

Metacognition in problematic gaming: the role of motivation, desire to dissociate and desire thinking

Playing computer games is becoming increasingly popular. This does not only apply to computer or console games. Games that are available on smartphones or tablets are chosen with similar frequency. In recent years the negative consequences of playing video games on has been acknowledged.

In the latest edition of the classification of diseases and health problems (ICD-11), the World Health Organization has distinguished a new diagnostic unit - gaming disorder. Many clinical practitioners have long pointed to the presence of addiction symptoms among some gamers. However, there was no agreement among them as to the typical diagnostic criteria. The introduction of a new disorder in ICD-11 enables the unification of existing concepts and the conduct of research based on the same assumptions. This is especially important due to the small amount of research conducted in the context of problematic gaming.

As part of this project, we have planned a study, thanks to which we will learn how many players show symptoms of a gaming disorder, and thus we will find out how many people require specialist help. In addition, we are particularly interested in considering the motivational factors, the desire to dissociate and (desire thinking), which are involved in the development of problematic gaming. Gamers play games for a variety of reasons, e.g. to rest or spend a pleasurable free time. However, it can also be an attempt to escape from the surrounding world, when various difficulties make it impossible to deal with a given situation. The desire of escapism manifests itself by cutting a person off from reality, which becomes the basis for the development of non-adaptive dissociation patterns. This addictive mindset is one of the main elements that have so far been practically unknown among gamers.

The research scheme assumes the use of a set of questionnaires with repeated measurement on a representative group of players, relating, among others, to motivational factors, the desire to dissociate, addictive thinking, symptoms of problematic gaming, gaming disorder, as well as other psychopathological symptoms. A wide range of tools will allow to measure multiple areas at once, as well as monitor changes over time.

Additionally, to get to know the players who show symptoms of problematic gaming even better, we will conduct clinical interviews with them. We will confirm and deepen the data collected in the questionnaires. In addition, it will enable deeper understanding of the gamers' perspective - their needs, expectations, and difficulties, which cannot always be fully expressed by the questionnaire survey. These discussions are also very important in the context of developing interventions and effective therapeutic approaches. Understanding the thought processes involved in the development of a gaming disorder will enable the forming of more effective techniques.

The presented project covers clinical, health and cognitive psychology as well as therapeutic practice. Problematic gaming is a poorly understood area, despite the increasing number of players and the changing habits of the society resulting from the pandemic of coronavirus. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a detailed examination of the mechanisms involved in the development of a gaming disorder. This will be an empirical confirmation of the theoretical assumptions of the model describing the formation of behavioral addictions. The obtained results can also be used to design an effective therapeutic effect among people showing symptoms of problematic gaming.