Chapter 50

Well-Being, Motives and Experiences in Live and Online Game Settings:
Case of Contract Bridge

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ABSTRACT

Traditional mind sports are extremely suitable for online environment, so various specialized platforms, were developed for this purpose. Although online games are technically superior and popular, many players argue that online play lacks "the game spirit". The aim of this article was to compare motives and experiences of live and online games of Bridge. The authors conducted ten semi-structured online interviews with bridge players. All participants confirmed that Bridge significantly improved their quality of life. The participants reported benefits in accordance with Major (2001) serious leisure benefits and partially in accordance with the DRAMMA model of five factors related to leisure activities (Newman, Tay and Diener, 2014). Results showed that online bridge was generally perceived as less challenging and demanding, but appropriate for training purposes. The most important difference in motivation is related to boredom – frequent motive of online bridge, while not existent in live settings.

Feeling the cards in your hand and looking the opponents in the eye is part of the magic. - Bridge player

INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to the assessment that people provide relating to their quality of life (Pavot & Diener, 2004), and it is well known that leisure activities contribute significantly to the quality of one's life (e.g. Newman, Tay, & Diener 2014; Yarnal, Chick & Kerstetter, 2008). Motivation, as a force that initiates behaviour, plays an important role in participation in leisure activities, as well as in determining SWB (Kuykendall, Tay, & Ng, 2015). Due to technical progress and digitization, there have been also notable changes in leisure activities, and many of them are now being placed in virtual settings, including mental games. Thus, the aim of this research paper is to provide a framework within which to describe how the characteristics of bridge, as mental game and specific type of leisure activity, are linked to SWB by delineating different aspects of motivation related to live and online bridge playing settings. This research paper also aims to provide a guide to understanding how different motivations are involved in live and online bridge game settings, and how an online game setting can be designed to appeal to those with different motivations for playing bridge.

Authors of the paper confronted significant challenges while trying to present findings from previous studies on this issue, since the existing body of research on this topic is very limited. Therefore, we were sometimes forced to (1) make analogies with other mind sports or leisure activities (2) partially rely on first-hand experience or anecdotal evidence in order to support our findings (3) refer to popular bridge web sites, online forums, or non-scientific articles. To avoid over-interpretation or misinterpretation of data reported, sources of references were always clearly designated.

The introductory section describes the concepts of wellbeing, motivation and leisure activities, followed by explanations of the game and different motivations for playing it. We then take a closer look at the game of bridge and its relatedness to theoretical key concepts, followed by a comparison of live and online bridge playing settings. Research methodology and description follow introduction accompanied with study results' presentation and discsussion.

WELL-BEING, MOTIVATION, LEISURE ACTIVITIES, AND PLAY

SWB is an individual's overall state of subjective wellness, and it is commonly conceptualized as having two primary components– affective and cognitive (Diener 1984; Eid & Larsen, 2008). According to Diener's tripartite model of SWB (Diener, 1984), life satisfaction is an overall judgment of life, and positive and negative feelings refer to affective experiences.

A broad definition of motivation divides it into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Recently, Reiss (2004) argued that the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is invalid, and that extrinsic motivations do not exist. Intrinsic motivations describe activities that follow one's inner interests, and which are performed spontaneously and naturally (Deci, 1975). Those who report higher levels of intrinsic motivation and freedom experience greater levels of life enjoyment and psychological well-being (Graef, Csikszentmihalyi, & McManama Gianinno, 1983; Deci & Ryan 1987; Rodin, Timko, & Harris 1985; Wallston, Wallston, Smith, & Dobbins 1987), and leisure is a key life domain and a core ingredient for overall well-being (Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Perhaps the most innovative of these

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