

# Tweet, Play, Love: Evaluating Social Media Communication Strategies on Gamer and Non-Gamer Audiences

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## Abstract

The purpose of this project is to study and understand social media targeted ads and how they may alter people's perception of a new game. The way different social media platforms and contents are used may have an impact on how video games are perceived by the players, both existing and new ones. Social media presence can be critical to maintain or augment the player-based universe of any gaming company. The researcher analyzed video games social media posts from November 2020 on different social media platforms, looking at the most popular posts (through upvotes, likes, and retweets). Eight layouts were created for the two different audiences, the gamers and non-gamers, and tested a new marketing campaign for a game. The game mock-ups were created for research purposes only by the author only. This study will give insights or ideas on how to best market a video game on social media with an awareness of the audience and other factors.

## Keywords

Video Games, Strategic Communications, Advertisement

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## 1. Introduction

During the international pandemic of the Coronavirus, people have been engaged their digital devices more often and seemingly have been bombarded by new information every second. The usage of social media "is an ever-increasing phenomenon of the 21st century", which has been utilized by companies to better market their products (Bekalu, McCloud, & Viswanath, 2019). Understanding some techniques on how to convey clear messages memorably helps any company and its product(s) to stand out in a crowded, competitive field. [...] This

this thesis will illustrate ways in which a company can strategically increase its social media presence on different platforms.

Social media platforms are now the new way of communicating with people, chatting with others from all over the globe, both informally and in other contexts such as business or government. Communication seems easier and more constant than ever, taking our lives by storm, especially since the Coronavirus. By using social media, many companies can get feedback from consumers that might improve and satisfy current and future customers. [...] An example of this shift in user outreach is with the video game *Fortnite*. Released by Epic Games in 2017, *Fortnite* quickly became not just a popular game but a social avenue for players all over the world. Because of the rise of *Fortnite*, Epic Games employed both extensive traditional and social marketing strategies to keep the game on track to become the most successful and popular online multiplayer Battle Royale shooter game and to becoming “the most financially successful free game on consoles of all time, according to Super Data” (Cherney, 2018). In their battle to become the best multiplayer game, Epic Games has utilized its audience as game testers, idea generators, and more. Being so open with their audience has helped Epic Games to distinguish *Fortnite* from other games and has facilitated new ideas for the next seasons, which function as planned and periodic updates to the game. Epic Games importantly maintains its connection with its audience by providing updates, previews, competitions, and even game server maintenance through social media channels. [...]

Theories such as the Expectancy Value Theory, Skinner’s Reinforcement Theory, and the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) can be employed to analyze and predict some of the player behavior. Player behavior changes from player to player but is seen as a common ground between all the consumers. However, this study shows that targeted words such as “frag” could attract more gamer audience than a non-targeted advertisement, and gamers seeing an advertisement targeted toward gamers would pay more for the game. Though not statistically different, this would have a meaningful to retailers.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis will include the Uses and Gratification theory (UGT). This theory assumes “that individuals actively use certain media to satisfy certain needs”, otherwise they would use their time differently (Hou, 2011: p. 4). This theory is based on five concepts such as

“(1) the use of communication media is motivated by certain goals and said behavior is functional and has consequences for people; (2) the use of communication media is a way of satisfying desires or interests, such as seeking information, solving personal dilemmas, or reducing uncertainty; (3) social and psychological factors mediate communication behavior; (4) media compete with other forms of communication to be chosen, to capture attention and to attract users; and (5) people tend to be more influential than media

in-person-media relationships” (Cabeza-Ramirez et al., 2020: p. 2).

There is a social and psychological explanation of why people use social media. Introduced by Morris and Ogan (1996) in 1996, Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) in 1996, and Ruggiero (2000) in 2000, the UGT is suited for an approach and works by actively engaging “communication participants in the Internet environment as compared to degrees of engagement in other traditional media” creating a sense of invisible community (Hou, 2011: p. 4). Hence, the reason why people keep using social media is because of the reward system of message feedback, social engagement, and a sense of community belonging that is reinforced. As reward systems are an integral part of many games, there is a strong synergy between games and social media user experience. [...]

Gratification can be measured based on the activity and how likely to repeat it. Gratification is personal, so the UGT takes into consideration not only the expected outcome but also the individual result. Past outcome results will influence media usage in the future and will lead to an increase in targeted media consumption by the user. Understanding the past behavior of customers will improve the ability of companies to harness “the predictive power of the Internet” and will increase the chance of the gratification being sought and obtained by the user (Hou, 2011: p. 3). [...] While fulfilling their needs, players may get in contact with others, enlarging the community, and possibly engaging more directly with a company. It has been found that people tend to connect and want to talk with others online because it increases the gain of gratification. Ruggiero explains that “interactivity significantly strengthens the core U&G notion of active user” because of the constant feed of communication on social media.

From this constant feed of information, people are more likely to look and share with friends a post that will evoke strong feelings. The UGT explains that gratifications are “sought and obtained in the use of social media”, and it is proven that “these gratifications differ according to individual characteristics” (Kircaburun et al., 2020). Given that different social media platforms act differently from each other, despite sharing some common design goals, this thesis will analyze how to best use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (the three main general audience target platforms), Pinterest, and Reddit (two more specific audience target platforms). [...]

Because of the many factors that may shape experience, it may be especially hard to know how to target an audience. [...] One of the gratifications involves sharing with other people and getting answers to begin the feedback loop. Five factors motivate UGT for the social game uses. Factors include

“social connection (to keep in touch with friends and maintain relationships); social investigation (to see what friends do and to make new friends); shared identity (to join friends’ groups to avoid being left out); popularity (to become a popular figure among friends); and, self-expression (to update one’s status or to let friends know your news)” (Hou, 2011: p 3).

The five UGT factors help determine what people like to look for in a social media post. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are used to update people and have relatively sad emotions towards the content viewed. Instagram measured high on past-time activity and had happy feelings toward the content (Voorveld *et al.*, 2018). [...] User motive will target the next ads to be closer to what the user was searching previously.

Understanding the targeted audience and general motive or mood will increase the chance to hit the target audience. The researcher will analyze social media posts and with this knowledge create different social media posts. These posts will vary in voice (who is the targeted audience), the motive of the post (to play with friends, to look cool, to win new challenges, and to explore new places), and picture in the post (in-game graphics, scenery, catchy images). [...] Social media has daily information overload, and people choose which posts to attend to and which to ignore. Companies need to learn how to stand out from the crowd, to represent their product and ideals, and to get feedback from consumer.

### 3. Review of Literature

#### Different Social Media Platforms

There are many social media platforms on the web and each of them is used for different purposes. The researcher will be looking at general platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more targeted ones such as Pinterest and Reddit. The three main platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter will reach a broader audience, meanwhile Pinterest and Reddit will target a more specific audience. This will allow the researcher to understand if there is any difference between general and specific advertisement targeting to what audience.

The first platform the researcher picked is Facebook because it is one of the biggest social platforms. Created in 2004, Facebook has a history of instant shareability with people from all over the world. Since then, people have been sharing moments on their timeline, making it a great field for advertising. [...] On Facebook, users are usually happy after “reading positive posts from their Facebook friends” and are happier if the good news comes from a strong tie, such as close friends or relatives. Feelings of envy are more likely to be predicted by “individual characteristics of the user such as low self-esteem, rather than relationship closeness” (Lin, 2015). People are more likely to pay attention to something if people close to them have reacted to the post.

The second platform that the researcher picked is Instagram. This second platform also plays on the connectivity to friends’ factor. With more than 150 million registered users, Instagram is another big social media platform. Since its launch in October 2010, Instagram offers its users a unique way to post pictures and videos using their smartphones, applying different filters or manipulation tools. Instagram constantly looks for what a user has been looking at and shows related products or services. [...]

The third platform the researcher picked is Twitter. This platform has changed the way news reports are done. Now with just few words, people from all over the world can be updated on what is going on somewhere specific in any country. [...] Because of this way of being able to post during any given event, Twitter has “become the go-to place for latest developments whether it be hurricane, flood, earthquake or tornado” becoming one of the primary sources of news (Walck, 2013). This plays a big role in the newer generations and how they receive their news, compared to older generations.

After looking at the general platforms, the researcher examined specific platforms that will attract a certain group of people. Pinterest, for example, is a social platform majorly populated by creatives and designers. [...] Pinterest works mostly on emphasizing visual content over verbal and the realism gratification positively predicts commenting, checking, and inviting.

The second specific audience targeting platform is Reddit. Reddit calls itself “the front page of the internet” and describes the site as “a source for what’s new and popular on the web” (Anderson, 2015). [...] This community policing is a solution to people who spam or are negative in the community.

The targeted platforms that the researcher has picked, not only serve for different purposes, but also attract different audiences. [...] These five different platforms shaped the message and composition of each individual posts for the two different audiences.

#### 4. Research Questions

To determine how message targeting on social media affects and alters people’s perception of an advertisement, the researcher will analyze how specific game-related posts are perceived by two different types of audiences. The sample will be composed of both self-identified gamers and non-gamers, who will evaluate six different mockup ads for a new video game. The social media mockup ads will vary in the level of in-group language familiar to gamers. The researcher will also examine if people’s motivations for playing video games is associated with their evaluation of the ad. The researcher has the following research questions that might highlight the key components of message targeting in social media posts.

**RQ1:** To what extent is message targeting (in-group gamers vs. out of the group) associated with the participants’: (a) recall of the advertisement; (b) likelihood to share the advertisement on social media; (c) favorability rating of the game; (d) perception of the value of the video game; and (e) purchase intention?

**RQ2:** To what extent is the player type (gamer vs. non-gamer) associated with the participants’: (a) recall of the advertisement; (b) likelihood to share the advertisement on social media; (c) favorability rating of the game; (d) perception of the value of the video game; and (e) purchase intention?

**RQ3:** To what extent do participants’ video game motivation factors (social

connection escape, and achievement) affect participants': (a) recall of the advertisement; (b) likelihood to share the advertisement on social media; (c) favorability rating of the game; (d) perception of the value of the video game; and (e) purchase intention?

**RQ4:** To what extent does audience type and advertisement type have an interaction effect between: (a) likelihood to share the advertisement on social media; (b) favorability rating of the game; and (c) perception of the value of the video game?

## 5. Method

This study incorporated an experimental design. The independent variables were message targeting, audience type, and video game motivation. The dependent variables were the participants' likelihood to share the advertisement on social media, their purchase intention, their recall of the elements of the advertisement, and their perception of the value of the game. These variables were tested against two different samples of a population such as gamers and non-gamers. The two audiences got to see and comment on the two different targeted social media layout advertisements. This helped the researcher understand if targeted advertisements would attract more people than generic advertisements or vice versa.

The data was collected via an online survey. This method was appropriate for two reasons: (a) the advertisements were designed to be social media ads, and (b) COVID-19 was currently active, and the university IRB prohibited face-to-face data collection.

### 5.1. Proposed Sample

This study included two samples to test how message targeting is associated with evaluating a new video game advertisement. The sample included 124 people who self-identify as gamers and 55 who do not identify as gamers. [...] The social media mockup posts in the study were advertisements created to look like real posts on various social media sites. [...] Participants were 55 females and 124 males. The average age of the participants was 29.4 (SD = 7.78).

### 5.2. Gamer Sample

This study included approximately 124 students who major in game design, play Esports, participate in a video game club, or are members of an online video game community or gaming teams. Participants were from 18 to 65 years old (those outside this range were excluded from the analysis). Based on the general demographics of students in game design, it was likely that 60% of the sample will be male.

### 5.3. Non-Gamer Sample

This study also included 55 non-players who were approximately 18 to 65 years old (those outside this range were excluded from analysis) from non-game de-

sign classes. Based on the general demographics of students at the university, it was likely that 60% of the sample was female. [...] Both sample's demographic helped understand if the layouts were targeting the right audience and if they were concise and understood by the general public. [...]

#### 5.4. Measures

The scales used in this thesis were measured with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from one indicating strongly disagree to seven indicating strongly agree. Any original negatively worded was modified to remove the need for reverse coding. To ensure that participants read the questions, attention check statements, such as "please click on number 4" was included.

**Audience Targeting.** Advertising content was modified to target either a gamer audience or a general audience. To ensure the differences are clear, eight targeting elements were modified. The researcher is going to modify keywords, hashtags (#), and language in the caption. The images in the post were also altered and tailored to fit the aesthetic of either targeted audience, allowing the researcher to understand which post attracts more people.

**Player Type.** Though gamer participants were recruited from either game design classes, game design clubs, online game blogs, and non-gamers were recruited from classrooms. The participants were accessed if gamers or non-gamers in the first step of the survey. This quick question was asked on how much the participant saw themselves as a gamer (from 1 being not likely to 7 being hard-core gamer). [...] Participants completed the Analysis of Video Game Uses and Gratifications Instrument scale (Sherry, 2006) that will ask questions based on six different characteristics of in-game reward: competition, challenge, social interaction, diversion, fantasy, arousal:

1. I like to play to prove to my friends that I am the best.
2. I feel proud when I master an aspect of a game.
3. My friends and I use video games as a reason to get together.
4. I play video games when I have other things to do.
5. I play video games because they let me do things I can't do in real life.
6. I play video games because they excite me.

**Video Game Gratifications.** To assess why people play video games, the video game motivation scale was used. This measurement instrument evaluated the game attributes, self-perception of level as a player, and motivations for playing/viewing content (Cabeza-Ramirez et al., 2020):

1. I play/watch to forget my problems.
2. I play/watch to make new friends.
3. I play/watch to be part of the community.
4. I play/watch to learn new gaming strategies.
5. I play/watch to keep up-to-date with my favorite video games.

**Advertisement Recall.** Participants' attention to the advertisements was measured with five multiple-choice quiz questions about the advertisement. The quiz

was scored so that higher scores indicate more recall. The questions are:

1. Who can you play with?
2. Where can you play?
3. What is a new in-game feature?
4. What can you customize?
5. Why would you play this game?

**Likelihood to Share Information.** Three statements were developed for this project to be used to assess participants' likelihood to share information about this game. The three statements were:

*If I saw one of these advertisements, I would share it on my social media page.*

*I would tell my friends about this game.*

*I would promote this game to people I think would be interested in it.*

**Favorability.** Participants' favorability rating of the game was assessed with the likeability subscale from the Gameplay scale, which has 26 items that "had a significant correlation to both scale and subscale total scores" (Parnell, 2009: p. 35). This subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of .903. Questions will be modified to reflect perceptions of the advertised game. Example questions included:

*I would enjoy the game advertised.*

*I thought that the game advertised seemed fun.*

*I found the appearance of the game world advertised to be interesting.*

*The aesthetics of the game advertised were unimpressive. (negative)*

*I wanted to explore the game world advertised.*

**Perception of the Value of the Product.** To assess how much people value the game, the following question was asked:

*What do you recommend as a retail price for this game?*

This question was answered with a short answer providing a number.

**Purchase Intention.** Participants likelihood to purchase the game were measured with the following questions:

If you had been given money to buy a new game from a new video game company, how likely would you be to purchase this game (please circle one response):

*Definitely wouldn't purchase*

*Probably wouldn't purchase*

*Might purchase*

*Probably would purchase*

*Definitely would purchase*

If you had the opportunity to buy this game, who would you buy it for?

*Yourself*

*Another person*

## 6. Procedure

Participants were provided a link or QR code to the survey either through email or social media pages of High Point University. The online survey from Qual-



trics was completed by 180 individuals from online social media groups such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and through email. This was the ideal group of people to take the survey because groups of college students majoring in game design and game designer communities are the people targeted by video game companies. The participants first responded to the consent form and then answered questions about gamer status and gratifications for playing video games. Next, they saw four social media advertisements for the game, with the name of the social media platform underneath. The two different layouts of each post—for gamers or the general public—were randomized between the entire sample. For this thesis, the researcher picked three main social media platforms, which were Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and two more specific platforms. In order to target further the audience, the researcher picked two other platforms that were tailored to either the gamer audience—Reddit, or for the non-gamer audience—Pinterest. The participant answered a 12 questions long survey about their perception of the game, their willingness to share the advertisement, perception of the value of the game, and their purchase intention. After those questions, the advertisements disappeared, and the participants responded to a short 5 questions quiz about the content viewed in the posts. Demographics questions such as sex and age were asked at the beginning of the survey, and one question was used to check if they were paying attention (press 4 on this question). The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete, not timed, and was fairly easy.

Each participant received a randomized layout set of social media platform ads in their surveys. These two different voices targeted the gamer and non-gamer audience. The post created for the gamer audience used precise wording, such as ‘frag’, ‘grind’, ‘aggro’, ‘loot’, ‘percs’, ‘raid’, ‘Pv.P, Pv.E’ and ‘skins’, that attract more the gamer audience (Chiang, 2017). The second layout will remain generic, with words such as ‘swordsmen’, ‘crusade’, ‘victory’, ‘knight’, and ‘freedom’, which are more generically targeted to the non-gamer audience. After answering generic questions about the participants’ interest in games and the game’s social media posts, the participants then took a memory quiz of the social media posts mockup. This quiz will be based on the keywords used in the mockup advertisement that would either attract or repel people to buy this game.

## 7. Development of Materials

The researcher developed four concept layouts, one for each of the main social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit). [...] These five different social media platforms allowed the researcher to reach a varied sample, which allowed the research to be generalized.

The design of the ad was informed by existing video game ads. The researcher looked at November’s *Fortnite* posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. [...] The researcher created eight posts in total, a set for the two samples representing the four social platforms. The different sets of social media advertisements were

made to test the difference between the gamer and non-gamer samples and how they would perceive the game through the same social media post.

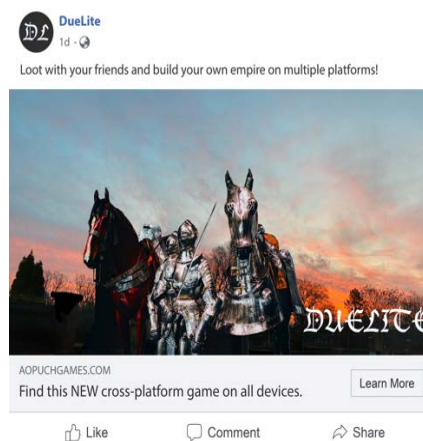
The researcher used Adobe Photoshop to create these eight different social media mockups. The researcher combined multiple pictures together, to create the images showed to the audiences, and created eight different mockups of what each post would look like online as if it was from a real video game company. Both the game and the company names and logos are to be used exclusively for this thesis purposes only. These eight social media mockups differ with four, being targeted towards gamers and four being targeted towards non-gamers. The researcher tested both designs and captions against the two samples of gamers and non-gamers to understand if the different voices worked or if there was a predominant one.

### Audience Targeting

The advertisements targeted toward gamers contained words that are popular around gamers. This differentiated and targeted the two samples since it was expected that the generic audience did not know what those words mean. These words included “grind” and “loot” that were part of the caption, as well as “frag” and “aggro” that were used to test the memory of the participants.

## 8. Results

**Figures 1-8** were presented to the viewers. A t-test was run to answer the first research question, which assessed if participant gamer categorization (gamers versus non-gamers) was associated with (a) recall of the game advertisement, (b) likelihood to share information about the game, (c) favorability ratings of the game, (d) suggested retail price, and likelihood to purchase the game, and (e) variety of motivations to play video games. As **Table 1** displays, there were four significant differences. People categorized as gamers, regardless of the advertisement they saw, were more likely to share information about the game, evaluated the game more favorably, were more likely to purchase the game, and had



**Figure 1.** FB Gamer Ad.

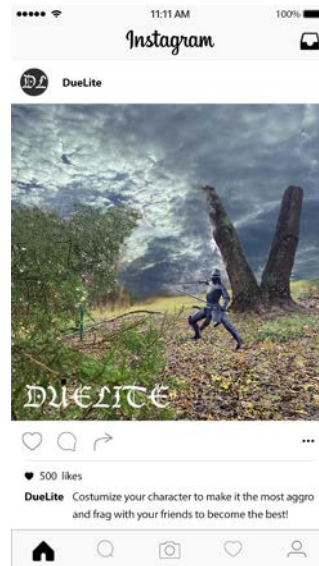


Figure 2. IG Gamer Ad.

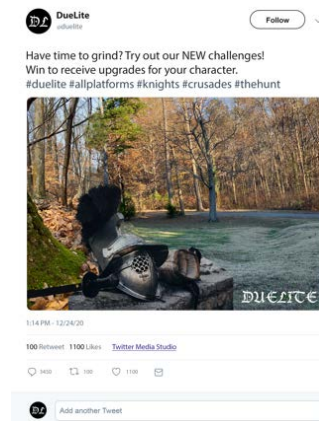


Figure 3. Twitter Gamer Ad.

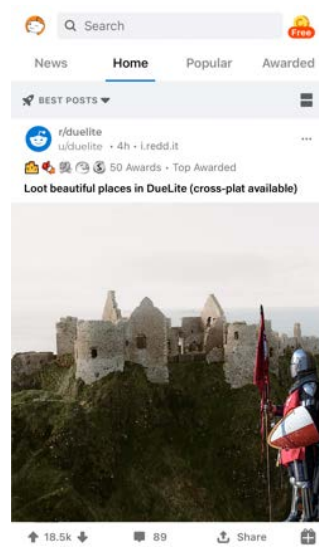


Figure 4. Reddit Gamer Ad.

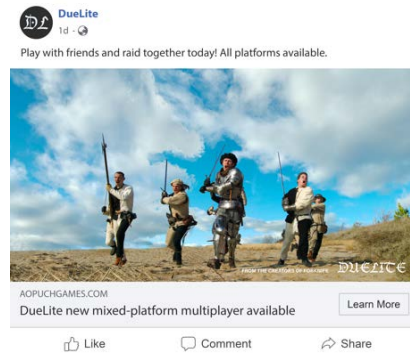


Figure 5. FB Non-Gamer Ad.

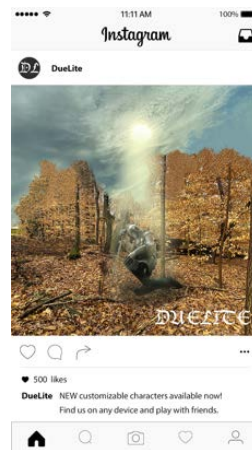


Figure 6. IG Non-Gamer Ad.



Figure 7. Twitter Non-Gamer Ad.

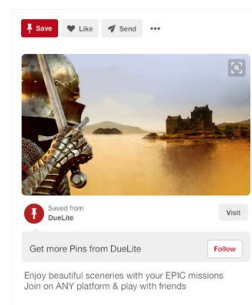


Figure 8. Pinterest Non-Gamer Ad.

**Table 1.** Gamer categorization association with participants' recall, likelihood to share, favorability, suggested price, intent to purchase, and motivations to play.

	Gamer			Non-Gamer			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Recall	125	2.51	1.04	55	2.49	1.15	0.121	0.90	0.01
Likelihood to Share	125	3.88	1.29	55	3.18	1.56	3.17	0.002	0.49
Favorability	125	3.96	.97	55	3.56	1.17	2.39	0.018	0.37
Suggested price	125	47.91	43.8	55	36.76	42.72	1.58	0.115	0.26
Intention to Purchase	124	3.46	1.04	55	2.96	1.22	2.77	0.006	0.44
Motivations to Play	125	3.65	2.40	55	2.52	1.80	3.20	0.002	0.53

a greater number of motivations for playing games. There were no significant differences between participants' recall of information in the advertisement or their suggested retail price.

A t-test was run to answer the second research question, which assessed if the focus of the game ad (gamer targeted versus non-gamer targeted) was associated with (a) recall of the game advertisement, (b) likelihood to share information about the game, (c) favorability ratings of the game, and (d) suggested retail price, and (e) likelihood to purchase the game. As **Table 2** displays, the only significant difference was that people who saw the advertisements targeted toward gamers indicated an increased likelihood to purchase the game.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate research question three, which assessed if the number of different motivations for playing video games (high, moderate, low) was associated with (a) recall of the game advertisement, (b) likelihood to share information about the game, (c) favorability ratings of the game, and (d) suggested retail price, and (e) likelihood to purchase the game. Research question three predicted that those with a greater variety of motivations would have more positive evaluations of the game. Those who had low motivations (1 - 3) were grouped together and tested against those who had moderate motivations (4 - 6) and those who had a lot of motivations (7 - 11). Hypothesis three was supported. As displayed on **Table 3**, the people with most variety of motivations evaluated the advertisement much more positively than the people with less motivations.

Research question four explored the interaction effect between audience and advertisement type. A factorial ANOVA was conducted to address research question 4a, which examined if there was an interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on willingness to share. As **Table 4** displays, there was no significant interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on willingness to share,  $F(11, 143) = 0.075, p = 0.785$ .

A factorial ANOVA was also conducted for research question 4b, which examined if there was an interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on favorability. As **Table 5** displays, there was no significant statistical interaction between audience type and advertisement type on favorability,  $F(96, 84) = 0.77, p = 0.382$ .

**Table 2.** Advertising type effect on participants' recall, likelihood to share, favorability, suggested price, intent to purchase, and motivations to play.

	Gamer			Non-Gamer			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Recall	84	2.45	1.05	96	2.55	1.10	0.62	0.53	0.09
Likelihood to Share	84	3.70	1.53	96	3.64	1.30	3.17	0.78	0.04
Favorability	84	3.82	1.21	96	3.56	0.88	2.39	0.87	0.24
Suggested price	84	39.56	38.68	96	48.33	47.42	1.58	0.17	0.20
Intention to Purchase	84	3.13	1.18	96	3.46	1.04	2.77	0.05	0.30

**Table 3.** Motivations effect on participant evaluation of the advertisements.

	Few Motivation			Moderate Motivation			Many Motivation			<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>eta</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
	Recall	75	2.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.09	66	2.28 <sup>b</sup>	1.03	39	2.30 <sup>b</sup>			
Likelihood to Share	75	3.36 <sup>a</sup>	1.56	66	3.80	1.10	39	4.03 <sup>b</sup>	1.50	3.46	0.034	0.96
Favorability	75	3.74	1.07	66	3.80	0.89	39	4.03	1.21	1.44	0.240	0.82
Suggested Price	75	43.44	45.10	66	37.1 <sup>a</sup>	26.81	39	57.9 <sup>b</sup>	59.21	2.87	0.06	0.94
Intention to Purchase	75	3.05 <sup>a</sup>	1.20	66	3.42	0.95	39	3.59 <sup>b</sup>	1.16	3.64	0.028	0.96

<sup>ab</sup>Significant differences indicated with different superscripts.

**Table 4.** Interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on willingness to share.

Ads Type	Audience	Gamer	Non-Gamer
		<i>M</i> = 3.97 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.31)	<i>M</i> = 3.28 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.77)
	Non Gamer	<i>M</i> = 3.82 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.28)	<i>M</i> = 3.02 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.23)

**Table 5.** Interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on favorability.

Ads Type	Audience	Gamer	Non-Gamer
		<i>M</i> = 4.04 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.13)	<i>M</i> = 3.50 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.28)
	Non Gamer	<i>M</i> = 3.90 ( <i>SD</i> = 0.85)	<i>M</i> = 3.66 ( <i>SD</i> = 1.00)

A factorial ANOVA was also conducted for research question 4c, which examined if there was an interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on price. As **Table 6** displays, there was not a significant interaction

**Table 6.** Interaction effect between audience type and advertisement type on price.

		Gamer Audience	Non-Gamer Audience
Ads Type	Gamer	$M = 41.37$ ( $SD = 29.05$ )	$M = 51.77$ ( $SD = 51.40$ )
	Non Gamer	$M = 52.48$ ( $SD = 51.39$ )	$M = 36.77$ ( $SD = 28.41$ )

effect between audience type and advertisement type on price,  $F(2, 320) = 0.522$ ,  $p = 0.441$ . This indicated that the gamer audience are not likely to pay significantly more for a game than a non-gamer audience. However, the mean scores do show a \$5 to 10 difference in suggested price, with gamers seeing an advertisement targeted toward gamers would pay more for the game. Though not statistically different, this would have a meaningful to retailers.

## 9. Discussion

### 9.1. Findings

The purpose of this analysis was to find what if there would be any difference in audience reception of advertisement, depending if ad was targeted towards the audience or not. This study questioned how much of a player people thought of being and how many hours do they play games, which allowed the researcher to break people into two different categories of gamers vs. non-gamers. This research tested the two different audiences and advertisement types against the recalling of the advertisement, shareability, favorability, how likely they were going to purchase, and the recommended retail price. The audience was divided into two subscales, *Gamer* audience and *Non-Gamer* audience. This was tested with a 7-point Likert scale at the beginning of the survey, which included the questions of *How much of a gamer would you consider yourself?* and *How much do you play?* These questions were asked at the beginning of the survey to understand the level of “gamer” of each participant. An Independent sample T-test was tested on the two audiences against the two different types of ads on the recall of advertisement, shareability, favorability, likelihood to purchase, and retail price. A second T-test was run on advertisements type (gamer targeted ads and general audience ads) against the two types of audiences (gamer vs. non-gamer) on the recall of advertisement, shareability, favorability, likelihood to purchase, and retail price.

The participants followed up by answering why they play and what motivates them to keep playing. The *Motivation* subscale was created with answers to statements such as *I like to play to prove to my friends that I am the best* and *I play video games to make new friends*. These questions were asked to understand if there was any difference between the people with most motivations and the people with the least motivations. Three subscales were created for *Motivation: Few Motivation* (people who had the least motivations), *Moderate Motivation* (people

who had average motivations), and *Many Motivation* (people who had the most motivations). A one-way ANOVA test was run to understand if there were any difference between the audience type and the advertisement type on recall of advertisement, shareability, favorability, likelihood to purchase, and retail price. Participants below age 18 and above age 65 were excluded from results. The first group, *Few Motivation*, consisted of people who had one through three selected motivations to play games. The second, *Moderate Motivation*, consisted of people who had four through six motivations to play games. The last group, *Many Motivation*, consisted of people who had seven through eleven motivations to play games. There was a significant difference between the groups *Few Motivation* and *Many Motivation*, where people with the most motivation would be most likely to remember the advertising, be favorable towards it, and the likeability to purchase. These were compared in the Post-Hoc test and the results showed a positive relationship between *Many Motivation* and the willingness to recall the advertisement, favorability towards it, and the willingness to buy the game.

After seeing the advertisements, people answered few questions of their thoughts on the advertisements. The subscale of *Favorability* was created in order to understand how people felt from the advertisement. A question in the subscale was reversed, such as *the aesthetics of the game advertised were unimpressive*. The rest asked about their interest on the game advertised, such as *I would enjoy the game advertised* and *I thought that the game advertised seemed fun*. A Univariate Analysis of Variance was tested with gamer and non-gamer audience and advertisements. There was no major difference between the two audiences, where gamer audience was most likely to prefer the gamer advertisements, where the non-gamer audience preferred the non-gamer advertisements.

The retail price and likelihood of purchase were asked with two questions: *what do you recommend as a retail price for this game?* (which was an open answer) and *if you had been given money to buy a new game from a new video game company, how likely would you be to purchase this game* (which was choice selection). These two categories were tested together with the recall, shareability, favorability, and motivation against the two audiences and the two different sets of advertisements.

## 9.2. Limitations

There are two major limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. The first limitation is the sample size and geographical location with the ongoing Pandemic. [...] The lack of diverse sampling is an important issue in this research because of the inability to generalize the research findings. This is a problem because, in future research, both the sample and the results of the research may vary. This specific audience limited the answers from an older generation because most of the results came from ages 18 though 56. Due to the student-teacher ratio, even if the survey was open to people up to 65 years old, most people who answered were students. For future research purposes, testing the same material on a wider audience, hopefully from all over the world, may



allow the researcher to generalize the results.

The second limitation in this study was the time constraints the researcher had to face during the process of collecting data. This played a severely big role in the forming of the analysis and conclusion. The researcher had little to no time to give out surveys, collect the data, and analyze it in order to describe it. This has led to limited research outcomes and analysis of data. [...] This may cause problems because the data should be able to explain the research questions, but when there is less time to seek the data and analyze it, the researcher may not get to it in time. For future research, it is imperative that the researcher has more time to distribute the surveys to the right audience, and to analyze the results.

## 10. Future Research

The researcher predicts that for future analysis, more background research needs to be done on different social media platforms. More background research on how social media was impacted by the Coronavirus needs to be done. It can lead to more knowledge on how these different social media platforms are used, and what research has been done in the past. [...] It may be the case to test those different social media posts by themselves on those specific platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit. Understanding how a post will do in its social media environment, will allow the researcher to reach a wider and actual audience that uses the specific platform. Having people that use the specific platform judge a post on there, will be the best audience for the researcher. Each online person can actually test each social media post individually, which will determine if the posts are actually attracting people or not. More than just testing the four targeted social media posts in a survey, allowing each post to be tested individually on the respective social media platforms will increase the chance to understand if the post by itself can be considered successful online.

## 11. Conclusion

The results in this research indicate that there is a positive correlation between gamer and non-gamer audience and the reception of gamer and non-gamer online ad of a video game. This study shows that targeted words such as “frag” could attract more gamer audience than a non-targeted advertisement. At the same time, less targeted ads will attract more of the general public. This will lead to a better understanding of what to post where on different social media platforms. Favorability of post also increases if audience is paired with targeted ad. Shareability, another measured variable, showed that people who are most invested in the ads are most likely to share. The retail price had no major difference, but stated that gamers are more likely to pay more for a game than non-gamers. The goal of this experiment was to understand if there were any differences between the targeted audiences and how they reacted to the targeted and non-targeted

advertisements of a new on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Reddit. This has allowed to understand that a more targeted audience is more likely to react to a more targeted advertisement, while the general public is more likely to react more to a generalized advertisement of the game. This may be used as an advantage, to target certain people with different social media platforms advertisements.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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