

## **The Role of Emotion Regulation in Esports Performance**

People encounter high-stakes performance situations in sports competitions, exams, or job interviews. Some individuals perform at the highest levels achieving their goals, whereas at the same time, others choke under pressure, underperform, and fail to achieve their goals. It is critical to identify – and ideally, intervene upon – the **processes that distinguish success from failure** in performance situations. The present project aims to test the role of one such factor - emotion regulation. To reach performance goals, individuals must not only cope with situational demands (e.g., knowing the answers for exam questions) but also master emotions that arise in the course of these efforts through a process called emotion regulation.

However, despite the importance of emotion regulation in performance contexts, existing emotion regulation models do not provide a framework sufficient for understanding factors specific to performance. To address this issue, we propose a novel framework, i.e., ***Adaptive Emotion Regulation in Performance***. To test our framework, we will focus on the role of **emotion regulation training in esports**. Esports is a relatively novel and the fastest-growing area in sports, in which individuals compete using video games. Using esports will allow us to study emotion regulation in the context in which **motivation to perform is high, and emotions are intense**. In studying the adaptive emotion regulation in esports, we will focus on three aspects of esports performance, i.e., **effectiveness, emotions, and health**. Thus, we will test whether regulating emotions while gaming 1) **facilitates performance levels, e.g., match scores (effectiveness)**; 2) **makes the performance experience more pleasant and joyful (emotions)**; 3) provides the **physiological support** for necessary gaming actions and **speeds up the recovery** after the gaming (health).

In our project, we will organize a **real-life esports competition**, which will be a part of a **large-scale, three-stage experiment with the measurement of cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses**. During the first laboratory session, half of the gamers will learn how to use a **reappraisal strategy** to effectively regulate emotions. The other half will be instructed to observe emotions related to gaming. Next, gamers will be asked to apply this emotion regulation to their daily gaming routines. Finally, after two weeks of emotion regulation training, gamers will come back to the laboratory to compete in the real-life esports competition with the prize of 2000 PLN (c.a. \$500). In the competition, gamers will be asked to apply the learned emotion regulation strategy. We expect that gamers that will train reappraisal would display more adaptive responses to performance than gamers in the control condition.

In summary, this project aims to offer and test a novel framework for adaptive emotion regulation in performance contexts. We will study how emotion regulation influences the esports performance levels, the emotions accompanying the game, and issues related to players' health. We will also check if, after emotion regulation training, the players will acquire additional regulatory skills. This project will contribute to developing knowledge in such areas of psychology as affective psychology, sports psychology, and psychophysiology.