Player Types: A Meta-Synthesis

Janne Tuuanen

Part 1
Christopher W. Gjøvåg
Market Segmentation

• Divide market to better meet demand
  • Geographic segmentation
  • Demographic segmentation
  • Psychographic segmentation
  • Behavioural segmentation
### Studies Analysed

- **Focus on Psychographic and Behavioural**
- **A total of 14 studies mentioned**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Basis</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Presented player types</th>
<th>Games in this study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wang Chen</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Psychographics</td>
<td>Questionnaire - focus analysis</td>
<td>Single-player games, Community-oriented games, Massively</td>
<td>Lineage (MMORPG)</td>
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<td>Tang</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Psychographics</td>
<td>Questionnaire - focus analysis</td>
<td>Aggressive games, Fast-paced, VR/AR games</td>
<td>Online games in general</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Lee       | 2006, 2007, 2012 | Psychographics | Questionnaire - focus analysis | Achievement, Social, Immersion | EverQuest, Dark Age of Camelot, Online Games, and Bar Mitzvah Games (PVP)
| Dolan et al | 2010 | Psychographics | Conceptual analysis | Progress & presentation, Power & achievement, Role-playing | World of Warcraft (MMORPG) |
| Serden et al | 2011 | Psychographics | Conceptual analysis | Game objectives, Narrative, Emergent, Open-world, Company, Leadership, Player-chosen | The same as in the previous studies class is continued |
| Barie     | 1996 | Behavioural | Questionnaire - correlates, analysis | Achieve, Explore, Socialize, Kill | MMORPGs |
| Loerke    | 2004 | Behavioural | Conceptual analysis | Be fast, Be funeral, Alien types, The people factor | Non-exclusion |
| Druckien et al | 2009 | Behavioural | Questionnaire - matching, analysis | Wear, Save, Pacify, Human | Tomb Raider: Underworld |
| By Jenkins | 2005 | Behavioural | Questionnaire - focus analysis | Hardcore games, Casual gamers | Non-exclusion |
| Köhn et al | 2011 | Behavioural | Transposition of analytical and qualitative data | Social metanarrative, Casual narratives, Immersive narratives | Non-exclusion |
| Harned & Lefferts | 2010 | Behavioural | Conceptual analysis | For example, character level and class | EverQuest, Hitman, Half-Life, World of Warcraft (Baseline) |
| Williams et al | 2006 | Demographics | Transposition of questionnaires and qualitative data | Group activity, Size of the guild, Type of server selection | World of Warcraft (MMORPG) |
Psychographic Basis

• Hardcore-Casual according to Ip & Jacobs (2005)
  • **Hardcore**: someone who has a *deeper knowledge*, that engages *outside the game* itself, and *play longer*.

• Hardcore-Casual according to Steward (2011)
  • **Hardcore**: Want to be *intellectually challenged*, and want *interesting and compelling experiences*. More likely to prefer *adventure* or *puzzle* games.
  • **Casual**: Might prefer *action* or *strategy* games
Behavioural Basis

• Drachen et al. (2009)
  • Veterans
  • Solvers
  • Pacifists
  • Runners

• Bartle (1996)
  • Achiever
  • Explorer
  • Killers
  • Socialiser
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Part 2

Eirik Osnes
In-game demographics

- Segmenting based on in game avatars, rather than players
  - Might give better results for marketers (Zackariasson et al. 2010)

- Two dimensional segmentation (Hamari & Lehdonvirta, 2010):
  - Vertical: Progress of character – Levels, rank etc.
  - Horizontal: Type of character - Classes, professions etc.

- Meaning and Value of Guilds (Williams et al. (2006))
  - Role-play oriented servers completely different than others in playstyle
  - Large achievement-oriented guilds vs. small tightknit social guilds
  - Not suggesting segmentation explicitly, but identifying factors.
Typologies combined: a concept-centric summary

- Concepts: Common reoccurring ideas:
  - Achievement
  - Sociability
- Most covered:
  - Achievement
  - Sociability
- Less covered:
  - Domination
  - Immersion
- Least Covered:
  - In-game demographics
- Other:
  - Intensity
  - Exploration

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<td><strong>Gaming intensity and skill</strong></td>
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<td>(Achiever, Single-oriented player, Guardian/Achiever, Aggressive gamer, Achievement, Progress &amp; provocation, Power &amp; domination, Runner, hard fun, Casual (Stewart), Avatar level, (Semi-)professional)</td>
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<td>(Avatar class and profession, non-clan member, Amateur, (Semi-)professional, Group centrality, Size of the guild, Type of server, Faction)</td>
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Criticism on player types

• Should be addressed as scales rather than categories
• Player types are abstractions of abstractions: should be interpreted as archetypes
• Motivation and behaviours might not transfer between different types of games
• Can a player be classified as one single player type?
• Might seem counterproductive if investigating player experience on richer level
• Player types not defined the same in different papers – hard to compare research.
• Question whether should adopt existing psychological frameworks, rather than create new for research. (Some are already based on these)
Discussion

• Amount of dimensions for player types rather low, and mostly based on Bartle. (Only immersion figuring from other literature). Some categorize the dimensions in higher fidelity.

• No mention of sensory enjoyment, aesthetic enjoyment, playfulness or utilitarian gaming motivations

• Not yet exhausted the study of identifying player types:
  • Identification and abstraction
  • Working from behavioral use data, and connecting to psychological factors a potential avenue.
Implications to game studies

• Largely based on MMOs and other online games – further studies could employ to other game types, platforms and contexts.

• Not necessarily very useful for qualitative game studies directly, but player types can act as starting point for finer lever investigation.

• Investigating the self-fulfilling cycle:
  • Identify player types
  • Create game aiming at the different player types
  • The designed player types become the dominant player types for the game

• Could possibly be applied to other fields through gamification and persuasive games: commerce, orgs., lifestyle and marketing.
Implications to game design and marketing

- Player types potentially good means of segmenting market – both real world and virtual.
- Many techniques used to determine player types in research also commonly used for segmentation. Creates typologies for segmenting.
- Paper potentially a good starting point for a thorough segmentation.
- Designers gain knowledge of common behavioural patterns and can develop accordingly.