

Prevention Focus as a Moderator of Aggression Towards Women in Video Games



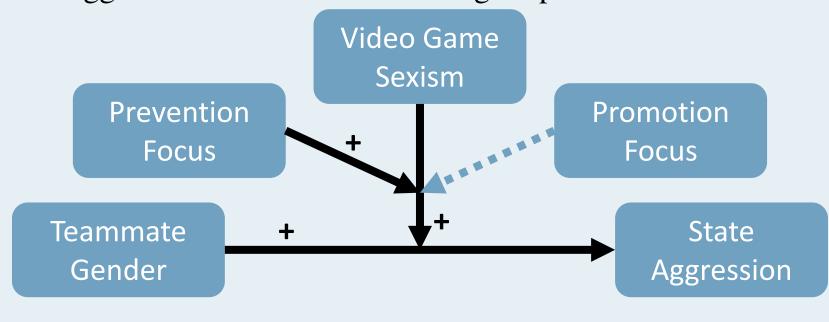
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Background

- Women face a disproportionate degree of aggression and abuse from men in video game contexts (Kuznekoff & Rose, 2012; Salter & Blodgett, 2012).
- Gaming has generally been seen as a male activity (Fox & Tang, 2014). Moreover, aspects of current game design may perpetuate gender stereotypes (Downs & Smith, 2010; Miller & Summers, 2007; Yao, Mahood & Linz, 2010).
- Prevention focus, a sensitivity to loss (Higgins, 1997), has been linked to aggressive responses to the violation of certain normative behaviors (Keller & Pfattheicher, 2013; Pfattheicher & Keller, 2013)
- If female gaming is seen as non-normative behavior, prevention focus may help explain aggression towards women in video games.

Hypotheses

- 1. Aggression will be higher after criticism from female teammates than from male teammates.
- 2. The relationship between gender and aggression will be stronger for those with higher sexism.
- 3. Sexism's effect on the relationship between gender and aggression will increase with higher prevention focus.



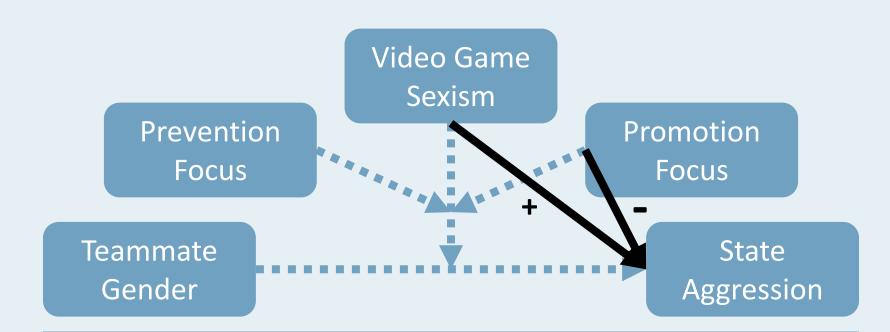
Method

- 157 male participants who had been screened for gaming experience completed an MTurk survey.
- Participants responded to the Video Game Sexism Scale (VGSS; Fox and Tang, 2014) and the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al. 2001).
- Video vignettes of gameplay were used as a manipulation with half of participants receiving a video voiced by male players, and half a video voiced by female players.
- After vignettes, participants completed the State Aggression in Video Game Environments (SAVE) Questionnaire, a new scale based on prior aggression measures (e.g. Buss & Perry, 1992; Farrar & Krcmar, 2006).

Results		
Predictor	eta	t
Teammate Gender	0.06	0.81
Video Game Sexism (VGS)	0.35***	3.53***
Prevention Focus	-0.10	-1.29
Promotion Focus	-0.16*	-1.99*
Gender X VGS	-0.06	-0.56
Gender X VGS X Prevention	0.01	0.92
Gender X VGS X Promotion	0.06	0.71

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001; DV = State Aggression

- Main effect variables and relevant interactions were submitted to multiple regression analysis in SPSS.
- The final model was significant (R^2 = .18, $F_{7,149}$ = 4.56, p < .001), but only VGS and promotion focus were significant predictors of aggression.
- None of the hypotheses were supported.



Discussion

- *Regardless* of teammate gender, individuals with higher levels of sexism expressed greater aggression.
 - Fox and Tang (2014) found a very high correlation of .61 between Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and VGS. Considering that Passini (2008) found that SDO correlates with authoritarian aggression (r = .14), SDO could account for the connection between VGS and aggression.
 - More research is needed to test SDO's role in predicting aggression in video game contexts.
- Prevention focus did not impact aggression. However, higher *promotion* focus decreased aggression in contrast with past research (e.g. Keller et al., 2008; Keller & Pfattheicher, 2013; Pfattheicher & Keller, 2013), which found no effect of this variable. This suggests that the achievement-oriented context of video games may be different than the contexts tested in prior literature.
- Limitations of this study include:
 - The vignette audio was created by the researchers, but the video was not, limiting experimental control.
 - The use of a vignette may have limited the realism of the manipulation, decreasing its effects.