional of me to help them down this path, instead of steering them in a different direction towards a more conventional type of path.

Line 337-339: I think my role is they were serious. I think my role would consist of helping them be as prepared as they possibly can for when they actually step out into the world and head down that path.

Line 262-269: I have a buddy who played poker and that was how we made money and he played in Vegas ended up having an accident and so yet wasn't able to play for one time, but that was how he made money. And it sounded cool it sounded edgy it sounded

like something I wanted to do just because it sounded fun. I wouldn't have considered it a career, it was just how he made money.

Line 299: I would say. Bum, couch potato.

Line 239-240: I would if I had a student come tell me that I think I would hesitate big time.

Line 241-242: As far as any advice or trying to make it happen. I mean, their dream is their goals their life, you know, and so I'm not gonna, I'm not going to stand in the way but in my head for sure I'm going to be second guessing that decision, the entire time.

Appendix O

Manuscript II: Participant Experiential Themes (PET) Tables

Igaming Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lack of knowledge • Generalized training on career choice • Learns about new career opportunities through self-exploration • Career specific training is lacking	Line 289-290: I do not have any (laughs). And I think just being in grad school and doing those career development classes, and I said earlier how they're kind of vague and more general. Line 300-301: But for the sport I'm familiar with I know at least some of the steps but for igaming, I don't know any.
2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Igaming is risky, challenging and high improbable • Potentially negative due to association with gambling addiction	Line 320: I guess just because my experience of igaming is always gambling.

Igaming Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling theory • Values role as a career counselor • Counselor identity leads to support student • Desire to want students to pursue what they are interested in • Desire to have students succeed	Line 341-342: I mean, mine is a helping profession, so I just, I do it to help people and help kids succeed. Line 352-256: So I think the conversation I would have with the student, is like I'm in full support of whatever you want to do, let's just look at the logistics of this happening. It could be possible that you do really well here, but it's also just like any professional sport risky, in a way that maybe doesn't have the way you want it to. But it doesn't hurt to try. So, let's have a backup plan in case something doesn't work out.
4) Struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness.	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Validity due to visibility on television • Growing presence in mass media • Experiences validity related to cultural change	Line 313-315: I mean that's like broadcasted on ESPN a lot and I know they have all those tournaments. And they have, like, a lot of places you can gamble and, and play those games, and get involved in similar igaming things.
5) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career	• Highlights the importance of a Plan B in risky career choices • Feelings of anxiety and sadness	Line 267-269: And I'm all in support of it, but I think it's important to have a backup plan.

Igaming Transcript 1: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

igaming as a career choice.	choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	due to unrealistic career choice • Awareness of conflict between personal and professional values • Feelings of confusion • Feeling mixed emotions	Just because sometimes that doesn't work out, or I mean, in any career you should probably have a somewhat of a backup plan in case you don't like it as much as you thought you would. Line 367-369: I'm not pessimistic like that towards my kids because I'm not here to crush dreams, I'm here to encourage them. Line 373-375: But it would be for me a little nerve wracking knowing that student has that as their first plan.

Igaming Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lack of knowledge • Generalized training on career choice • Learns about new career opportunities through self-exploration • Career specific training is lacking	
2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases.	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Potentially negative due to societal view of the activity being taboo • Taboo = gambling = stigma = huge risk • Not doable • Not stable • Views activity as a hobby • Views igaming as an activity that	Line 297: In my opinion. I would say, igaming is still kind of looked at as taboo in society. Line 316-317: Because it is looked at as gambling and taking that risk and gambling kind of has a stigma anyways. That could

Igaming Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

		someone does regularly for enjoyment rather than work • Not legal in all States • Rank order of acceptable careers leads to student marginalization • Marginalized due to lack of productivity • Does not contribute to society • Not accessible to all students (i.e. low income)	be why it's not as widely accepted up. Line 374-375: But I don't know if society would see that as being a contributing member to society.
3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling theory • Values role as a career counselor • Counselor identity leads to support student • Views self as an advocate	Line 254-257: I just want to make sure that it's doable, and maybe stable would be the right word. So I'll ask them the same questions as, well how like what are the steps to make like do that as a career. Line 262-264: Make sure that it is sustainable and stable enough to where they could provide for themselves and live off of that income, because ultimately that's what careers are supposed to do. Line 339-346: I will be on the students page as much as I can be as long as they're not harming themselves or others. So my perception of them doesn't necessarily change, it would be more like, you probably the student, you probably know

Igaming Transcript 2: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			more than I do, I will follow your lead. But I'm going to support you and we'll kind of navigate through how to get this done together. Because I don't I wouldn't want them to feel like they're alone, and then have any support and making this choice because who knows maybe their parents or, or their guardians are not as willing to accept that as a choice. It's my job to make sure that their voice is heard and if that's what they want to do, then I have to stand with them while they figure it out.
4) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Feelings of anxiety and sadness due to unrealistic career choice • Feels overwhelmed • Feels exhausted	Line 353-357: I don't know it's exhausting but it's also exciting when they finally figure it out and they're like, oh, this one I'm actually really passionate about and we start doing more research and you can kind of see you see the passion and then kind of start to light up and that part's really exciting and really rewarding was a lot of hard work, you get hold of find their passion.

Igaming Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lack of knowledge • No formal training of specific career choice	Line 360-364: I don't know enough about it as a career choice and I don't know, I don't know, I know that there are a lot of people who do that for a living. I don't know a lot of people who make it in those same experiences. I know we know of the ones who, who have done well you know and they've said that that's what they've done but there's probably a lot of people who gamble all the time and maybe don't make a lot of money at it.

Igaming Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Potentially negative due to association with gambling addiction • Requires a specific skill set • Requires a certain type of personality	Line 364-366: I think there's also an addiction connection piece to that fear because there are every time you watch like one of those advertisements for those there's also a disclaimer to that if you need help. Line 385: So there's a potential for a hazard there that maybe you don't see with other careers.
3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling theory • Values role as a career counselor • Counselor identity leads to support student • Desire to want students to pursue what they are interested in • Desire to have students succeed	Line 466-467: Would I would be curious myself and want to run dive into the research with the student to kind of get some more information.
4) Struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness.	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to rationalize the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• COVID protocols demonstrated the multiple uses of technology • Experiences validity of igaming related to increase in acceptance • Increased popularity • Cultural change	Line 405-409: The whole electronic method of placing bets and that increased tremendously through throughout COVID and so I feel like there was again another shift there that caused that to happen and the suddenly opened the doors on a lot of different levels where you didn't have to necessarily go to a specific place to place a bet you could you could do it from your

Igaming Transcript 3: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			house and you can do it from your couch, in the living room, or anywhere else you have your phone.
5) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Desire to connect students to others in the field • Works collaboratively with students	Line 416-417: I don't have necessarily a specific perception about that one way or another. Line 452-456: I would definitely reach out to the experts like I wouldn't try to like have all the answers by any by any means, and we would do some research and we talked to experts we could set up a meeting we could, I would get to have the students develop some questions and so the student could do some research and we could do a zoom meeting with a professional in the field. Line 466-467: Would I would be curious myself and want to run dive into the research with the student to kind of get some more information.

Igaming Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Generalized training on career choice • Lacks knowledge of igaming as a career choice	
2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Only accessible by a small percentage of the student population • Requires a quantitative mindset • Must be personable, sociable • Some careers are more acceptable • Igaming lacks social support	Line 277-279: Gambling has been around forever, but I know there might be a religious viewpoint in this area where gaming is wrong, it might be, it might feed on people's weaknesses.

Igaming Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling • Values career counseling	Line 297: Who am I to rain on that parade? Line 304-305: I ask myself if, do I have the connections, the network, enough knowledge to help this child attain that. Line 318-319: for me as a counselor, I want to expose my students to as many things as possible as many experiences as possible.
4) Struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness.	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to justify the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Views igaming as a "cool" career choice	Line 279-281: People that are addicted to gambling and all the social ails that might, that could or might happen. I don't have that belief. I'm not, I'm not, I wasn't raised in that type of thinking. Line 305-307: Can I give them sort of a scenario or relay a scenario that we can kind of play around with and say yeah this is something you really wanna do or do you have a Plan B.
5) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Important to recognize biases • A student's happiness is important in the relationship • Happiness, strengths and success • Feels anxious because career choice may not be supported	Line 263-265: Okay, so one happiness. What makes you happy, what's going to make you happy? Line 292-297: I would have to take it on the individual student,

Igaming Transcript 4: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			knowing that and knowing your personality if I have somebody that already shows tendencies towards addiction like obsession and different things like that I would kind of I would be concerned but again if it but if the kid is you know like this very, this is what I want and can show me the research, can show me that this is they have done it this is this is a passion for them who am I to rain on that parade.

Igaming Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• No formal education specifically on igaming as a career choice • Generalized training on career choice	
2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Not supported by administration • Views igaming as potentially negative due to risk associated with gambling addiction • Lack of productivity • Does not contribute to society • Lacks profitability • Requires a specific skill set	

Igaming Transcript 5: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling • Values career counseling	Line 314-315: I'm all about them being able to, you know, to achieve their goals. you know, so if that's a goal that he has you know then whatever I can do to help them.
4) Struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness.	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to justify the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Views igaming as positive due to newness • New pathways = opportunities	
5) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• A student's happiness is important in the relationship • Encourages students to pursue passion • Personal connection with igaming through friends and family • Student interests are important • Wants students to be passionate	

Igaming Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

Emerging Themes and Subthemes	Description of Themes	Relevant Codes	Quotes/ Excerpts
1) Virtual absence of knowledge about igaming as a career.	This theme includes a recognition that the graduate level career counseling curriculum is based on generalized career counseling theories and modalities versus specifically working with individual career choices.	• Lack of knowledge • No formal education specifically on igaming as a career choice • Generalized training on career choice	Line 273-275: I have not I can't say I've been trained or been any trainings. As far as articles go I don't think I've read any articles specific to igaming.
2) Anticipatory navigation of student marginalization based own biases	This theme includes a recognition that the student is marginalized when selecting to pursue a career in igaming due to the non-traditional nature of the field.	• Views igaming as potentially negative due to risk associated with gambling addiction • Views igaming as negative due to traditional definitions of career • Relates igaming to a hobby • Negative societal view • Marginalizes igaming due to	Line 237-239: I just think of gambling just, it's not it doesn't sound like a job to sound good career or profession, it just sounds like lifelong gambling.

Igaming Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

		inaccessibility by some	Line 252-254: If it's this you know igaming you gotta have the money up front. Put it in and then pray that she made it back, or more, you know, and then you can lose it and now it's the opposite of a job. It's just throwing money away. Line 287-290: I think society would see somebody who chose gaming as a career. I don't want to say degenerate. There's. Yeah, there's a better word I'm looking for but somebody who's not a maybe closer to a like a burden of society, right and that person isn't contributing anything.
3) Countering personal bias with professional values and identity as they ponder working with students.	This theme includes the important role that the professional counseling identity and values play in working and interacting with students that are choosing a nontraditional career choice.	• Follows training on general career counseling • Values career counseling	Line 314-318: I think that would depend on a couple things. One, did they come with a plan right if they're a sports bettor. How are they going to learn more about whatever sports they're trying to bet on what what are their sources of information, how much they already know. You know if they're going to be a poker player, how often that they played, you know they played high anything high stakes, or is that just a dream of theirs

Igaming Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			what experiences do they come with. Line 328-333: I'd be nervous because it would be a first, second, nervous because again it doesn't feel for some crazy reason it just doesn't feel like a legitimate career option. It is a way to make money I will grant you that but my own bias, prejudice would probably get in the way a little bit. And so my nervousness would be. Is it appropriate or professional of me to help them down this path, instead of steering them in a different direction towards a more conventional type of path. Line 337-339: I think my role is they were serious. I think my role would consist of helping them be as prepared as they possibly can for when they actually step out into the world and head down that path.
4) Struggling to see igaming as a viable career and emerging realization of igaming career awareness.	This theme includes the recognition that career counselors use personal thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings to justify the validity of a nontraditional career choice.	• Personal experience with igaming through a friend that is successful • Awareness of growing popularity	Line 262-269: I have a buddy who played poker and that was how we made money and he played in Vegas ended up having an accident and so yet wasn't able to play for one time, but

Igaming Transcript 6: Emerging Themes (What are the Experiences?)

			that was how he made money. And it sounded cool it sounded edgy it sounded like something I wanted to do just because it sounded fun. I wouldn't have considered it a career, it was just how he made money. Line 299: I would say. Bum, couch potato.
5) Anticipating a professional relationship with students pursuing igaming as a career choice.	This theme includes having to learn to interact with students in discussing the difficult world of nontraditional career choice. It involves supporting the students and assisting in making the difficult decision of career choice.	• Feeling anxious • Difficult time supporting the decision • Hesitant • Need to be aware of personal bias	Line 239-240: I would if I had a student come tell me that I think I would hesitate big time. Line 241-242: As far as any advice or trying to make it happen. I mean, their dream is their goals their life, you know, and so I'm not gonna, I'm not going to stand in the way but in my head for sure I'm going to be second guessing that decision, the entire time.

Appendix P

Member Checks

Oregon State University   Cole, Justin D <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Review of Findings (Member Check)

_____@gmail.com>   Tue, Feb 28, 2023 at 11:26 AM
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Thank you for sending! It was an interesting read and prompts curiosity for more research. I enjoyed being a part of this. Good luck with everything!

Review of Findings (Member Check)

:@ffc8.org>
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Sun, Feb 26, 2023 at 3:43 PM

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Hello Mr. Cole,

I did not want to rush through reading these chapters and wanted to take the time to respond to your research.

Knowing the many facets of a high school counselors' job and the vast amount of time, energy, and heart that these professionals invest in their roles, I felt discouraged reading through the research because of the many generalizations connected to such a small sampling, and after reading, I did not want my responses to hold such a weighted view for all high school counselors.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to read through the two chapters and provide questions, initial thoughts, and feedback, which I am including below.

- Curious: Do you feel like proving your hypothesis guided how you interpreted counselors' responses? Were you looking for answers that specifically supported your hypothesis?

- The methodology of this research project: IPA -- The researcher is interpreting the data with a strong bias as well as a very small sample size. Knowing this information ahead of time would have changed my mind about participation. Making large generalizations about "all counselors perceptions or feelings" based on such a small sample as well as the researcher's past experiences, biases, and orientations can be misleading.

- I do not remember seeing a copy of my transcripts?
- One question that arises is has the researcher spent any time as a high school counselor in order to understand all of the facets of a high school counselors' job?
- The phrase, "Many counselors" or "Many of the school counselors" occurs quite frequently within Chapter 2 connected to generalized themes, so listing the actual number of counselor participants that had that specific viewpoint would help with overgeneralizations.

"Out of the ___ counselors interviewed, ___ reported not being aware of competitions. . ."

- I think that it is important to note that counselors understand that many of the jobs of today may either not be in existence or may look very different in the future due to the advancements in technology, which is one of the benefits of career conversations.
- The school counselors in the sample shared a strong desire to assist students in a career in esports regardless of their own views or knowledge on the topic

- The paper does not list or dive into the specific types of post-graduate trainings counselors are actually receiving and how those trainings connect to careers that students may be

interested in pursuing for their futures. Not including this information makes it seem like counselors are not receiving any professional development.

- Reflecting back, incompetence is a very strong word, and I if I stated that word, I would not want to be represented as incompetent. Feeling surprised or having a lack of knowledge is very different than being incompetent. If I did state that word, "Wow – talk about being vulnerable for sure."
- School counselors in the study were more likely to work collaboratively with a student when they had a positive experience with esports, both personally and professionally.

(Is this an analysis from your study or the research below? It is unclear. It if is from your research, then perhaps explain how the research connected back to that statement since the statement is very specific and seems like the statement should be supported with data.)

- Would it be good to reference when colleges/universities began their esports programs?
- Another good question to have asked participants would have been to ask your participants about their own historical experience in playing video games. Could have provided some surprising information.
- Data reflection section: (Yes, I agree about the small sampling, which is why I think that specific numbers should be used in this paper when presenting a data point such as, "Four of the six counselors interviews felt that . . . " Otherwise the presented themes are generalizing a viewpoint of "many" counselors which is not necessarily the case.
- Contributing to the lack of generalizability, was the challenge of finding school counselors that were also interested in exploring the research topic and participating in such research, perhaps due to the newness or stigma of the phenomenon. I also think that people do not participate because there is a fear of being misrepresented.
- Although the data collected is not be generalizable, due to sample size, the results are sufficient enough to offer a deeper understanding of school counselors' perceptions of esports as a career choice.

I would only agree if the data points are specifically represented with numbers within the paper.

- Bringing more voices into the conversation would add to the depth and understanding of this topic.

Perhaps it can also include tracking the number of students who are expressing an interest in esports or igaming through the career conversations.

- Holzhauer memorized obscure baseball and professional wrestling statistics, prompting his parents to reprimand him for 'wasting his life' learning about sports.

What is also interesting is that his notoriety as connected to Jeopardy and igaming was not in existence when until after you started this research. How fortuitous that this connection could be made within your research paper.

[Quoted text hidden]

Oregon State University

Cole, Justin D <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Review of Findings (Member Check)

@hotmail.com>   Mon, Feb 20, 2023 at 11:35 AM
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Justin,

Congratulations!!! I'm finalizing my chapter 1 and moving towards Chapter 2.

I feel like you captured that I said perfectly.

Good luck!!!

Best regards,

Sent from my iPhone

Appendix Q

Peer Debriefer Notes

Oregon State University

Cole, Justin D <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Review of Findings (Peer Debriefing)

Kim Severn <ksevern@uccs.edu>   Wed, Mar 1, 2023 at 9:58 AM
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Sorry it took forever, Justin! I love both of these! As I read them I felt my own bias toward esports and against igaming for the same reasons some of your participants did. I think both of these are powerful in their own way and I don't think you'll have any issues finding a publisher for them.

I saw a few typos, but I'm sure Leann pointed those out to you. 😊 I loved the school counselor perspective too! I think I also felt bias toward the implications of what is taught in career class in a master's program. Again, my own bias having taught the class and knowing that we can't teach everything to everyone, which you also pointed out. I do think your articles would be great reading for a careers class. Perhaps even switching up an assignment to include finding knowledge on new and upcoming careers. So, not a lot of actionable feedback, but I think you're doing a great job!

Best of luck on your defense!

Kim Severn

She/Her/Hers

Instructor

Coordinator – Human Services Major and Minor

Department of Counseling and Human Services

Columbine Hall 3018

720-272-2023 cell – 719-255-5815 voicemail

[Quoted text hidden]

Oregon State University

Cole, Justin D <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Review of Findings (Peer Debriefing)

Nikki Correa <nikki.c.correa@gmail.com>
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Wed, Mar 1, 2023 at 12:02 PM

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Hi Justin,

I have reviewed your findings and did not experience bias in your discussion of the themes discovered. You provided direct quotes from participants found in the transcripts. It feels accurate to say you worked towards capturing the perception of school counselors working with students who are interested in pursuing a career in esports.

Please feel free to reach out with any further need.

All my best,

Dr. Nikki Correa

Oregon State University

Cole, Justin D <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Review of Findings (Peer Debriefing)

Morgan, Leann <leann.morgan@mail.waldenu.edu>
To: "Cole, Justin D" <coleju@oregonstate.edu>

Thu, Feb 23, 2023 at 2:00 PM

[This email originated from outside of OSU. Use caution with links and attachments.]

Hi Justin! Thanks for the opportunity to review your work. Please read my feedback with a grain of salt! A good dissertation is a done dissertation and I what I provided was from the lens of a journal reviewer...not one of your committee members. My job was to play "devil's advocate," so that's what I did. LOL!!

Please let me know if you have any questions about my feedback. I am happy to clarify anything that's confusing. I wish you all the best as you prepare for your defense!

Take care!

LeAnn

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Appendix R

Researcher Positionality Statement

As the primary researcher, it is imperative to be self-reflective prior to data collection, as well as during data analysis. For this reason, I have reflected on my past experiences, biases, and orientations that may have shaped my approach to the study, motivation for the study, and interpretation of the results.

In reflecting on the two phenomena, I have come to the realization that I have a very favorable viewpoint towards esports and igaming. I attribute this to my own passion for gaming. As far back as I can remember, I engaged in video games as a form of leisure and entertainment. Like many children born in the 1970s, my first gaming console was an Atari 2600. A few years later, the Atari was replaced with the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). I played the console, literally, day and night. More often than not, I was interrupted by my father telling me to get outside, stop wasting time, and go play football with the neighbors. I tried to explain that I was playing football from the comfort of my bean bag chair and was about to lead Denver to victory over Dallas in Tecmo Bowl. Needless to say, he was less than impressed.

Flash forward 30 years, when my father contacted me after he read about Joseph "JoeyGats" Chiltowsky winning the 2017 Tecmo Madison Super Bowl and the $4,000 prize money. He asked, "Did you know that you can make money playing that video game you used to play?" Yes, I did.

This has been my motivation for exploring esports and igaming as a career choice. As a father, I have children that have shown an interest and affinity for video games, online gaming, and streaming video game play. With the advancements in technology and the legalization of online gaming, more young people are gravitating towards these activities as a way to earn a living. Personally, I have engaged in online poker, blackjack, sports betting, and esports. I have earned money along the way. However, I have decided to not quit my day job. What it takes to be successful (future research topic), I lost years ago. That said, I do believe there are young players that can make esports and igaming a viable career option or at least benefit from the many collegiate scholarships that are available for those that can click their way to victory.

I recognize my bias based on my past experiences and an obvious passion for gaming. I have a difficult time discussing the evils of video games and the dark side of the legalization of online gaming with parents and colleagues. I know there are risks, for some. Addiction and pathology are valid concerns, for some. On the other hand, there are those that could benefit from the opportunity to pursue their passion and potentially open doors to success and prosperity.

For these reasons, I feel that we have an obligation to explore the topics of esports and igaming as viable career choices. Our responsibility to our students is to be aware of the many opportunities and share this information with those that show an interest. I feel the need to conduct further research to inform our profession, while being aware of our own positionality.