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**An Application of Tajfel's Social Identity
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Identity Among Saudi College-Level Students**

by

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B.S., English King Abdul Aziz University, Saudi
Arabia, 2013

M.A., TESOL, Arkansas Tech University, USA, 2016

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
of

**Doctor of Philosophy
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Dedication

To the person who scarified everything for us,
who stayed all night praying for our success.

To my beloved mom, Sana'

I did it, mom!

Also to my wife and soulmate, Fairoz.

And my beautiful child, Sukkar.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank Almighty *Allah* (God) for his guidance, blessings, and success in my life and academic journey. I would also like to express my gratitude, sincere appreciation, and love to my hero, my beloved mom, Sana'. 22 years ago, you dreamt I would get my Ph.D. Today the dream came through. So, thank you for lighting the way for me to be who I am now. My special profound affection and thanks are due to my loving soulmate, Fairouz; without her dedication and sacrifice, I would not be able to endure. I thank my Sukkar, whose eyes gave me the strength to complete this project.

In the work toward my dissertation, I appreciate the help of my dissertation Co-chair, Dr. Rebecca Blum-Martinez, and my committee members, Dr. Bee, Dr. Cun, and Dr. Alqarni. All of whom showed endless support, caring, and encouragement. I realized that doing a dissertation required great energy, patience, persistence, and time. It was more like a fight against myself than against anyone else. Their trust in my ability to complete this study strengthened me to overcome such struggles. Their invaluable advice, dialogues, and interest in my research brought about this accomplishment. I thank them for everything during the long process of finishing this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the social identity construction of Saudi college-level students who self-identify as gamers in Saudi Arabia is essential when designing a student-centered education. Although support exists within the literature for exploring what it means to be a gamer from the perspective of gamers, a review of the literature revealed a gap in this regard in the context of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this grounded theory study explored self-identification as a gamer in Saudi Arabia using Tajfel's (1981) three tenets of self-identification with a group. A social identity framework was used to understand the characteristics of Saudi gamers, their positive or negative evaluation of the gaming group and their membership, and their feelings of belonging or not belonging to the gaming group. This study's focus was to explore gamers' social identity among Saudi college-level Saudi students. The data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews. The findings show the definition of self-identification as a Saudi gamer, the characteristics of the Saudi gamer social group, and the interaction between their social identity and the

languages used. Findings also show the Saudi gamers' evaluation and the emotional significance of their social group and membership.

Keywords: Tajfel's social identity, social identity of gamer, gamers' social identity, Saudi gamers' social identity.

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List of Acronym

NO	Acronym	Definitions
1	AFK	Away From Keyboard
2	EFL	English as a Foreign Language
3	GG	Good Game
4	IRB	Institutional Review Board
5	KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
6	MMO	Massively Multiplayer Online Game
7	NPC	Nonplayer Character
8	PC	Personal Computer
9	QLP	Quality-of-Life 2020 Program
10	SIT	Social Identity Theory
11	SEF	The Saudi Esports Federation

An Application of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory to Understand Gamer as a Social Identity Among Saudi College-Level Students

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

According to Deshbandhu (2016), self-identification as a gamer is determined by many aspects. These include the type of games played, the frequency of play, and the overall relationship with gaming practices and gaming culture. In this paper, the term 'gamer' will refer to Deshbandhu's (2016) definition.

Being a gamer had an influence on me during my bachelor's and master's years. This influence extended beyond finding friends with a common interest to building study groups that used gaming terminologies, metaphors, and examples to facilitate and clarify our study materials. I remember a time when I was participating in a gaming session and performing well; however, I was ranked lower than I expected. One of my study partners, a gamer, used this incident to explain the statistical concept of the normal distribution.

In 2014, I started working as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor for one of the major universities in Saudi Arabia. As an EFL instructor, I observed that many of my students' free writing and speaking assignments were about different types of games and their gaming experiences. In 2018, I asked my students if they identified as gamers, and almost two-thirds of them did. Usually, such conversations led us to question what values they obtained from being members of the gaming community. More importantly, we talked about what makes a person identify as a gamer, how they evaluate their membership in the Saudi gaming social group, and their sense of belonging to such

a social group. The topic of gaming was the common ground where my students and I could meet and start conversations.

The issue of gaming was not exclusive to my personal experience or my students' conversations. It was a matter mentioned by the government of Saudi Arabia in their Vision 2030. The Saudi 2030 Vision is a road map for the post-oil era. The Vision is built around three themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. It includes many programs to ensure the implementation of the Vision (Vision 2030, 2016). One of them is the Quality-of-Life 2020 Program (QLP), issued in 2018. The QLP manual states that the government plans to increase gaming centers from 10 places in 2018 to 37 by 2020. It also mentions that an academy would be built to "train citizens to be able to design and program recreational e-games" (p. 147).

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) plans to host more than 30 Esports tournaments annually, spread across the nation. Finally, in 2017, the government allowed many international gaming conventions, such as Comic-Con, to be held inside the country. It is essential to mention that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some of these plans were postponed.

The government's emphasis on gaming shows that a substantial part of the population is interested in gaming to the point that the government considers them in the QLP. Saudi Arabia is "currently home to 23.5 million gamers; This is equivalent to 67% of the population of the Kingdom" (The Saudi Esports Federation, 2022). The Saudi Esports Federation (SEF) is an example of governmental efforts to improve Saudi gamers' quality of life. It is the regulating body in charge of nurturing elite gaming athletes and developing the gaming community and industry in Saudi Arabia. SEF

oversees developing programs that enable Saudi gamers to play locally and internationally at a professional level. In addition, SEF aims to develop the Esports gaming industry and community in Saudi Arabia. Their most recent program was the Voices of Saudi Esports, which aimed to increase the quality of Saudi gamers' content creation by providing financial and non-financial support (SEF, 2021).

During the writing of this paper, SEF is holding the world's biggest Esport event under the theme "Your Portal to the Next World." This event offers different competitive gaming tournaments with the participation of the best players and teams at the international level. The prize pool for this event is 15 million Saudi Ryals, which is four million USD. The event also includes "The Next World Summit," which will bring sector leaders and experts worldwide to discuss related topics. The event is broadcast live on various platforms in eight languages. These efforts show that gaming in Saudi Arabia is not just a luxury time activity; instead, it is being treated as a sport that requires a massive info structure and investment. Saudi gamers are not just people who play video games anymore; they are potential athletes that need nurturing to reach their full potential. The event also includes "The Next World Summit," which brings sector leaders and experts worldwide to discuss the future of gamers and industry.

It also marks a social change in Saudi society since gamers and games were mainly associated with negative connotations. From a religious point of view, many games included materials that discredited Islam and Muslims; thus, many *fatwas* (religious orders) were issued to forbid playing these games (Electronic games in Islam, 1999). Regarding Saudi families, many considered games a waste of time and prevented their children from contributing to the betterment of society and the family. Another

indicator of the social change is that some of the gaming conventions held after 2017 were mixed gender. In other words, both genders could attend simultaneously without boundaries that separated them. This is a notable social change as Saudis are famous for their conservative Islamic society that sees gender segregation as part of their religion and way of life.

Despite these social and cultural changes in the Saudi perspective on gaming that seemingly are led by the government, there is not an equal movement to support such change in the educational curriculum. This lack of representation of gamers, their way of life, and learning strategies was apparent when I checked the college-level materials I was delivering to my students, which the government also funds. In these materials, little to no importance was given to this topic by policymakers and curriculum designers. Hence, it is crucial to discuss this matter as one of the aims of the 2030 Saudi Vision is to improve education by building student-centered education (Alamr, 2019).

According to Whitehead (1929), knowledge acquired in schools most often remains inert. Something that can be traded for grades but not applied to situations that contain intrinsic values to the students (Lave, 1991, 1997; Wenger, 1998). Therefore, showing the importance of giving meaning to learning situations by having student-centered education. Barab and Roth (2006) commented on the issue:

The irony is that we then wonder why children appear unmotivated to learn after we have disconnected meaning from the learning situation, assuming that the learner somehow will attribute the same functional value to the information as the teacher does (p. 3).

To this end, The Saudi Ministry of Education has listed its plans for the National Transition Program, which is part of the government programs that ensure the implementation of the Vision. The National Transition Program includes many workshops and seminars to address issues in the Saudi educational system. It mentions that the weak educational environment inhibits Saudi students' creativity and innovation. Low-quality curricula and traditional teaching methods (teacher-centered) were also stated as the current challenges of the educational system (Alamr, 2019). This shows a governmental awareness of some of the problems regarding the Saudi educational system.

In order to resolve some of these educational issues, the Saudi Ministry of Education is implementing new strategies and techniques. These strategies include improving schools' infrastructure, planning advanced educational curricula, and improving training sessions to familiarize educators with new teaching methodologies. In addition, the Ministry will provide educators and schools with the latest technologies and supporting materials to facilitate learning and immerse students in the learning process (Education and Vision 2030, n.d.).

However, building student-centered education without exploring the students' understanding of their current needs, interests, and social identities may not be beneficial since these aspects shape their view of life and govern their attitude and emotions toward achieving tasks (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, it is important to understand students' social identity as research in this field is promising in understanding the relationship between students' social identity and their learning at universities. Particularly understanding the variables tied to students' learning approaches and academic performance (Bliuc et al.,

2011). Understanding these variables may be of the utmost importance when designing student-centered education.

With the governmental stress on gaming, students who label themselves as gamers and others who have different social identities should be included in the process of building a student-centered curriculum as they are the recipients of education. To do so, we first need to explore who these students are, why they call themselves gamers, and what values or emotions they obtain in doing so. Such an act of exploring students' social identity may provide valuable information that can be used in building student-centered education.

Statement of the Problem

Social identity explains a wide range of complex choices and behaviors such as intergroup conflict, becoming an activist, motivation, and psychological well-being (e.g., Ashford and Mael, 1989; Haslam et al., 2009; Jussim et al., 2001; Terry et al., 1999). To elaborate, our everyday life choices and our daily responses to simple and complex situations are driven significantly by our association with a particular social group. Tajfel (1981) indicated that social groups provide norms, standard behaviors, and expectations to their members, and group members will likely follow these expectations. Ellemers et al. (1997) indicated that people who strongly identify with a social group are more likely to follow the group's norms than those who have less attachment to the group. For example, social identification with an organization plays a role in how workers act in terms of attitudes, effort, loyalty, and motivation (Ellemers et al., 2004; Haslam et al., 2001; Ouwerkerk et al., 1999). Kuh (1995) indicated the importance of considering learning community variables in learning at the university level because students' academic

performance is, to some extent, influenced by their memberships in social groups (Bluc et al., 2011). Goodnow (1992) suggested that researchers should explore the links between students' self-identification and their motivation and learning. Therefore, the research problem explored in this study was the construction of the gamers' social identity of Saudi college students in Saudi universities.

As stated before, 63% of the population of Saudi Arabia are gamers, and I have personally witnessed the increased number of gamers in my classes. However, according to Tajfel (1981), it is vital that we allow members of social groups to define their identity before doing any research related to them. Thus, this study focused on establishing a definition of the Saudi gamer group that is constructed from in-group members; This definition should include the value and emotional significance that stem from self-identification to that particular social group (Tajfel, 1981). Although previous studies have examined gamers' social identity, they were primarily conducted in Western countries (De Grove et al., 2015; Shaw, 2011). Deshbandhu (2016) has examined the meaning of the term 'gamer,' noting that it has been frequently used in a simplistic way to label anyone who plays video games. De Grove et al. (2015) focused on exploring personal and social indicators of gamer identity. This study concluded that social network influences people more when they identify as a gamer than individual behavior. Additionally, Shaw (2012) investigated the representation of marginalized group identity in video games. However, little to no research attention has been directed toward the social context of Saudi universities as a site for examining gamers' social identity. Furthermore, none of these studies investigated how gamers evaluate their gamer social

identity nor the emotional significance attached to this self-identification. Thus, these were research gaps that this study aimed to fill.

Ćwil and Howe (2020) stated that "when describing gamer culture, the differences between countries and cultures should not be ignored" (p. 13). The research context should be considered because when discussing a group's social identity, it is understood that social identity is tied to the state of people's thoughts about themselves inside social groups and social surroundings. Hence, any change in the social group's features or surroundings can lead to different results since social identity is formed mainly from the group membership and interactions with the group members (Brown, 2000). Therefore, investigating the gamers' social identity in Saudi universities is important due to the variance in cultures that may yield different outcomes. For example, in a conservative society such as Saudi, Saudi gamers may carry different evaluations of their membership in the gamer community than in other societies. Their sense of belonging to such a community may also vary. These considerations should be addressed because the gamers' social identity, like any identity, "intersects with other identities and is experienced in relation to different social contexts" (Shaw, 2012, p. 29).

Ćwil and Howe (2020) conducted a cross-cultural study that compared gamers' social identity in the United States (US) and Poland. Their main result was the existence of cross-cultural differences among gamers in terms of the meaning of gamer identity between the two countries. Consequently, this shows the importance of considering the social and cultural aspects of the research context because factors that may influence people's choice of being a member of a gamer group in the US may be different in another social context such as Saudi Arabia. For example, the stigma associated with a

specific social group may differ between countries, hence, affecting the decision to identify with a social group.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's social context is unique since cultural factors may influence the choice of participation in a social group. These factors are the Arabic language, Arabian origin, and Islam (Alsubaie, 2019). These are essential aspects of Saudi society as they represent the core of people's identity and shape the peculiarity of Saudis. More discussion of these aspects will be provided in the literature review section.

Significance of the Study

The proposed study has both practical and theoretical significance. From a practical perspective, the findings of this study may improve the current pedagogy to suit Saudi students' needs and interests. This study will help improve current curriculums by providing information on how Saudi students describe and evaluate their gamer identity and the emotions they gain by self-identifying with the Saudi gamer group. Thus, this information can help educators build an authentic and engaging student-centered education. Implementing an engaging student-centered curriculum will help achieve the national goal mentioned in the 2030 Vision. The findings may also help curriculum designers appropriately represent college-level adult gamers in their work, which may foster students' interest in education and provide motivation to learn. Findings from this study can also help EFL educators and policymakers find a way to blend leisure activity time with formal instructional activities that may improve the language learning process (Alamr, 2019). Finally, the findings of this study will contribute to the field of social identity studies and gaming in Saudi Arabia as it will show the lack of research on this

topic in Saudi Arabia. It will also offer valuable insight into social identity from the perspective of Saudi college-level gamers.

Purpose of the Study

This research aimed to explore the construction of the Saudi gamers' social self from the perspective of self-identified Saudi gamers who are undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia. This exploration was done by establishing a definition of the Saudi gamer social group that contains the emotional and value significance of self-identifying as Saudi gamers (Tajfel, 1981). This research was not an attempt to determine whether or not someone is a Saudi gamer. Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory (SIT) was utilized as a theoretical lens to explore the experience of college-level self-identified Saudi gamers. It specifically evaluated the following three elements. The cognitive element, which includes the awareness that one belongs to a group; the evaluating element, which includes one's positive or negative assessment of the group and its membership; and the emotional element, which is based on one's feeling of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981). Although this study shed light on some gaming practices as part of gamers' social identity, it did not aim to investigate gaming or gaming identity that is mainly related to in-game characters or gaming behavior.

Theoretical Framework

Overall, Tajfel's (1981) SIT has been chosen as a theoretical framework due to its clear focus on group membership in identity formation and its prior use in similar research (Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2001, 1979; Turner, 2012). Social identity is "the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to a certain social group

together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 31). It originated as a theory to explain group processes and the behavior of social groups. It views groups at large as opposed to the traditional reductionist approaches, which focus heavily on individuals' behavior in groups. Social Identity Theory provides a general scheme to understand the relational uniformity of inter-group activity and conformations (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). It considers groups to be the primary tool for social reform and conflicts, not individuals (Halldorson, 2009).

The theory suggests that self-concept is formed by two sources: personal and social identity. Personal identity includes an individual's attributes; social identity is the cognitive awareness that a person belongs to a social group that provides emotional and value significance to the person and the group. Therefore, SIT has three components: cognitive, evaluative, and emotional. The theory also provides four steps for social-psychological processes to explain inter-group behaviors. These are 1) social characterization, 2) social identification, 3) social comparison, and 4) the search for psychological distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1981).

Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals associate themselves with a group for a sense of pride, involvement, stability, and meaning (Ling, 2020). People strive to link themselves with a positive identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). If the group does not provide a positive identity, its members might opt to move to a more positively valued group through social mobility. If they cannot leave their group, they may use different strategies to acquire a more positive social identity through social creativity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

As part of SIT theory, Tajfel and Turner (1986) also mentioned that awareness of group identity and its judgmental elements develop early in childhood as children learn social categories, content, and evaluative attitudes in their environment. The evaluation component and knowledge of surrounding groups are learned in terms of stereotypes (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Stereotypes can be positive, neutral, and negative, which may lead to self-devaluation. The group's status can increase or reduce antagonism (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The theory can be applied to video gamers as social groups to understand the construction of the gamer social group and explain inter or intra-behaviors of a group. However, SIT suggests that before delving into understanding the group's behavior aspect, it is essential to start with a definition that shows the group's construction from the perspective of its members. This definition should cover the three elements of belonging: cognitive, evaluative, and emotional (Tajfel, 1981), which this study tried to achieve. Hence, the three research questions of this study are discussed next.

Research Questions

The following three research questions are influenced by Tajfel's social identity theory which was the guide of this research design. One of the main aims of this study was to apply Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory to understand how Saudi gamers construct their social identity as a group. According to Tajfel (1981), this understanding can be achieved by exploring the three components of SIT. Tajfel's SIT (1981) argues that one's self-identification with a group contains the following three components: 1) a cognitive element that includes the awareness that one belongs to a group, 2) an evaluative element that includes one's positive or negative evaluation of their

membership and the group, and 3) an emotional element based on one's feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group. Each research question in this study aimed to tackle one of these elements. By making the research questions in this way, we were able to access information related to the construction of Saudi gamers' social identity from the perspective of in-group members, in our case, Saudi gamers. The study answered the three following research questions.

- 1) What are Saudi gamers' characteristics?
- 2) How do Saudi college-level self-identified gamers evaluate the gamer group to which they belong?
- 3) To what extent do Saudi college-level self-identified gamers feel they fit in or belong to the gamer group?

Research Design Overview

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) mentioned that knowledge is constructed through research that builds on others' research. Thus, it is acceptable for researchers to adopt others' research or "replicate it" (p. 70). To address the research questions, this study replicated Halldorson's (2009) study design as it fits the goal of this research. In other words, I used the same research questions and methodology. However, the population was different.

Halldorson (2009) used social identity theory to understand Metis as a social identity. In doing so, she utilized the qualitative grounded theory methodology to achieve this aim. Similarly, this study was qualitative grounded theory research. It also used Miles and Huberman's (1994) deductive approach, which entailed designing the conceptual framework, research questions, categories, and preliminary codes based on

the study's theory. This deductive approach was followed by an inductive approach as the variables within the conceptual structure were created and operationalized using knowledge gathered from study participants during the research process.

The study collected data using one round of semi-instructed interviews. The interview was designed to explore the three elements of social identity theory. A deductive coding approach was used to analyze the data. The findings were compared and contrasted with SIT and findings from the literature review on gamers' social identity.

The study targeted Saudi college-level students as participants. The sample size was 11 Saudi college students: eight males and three females. They were enrolled for the minimum number of hours to be considered full-time students per their university regulations when the study was conducted. The precondition for involvement in this study was that the participants must be engaged in the practice of playing video games and self-identified as Saudi gamers.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, this study was conducted virtually through Zoom. All University of New Mexico IRB protocols were used as a guide for ethical issues and consideration throughout the research process.

Definitions of Key Terminology

Key terms that will be used throughout this study are defined below.

- 1) The working definition of the term *identity* in this paper is how 'self' comprehends its nature through continuous interactions with others and how the 'self' understands and describes itself (Giddens, 1991).

- 2) For this exploration, *social identity* is defined as “... the individual’s knowledge that he [or she] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [or her] of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1974, p. 292).
- 3) *Belonging* is the feeling of being part of a group (Tajfel, 1981).
- 4) I draw from Deshbandhu's (2016) work to define *gamers* in this study. He concluded his ethnographic study about how gamer identity is formed by suggesting that game players’ self-definitions as gamers are determined by the type of games played, the frequency of play, and the overall relationship with gaming practices and gaming culture.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study aimed to explore the social identity of Saudi gamers from the perspective of self-identified college-level Saudi gamers in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, I wanted to examine the characteristics that make a person a Saudi gamer and the emotional and evaluative significance of self-identification with this group. These elements are crucial to me since they are the main points my students and I used to have most of our conversations. They are also important as the idea for this research came from these conversations with my students.

To achieve this, three major bodies of literature have been examined. First, Henri Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory is used as a theoretical framework for the study. Second, factors that shape Saudis' identity are included since they are the target of the study. Finally, studies on the characteristics of gamers' social identity are included to understand how the social identity of gamers is constructed in different research contexts. Thus, allowing me to compare the social identity of gamers with the same social identity in Saudi Arabia. I used multiple information sources to conduct this literature review, including books, dissertations, internet resources, professional journals, and periodicals. These sources were accessed through ERIC, ProQuest, eduCAT, CLIO, and the Saudi Digital Library.

Although I was advised to focus on the last ten years' publications, I found myself going beyond this for many reasons. First, there has been a lack of research on the social identity of gamers in the last ten years. Using keywords such as gamers' identity, the social identity of gamers, and gamers' social identity across multiple databases produced

around 600 research papers in total for the last ten years. After skimming these publications, I found that most of them were unrelated to the topic that I wanted to investigate. Many tackled issues such as the psychosocial impacts of social identity in gamers or the impact of social identity on online game addiction. Furthermore, a significant amount of these research were based on Gee's (2003) concept of video games and identity. Although these research studies explored gamers and identity, they were unrelated to this research topic; thus, I had to eliminate them. However, from the last ten years, I only found five studies directly related to this study's topic, demonstrating a gap in this area.

Second, from these five, many of them presented a change in what we know about gamers' social identity. Thus, to accurately describe those findings, it was essential to consider earlier studies that were the basis of comparing and contrasting with the most recent research. Besides, research that used quantitative methodologies used previous studies to gather variables for their research. Therefore, it was crucial to go beyond the ten years mark.

Through this review, I tried highlighting important gaps and arguments for the study. Each literature review section closes with a synthesis that focuses on research implications. The interpretive summary that concludes the chapter illustrates how the literature has informed the research.

Social Identity Theory

History of Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was developed in the mid to late seventies by Henri Tajfel to study how individuals form social groups and influence others from different

groups (Turner et al., 1979). In other words, it was introduced as a social-psychological theory to explain group processes and behaviors (Trepte, 2013). The theory arose from the critique of previous approaches to understanding and interpreting social behaviors, such as psychology, sociology, biology, and social psychology. During the 1970s and 1980s, the discipline of social psychology was in crisis. At the time, a divergence occurred within the discipline, reflecting the traditional tension between sociology and psychology (Halldorson, 2009). The conflict in the field of social psychology was an outcome of dissatisfaction with the trend that the discipline was following at the time.

Hepburn (2003) grouped the critiques of the discipline into three themes. First, social psychology was increasingly adopting an individualistic perspective in its approach to the social self. Second, there was an increasing loss of interest in research investigating the impact of broader social structures on social identity. Finally, social psychology increasingly relied on laboratory experiments as a research methodology.

In an alternative approach to the social psychology of inter-group behavior, Henri Tajfel, Professor of Social Psychics at Bristol University in the United Kingdom, sought to describe the interactions between social groups in more depth than other models. He was born in Poland into a Jewish family. Due to restrictions imposed on Jewish students in the educational system in Poland, he moved to France to finish his education. He was captured by the Germans and lost all of his immediate family in the Holocaust during the Second World War. This tragedy led him to question the reasons for hatred between groups and how social psychological models of inter-group conflict at that time did not fully explain inter-group conflicts.

He critiqued the realistic conflict theory as it does not paint the entire picture of inter-group conflicts. Realistic conflict theory seeks to explain inter-group conflict and was established by Donald Campbell in the 1960s. The theory suggests that conflict and hostility between groups happen when competition for limited materialistic resources exists. Tajfel did not refute this theory, but he questioned why there were conflicts between groups when there was no competition for resources. He also argued that traditional reductionist approaches focused on an individual's behavior in groups. Therefore, these approaches to understanding social behavior are individualistic (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Tajfel explained that traditional social psychology viewed groups as a small collection of individuals instead of how larger-scale social categories such as gender, religion, and ethnicity equip people with an identity or social identity. He commented on the state of social psychology as follows:

Thus, social categorization is still conceived as a haphazardly floating 'independent variable' which strikes at random as the spirit moves it. No links are made or attempted between the conditions determining its presence and mode of operation, and its outcomes in widely diffused commonalities of social behavior. Why, when and how is social categorization salient or not salient? What kind of shared constructions of social reality, mediated through social categorization, lead to a social climate in which large masses of people feel they are in long-term conflict with other masses? What, for example, are the psychological transitions from a stable to an unstable social system? (Tajfel, 1979, p. 188)

Although Tajfel was not concerned about the methodology aspect of the field, he believed that it would be better for the discipline to explore collective behavior and study

the direct effects of individuals' location in various parts of the social system on a wide variety of person-to-person encounters (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel's approach is not limited to a racial or a unique type of group but emphasizes the fundamental themes of inter-group relations. His approach reflects on group distinction and offers a general scheme to understand the relational uniformity of inter-group interactions, actions, and conflict.

Social identity theory was developed to counter the individualistic approach of social psychology to inter-group interactions and group processes (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). A fundamental premise of SIT is that groups are the primary vehicle for social reform and conflicts, not individuals. Tajfel's view recognizes the existence of human self-interest. He argued that focusing entirely on individual identity would not displace the knowledge base from what is already known. Furthermore, it would remove the impact of social identity on behavior within a given social context. The theory describes the limited dimensions of selves relevant to certain limited forms of social activity at a given point in time (Tajfel, 1981, 1982).

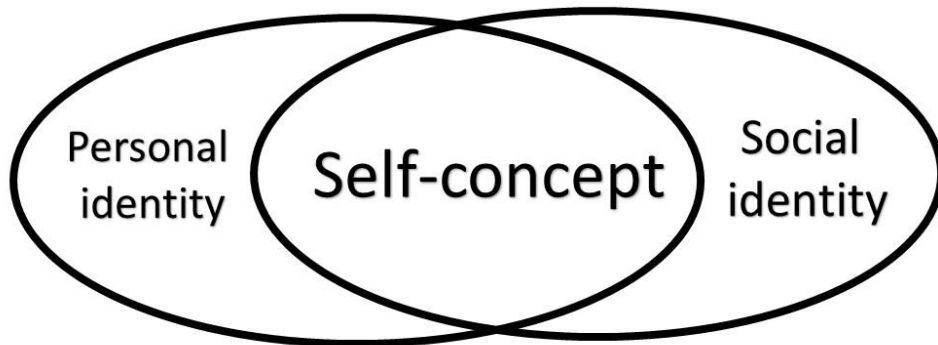
His initial work provides an interpretation of his approach's underlying principles. In one of his studies, Tajfel and his collaborators developed an unconventional method which is today known as the "minimal group procedure." In this process, individuals who had never met before were separated into groups using minimal knowledge (e.g., a coin toss). Tajfel (1970) showed that groups formed according to virtually any difference are vulnerable to group favoritism. Research has found that group favoritism and discrimination are easily triggered (Tajfel, 1982; Turner et al., 1987). For example, in one study, although only a few minutes had passed, individuals in the experiment perceived

their group as superior to others. Such groups often strive to retain an edge over others to enhance their self-esteem.

Tajfel suggested that social and personal identity are hypothetical cognitive structures that form most of the concept of self. Each structure is constructed of more narrow cognitive elements such as particular social categorizations of gender, race, political affiliation, religion, and personal features, for example, bodily attributes and personal preferences. In other words, a person's self-concept is extracted from two primary sources: personal and social identity. Personal identity contains a person's individual attributes, accomplishments, and qualities. Social identity involves collective affiliations that are accepted as part of a person's identity. Therefore, individuals' total characteristics that define a social group are used to identify themselves and produce their social identity (Turner, 1982).

Figure 1

Self-concept Construction According to Tajfel's (1981) SIT



Definition of Social Identity and Its Components

Social identity is defined initially as “... the individual’s knowledge that he [they] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [them] of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292). From the viewpoint of Tajfel, an individual’s social identity is seen as part of the self-concept, which usually includes attributes that reflect the social groups or categories to which the person belongs. The identity stems from their perception of their social group membership, along with an evaluation and emotional meaning attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981, 1982). Consequently, Tajfel (1979) structured his definition of a group with “a cognitive component (knowing about the group membership), an evaluative component (positive or negative evaluation of group membership) and an emotional component (positive or negative emotions associated with the group membership and its evaluation)” (Treppe,

2013, p. 256). In the following paragraphs, I explain each of the definition components and how it theoretically can be applied to the Saudi gamer group to establish a conceptual understanding of such a group. It is essential to mention that this application is only theoretical as there is a lack of research on this topic in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this demonstrates the importance of conducting research related to the social identity of gamers in Saudi Arabia.

Cognitive Component

According to Tajfel (1981), the cognitive component of an individual's social identity contains information about belonging to a group. Therefore, this shows the necessity of understanding the group from the perspective of its members. Tajfel (1981) stated that it is important to understand groups from their own perspective, as they define themselves, and not by adopting or dictating definitions from other groups. Furthermore, he explained that understanding the social groups needs to come before hypothesis testing and making assumptions about inter-group behavior. Furthermore, Tajfel (1981) stated that it is not necessary for a group's members to have had contact or face-to-face interaction because the social group exists with the individual, and a group's information is disseminated among its members in a way that allows for no direct communication. He theorized that an agreement about who is an in-group member and who is not is most likely to be shared by the group's members.

Regarding whether someone is not from the group, Tajfel (1981) recommended identifying relevant and significant out-groups before examining the inter-group relations or behavior. He explained that this identification is essential as it provides the in-group with a comparison to evaluate their in-group characteristics. Besides, identifying the out-

group may help identify 'who' contributes to the negative attitudes and prejudicial treatment of in-group members. Such distinction of out-groups from the in-group is bound to the context of time and social climate. Furthermore, defining a group entails the inclusion of the group's subjective characteristics, such as but not limited to stereotypes and belief systems. He added that for a group to be distinguished as a social entity, an awareness of these socially relevant characteristics should be commonly recognized by most of the group members. This is because these characteristics distinguish them from other social groups in the environment. According to Tajfel (1981), identifying as a social group member depends on the clarity of boundaries separating the social group from other groups.

Evaluative Component

Tajfel (1981) suggested that the evaluative component of a group may contain positive or negative evaluative characteristics ascribed to the group and the individual's membership of it by the group members. In other words, it reflects a person's tendency to positively or negatively evaluate both in-group attributes and their membership within the group. Although Tajfel (1981) acknowledged the connotations of potential negative value associated with an individual's social identity, he postulated that, in general, group members tend to ascribe more positive evaluative traits to the group they identify with because it provides a positive definition of social self which contributes positively to the self (Tajfel, 1981).

Emotional Component

Social identity theory suggests that the emotional evaluation should be examined separately (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel's SIT (1981) contains an emotional component

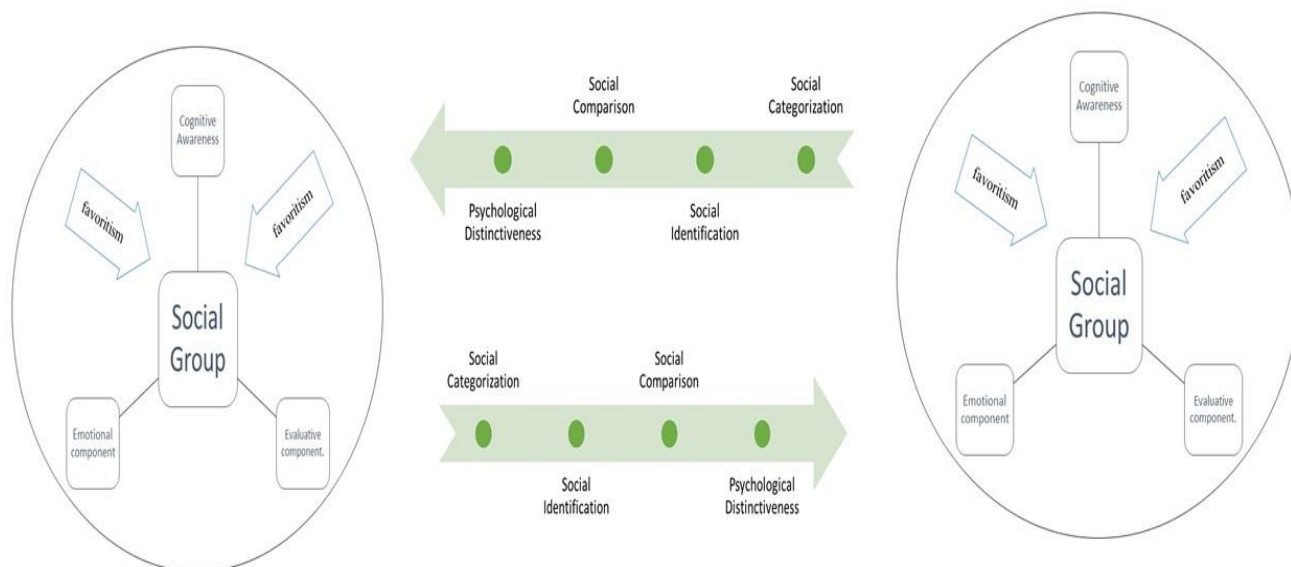
associated with the in-group members' emotional investment in their group membership. It represents descriptions such as feelings of belonging or not belonging directed toward one's in-group. Tajfel (1981) proposed that feelings of belonging to one's group can develop long before an individual group member can psychologically construct a cohesive and organized group for themselves or develop unique modes of characteristic informal behavior for their own use. It is frequently an interactive process that occurs between identifying criteria for in- and out-group membership, the conditions that lead to feeling like a member of the group, and acting according to group beliefs and attitudes. According to Tajfel (1981), one's feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group may be imbued with positive or negative emotions. In other words, if the feeling of belonging is associated with the experience of discrimination shared by members of the group, then this feeling of belonging is imbued with negative emotions such as anger and vice versa. To elaborate, people identify themselves and others in several groups, whereby their groups are a source of positive evaluation such as pride (nationality, religious belief, race, tribe, kin). This classification may lead to favoritism or prejudice to members of the group (us versus them) (Ling, 2020).

Four Principles to Explain Common Inter-Group Behavior

Based on these understandings, Tajfel underlined four principles of social identity theory that explain common inter-group behavior: social categorization, social identification, social comparison, and psychological distinctiveness. Each stage is dependent on the others (Worrall, 1982).

Figure 2

Tajfel's (1981) SIT



Social Categorization

The sequence begins with social categorization, a method of sorting individuals into groups (Baird, 2001). Social categories are groups in the social and psychological sense, as their participants perceive themselves and others as a distinct social entity and appear to behave uniformly against the world under some circumstances (Turner & Giles, 1982). It helps to simplify the environment, as self-categorization (and the additional categorization of others) indicates people's place in the social structure, thereby granting them social identities.

Social Identification

Social identification is when people specifically identify themselves with an in-group, resulting in accepting group expectations and beliefs. This identification happens because others' categorization contributes to recognition and approval between the individual and the in-group members. Being in a social group not only impacts the self-definition of individuals but also positively or negatively affects their self-image (Tajfel, 1981).

In embracing the group identity, social identity overcomes the personal identity of the individual, which manifests in a change of motives, expectations, affective connotations, background knowledge, beliefs, norms, and values (Turner & Onorato, 1999). This shift from personal identity to social identity appears to depersonalize the individual to become a part of a group. Depersonalization does not include dehumanizing, as it is merely a description of the tendency of the individual to downplay personal attributes to obtain group attributes (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Therefore, it is not a loss of personal identity but an acquisition of another identity.

Individuals can exhibit motivations and actions under the influence of social identity that clash with their personal identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As members of the group, people can embrace or support more radical views than they can individually (Korte, 2007). Moreover, suppose an individual's membership in a social group is meaningful. In that case, they behave according to the group's suitability principles that direct their actions and represent a framework of social expectations and values in a given social context (Tajfel, 1981). This is because an individual's view of themselves in relation to the world is derived from their membership in a social category. Their

membership would also influence their acts as they follow the shifting social environment in which they exist. As a result, social identity controls and builds social motivations and provides a behavioral control system (Tajfel, 1981).

Social Comparison

Social comparison is an evaluation measure in which individuals equate with and distinguish from other groups according to features, members, attitudes, and benefits (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Individuals associate themselves with a group for a sense of pride, involvement, stability, and meaning (Hogg & Grieve, 1999). According to Tajfel (1986), individuals strive to associate themselves with a positive social identity. Tajfel and Turner (1986) believed that a favorable comparison with other out-groups could preserve a positive social identity in terms of behavior and mutually valued attributes. On the other hand, a negative comparison results in unsatisfactory social identity as the differences between groups are perceived as favorable to the out-group. Social identity theory suggests that the need for assurance and positive self-evaluation are the main reasons a group exaggerates the in-group similarities and inflates its distinctions from other out-groups (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg & Grieve, 1999). When a positive social identity cannot be sustained, individuals might attempt to move to a more positively valued group or try to improve the evaluation of their own group. However, a negative social identity is insufficient for an individual to seek a more positive group distinctiveness.

The Search for Psychological Distinctiveness

Tajfel (1986) argued that the search for psychological distinctiveness comes in the fourth stage. He mentioned that groups try to solve problems by finding solutions that

preserve positive and valued psychological distinctiveness, in other words, to create or preserve certain forms of differentiation of one's own group from other relevant groups. Social identity theory concludes that if a social group fails to provide individuals with a positive social identity through psychological distinctiveness, then the individuals ought to choose one of several behavioral options. Such options depend on the individuals' social mobility and whether individuals can leave the social group or not (Tajfel, 1986).

Social mobility refers to the individual's perception that they can change their social position. This strategy "usually implies attempts, on an individual basis, to achieve upward social mobility, to pass from a lower to a higher status group" (Tajfel, 1986, p. 286). This solution implies that individuals can leave their social group; thus, it is an individualist option, not a group option. However, moving from one group to another is not easy as the permeability among groups varies. Some groups may allow members from other groups to enter while others resist them. If individuals fail to move to another group, they may rely on discrimination as a way to promote self-esteem (Korte, 2007).

If it is not possible for the individuals to leave their groups through individual social mobility, then they may aim to acquire a more positive social identity through social creativity. This occurs when group members try to seek positive distinctiveness by redefining the comparison element. This can be done in many ways. First, find new dimensions for the in-group to the out-group comparison. Second, change the values assigned to the group's attributes from negative to preserved positive. Lastly, change the frame of reference in comparison with a group that has lower status (Tajfel, 1986).

Another technique social groups may use to seek a positive distinctiveness is direct competition, or what Tajfel (1986) referred to as social competition. In this case,

the social group strives to equal or surpass the dominant group on the same dimension. For example, two countries may compete on the dimension of who is providing more social services to its citizens.

Although Tajfel did not focus on developmental aspects of social identity throughout the lifespan, he proposed that awareness of group identity and its judgmental elements develops early in childhood (Tajfel, 1986). In his experiment, children were shown pictures of many nationality groups. Children in the study showed favoritism for their own nationality. However, some of the children devalued their own ethnic or national identity. Children, thereby, become familiar with social categories, their content, and their evaluative attitudes regarding in- and out-groups within the social context in which they live. The evaluative elements are often learned before the concept is understood, and knowledge surrounding social groups is commonly transmitted in the form of stereotypes.

Social identity theory suggests that stereotypes are derived from or are an instance of the overall cognitive categorization process. They are relevant to the approach as they objectively represent the contribution of the social-psychological processes to inter-group relations. Stereotypes are an oversimplified idea of the traits that describe an individual or a situation. They are definitions that people often use to refer to other people on the grounds of group affiliation, which can be positive, neutral, or negative and differ in severity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). As a result, an internalization of self-devaluation occurs based on the negative views of other social groups. Tajfel's primary hypothesis was that antagonism could be increased or reduced depending on the differences in the social group's status.

The experiment mentioned above shows that the self-devaluation process begins in early childhood. Evidence of its presence comes from many countries and cultures (Tajfel, 1981). In general, social groups function as providers of positive social identity. This occurs by the process of comparison with other groups based on salient dimensions that carry a vivid value differential (Commins & Lockwood, 1981) and are cognitive, evaluative, and effective in their representation (Halldorson, 2009).

Strengths and Weaknesses of Social Identity Theory

The strength of SIT lies in its ability to logically link the individual with group behavior. It provides a general framework for understanding human behavior, favoritism, and stereotyping. It is also dynamic in nature and comprehensive to the point where many scholars have integrated their specific fields with the basic approach of SIT. For example, Williams and Giles have added gender differentiation; Giles, Bourhis, and Tylor have added a linguistic dimension to the theory.

Although the generality of SIT is one of its strengths, it is also one of its weaknesses. This is because it is lacking in terms of accurately predicting human behavior. For example, SIT predicts that when a group fails to provide a positive evaluation to its members, then they may use social mobility to opt out of the group. However, the theory does not address whether this would always be the choice if boundaries are permeable (Brown, 2020). In other words, would the members of an oppressed group always leave their group if allowed? Additionally, SIT does not state which social creativity strategies would be chosen first and when (Brown, 2020). Anne Maass, as stated in Brown (2020), also noted:

Although SIT's ability to offer a unifying explanation for multiple phenomena and to accommodate seemingly unrelated findings is very appealing, this also constitutes one of its potential limits if one assumes that breadth and predictive power are inversely related (an example is its difficulty in predicting which of many possible identity strategies is likely to emerge in a given situation and how self-esteem is linked to social identity). Although SIT may lack precision, due to its breadth and flexibility, it induced a profound 'paradigm shift' that permeated the entire field and redirected our attention to social identity as a pervasive motivator of human behavior. (p. 215)

Nonetheless, this challenge in forecasting human actions is not only a flaw of the theory of social identity but also a general trait of the social sciences (Korte, 2007). Tajfel (1981) stated that SIT helps to explore social groups; however, what can be achieved by doing that is the characterization of specific patterns of behavior, attitudes, or feelings that are more related to a social group than others.

Most of the criticism of social identity theory is related to the self-esteem hypothesis. Tajfel (1982) hypothesized that the motive for discrimination, prejudice, and the willingness to differentiate one's social group from others is the need for a positive self-image. This claim did not receive support past the minimal group experiments (Halldorson, 2009). Hogg and Abraham (1990) attributed this lack of support to measurement issues. Tajfel referred to self-esteem based on a specific self-image, which is the esteem in which one holds a particular self-image, such as self as Jewish. On the other hand, researchers often measured global self-esteem, which refers to the esteem in which one holds one's overall self-image that may play a role in intensifying the short-

term variation of self-image. To elaborate, there are different types of self-esteem that are typically measured in such investigations. These types are: (a) global versus specific self-esteem (e.g., Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995), (b) trait versus state self-esteem (e.g., Brewer & Miller, 1996), and (c) personal versus social self-esteem (e.g., Breckler & Greenwald, 1986).

Hogg and Abraham (1990) were referring to the first type indicating that researchers neglected the difference between global and specific self-esteem. Their suggestion is that measures of self-esteem should therefore be made specific to the particular in-group under investigation.

Another criticism of social identity theory is that it fails to clearly grasp the complexity of today's group-based identity. This is because having positive self-esteem as the only motivator is an oversimplified idea. People identify with groups for various reasons, for example, to reduce uncertainty about their social world (Hogg, 2007) or to achieve goals they could not achieve without others (Breakwell, 2015). Alternatively, they may join a social group to maintain continuity with their past (Sani et al., 2009) and for many other reasons. However, it could be argued that all of these reasons for joining a social group could contribute to a positive self-image, as they all positively affect self-image, thus enhancing self-esteem. Therefore, there is no actual contradiction with the theory; instead, these critiques show that SIT looked at the essence of joining a group rather than the surface-level reasons, which reflects SIT's ability to understand the complexity of today's group-based identity.

Furthermore, according to Brown (2020), SIT ignores the multi-faceted aspects of identity as it purports that a single in-group identity will become more salient in certain

contexts. He argued that researchers found that immigrants who are bi-cultural identify simultaneously with both their heritage culture and the culture of where they immigrated. This means that more than one identity can be salient. However, social identity theory suggests that, in particular contexts, some of the many available identities will assume a greater salience. For example, if the native aspect of the identity of a Native American was threatened by any means, being a native will rise and become more salient. This shows that social identity theory, as an identity theory, acknowledges the multi-faceted aspects and offers an adequate account of salience.

To summarize, SIT originated as a theory to explain group processes and behavior. It views groups at large instead of the traditional reductionist approaches, which focus heavily on individuals' behavior in groups. Social identity theory provides a general scheme to understand the relational uniformity of inter-group activity and conformations. It considers groups to be the primary tool for social reform and conflicts and not individuals.

The theory suggests that the concept of self is formed by two sources: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity includes an individual's attributes, and social identity is the cognitive awareness that a person belongs to a social group that provides emotional and value significance to the person and the group. Therefore, SIT states three social identity elements: a cognitive component, an evaluative component, and an emotional component. It proposes a four-step social-psychological process that explains inter-group behavior. These steps start with social characterization, followed by social identification, social comparison, and the search for psychological distinctiveness.

Social identity theory suggests that individuals associate themselves with a group for a sense of pride, involvement, stability, and meaning and strive to link themselves with a positive identity. If the group was not successful in providing a positive identity, its members might opt to move to a more positively valued group through social mobility. If they cannot leave their group, they may use different strategies to acquire a more positive social identity through social creativity or social competition.

The theory also mentioned that awareness of group identity and its judgmental elements develops early in childhood as children learn social categories, content, and evaluative attitudes in their environment. The evaluation component and knowledge of surrounding groups are learned in terms of stereotypes. These can be positive, neutral, and negative, which may lead to self-devaluation. The status of the group can increase or reduce antagonism.

Social identity theory can be applied to video gamers as social groups to understand the construction of the gamer social group and explain inter or intra-behaviors of a group. However, SIT suggests that before delving into understanding the group's behavior aspect, it is essential to start with a definition that shows the group's construction from the perspective of its members. This definition should cover the three elements: cognitive, evaluative, and emotional.

Application of Tajfel's Theory to Understanding Saudi Gamers as a Social Group

Addressing the question of how SIT can be applied to video gamers as a social group entails establishing first that 'gamer' is a relatively stable identity category. In other words, it is necessary to ensure that 'gamer' is an identity that people can choose, to express whether or not they belong to it. Many researchers have shown that being a

gamer is a stable identity category integrated into self-concept, as mentioned in De Grove et al. (2015), and people can choose to identify or not as gamers (Shaw, 2012).

When someone self-identifies as a gamer, it becomes a part of their self-concept and contributes to feelings of belongingness and positive self-esteem (Tajfel, 1979). Moreover, individuals who self-identify as gamers also embrace a personal identity linked with the group, which includes personal characteristics, preferences, and interests. Thus, this allows for comparison with other individuals' personalities and recognition of similarities shared with other people (Turner & Oaks, 1989).

The interplay between personal and social identity can be illustrated in an example mentioned by Grooten and Kowert (2015):

Imagine an American teacher, who is forty years old, married, and has two children. All these aspects categorize his/her social identity within society (by categories of nationality, profession, and civil status). However, the teacher might also be particularly interested in the field of gaming and likes to share his/her experiences with friends. This interest itself and the recognition that his/her friends share the same interests are aspects of the teacher's personal identity (additionally, the teacher might consider him-/herself a gamer). Both these identity structures allow for (self) identification within society as well as (self) perceptive identification with or belonging to certain social groups. Thus, identification as a gamer derives from the personal self-concept as well as from situating oneself in an overall societal context. (p. 75)

Based on Tajfel's theory, gamers are social group members with common problems, mainly that they are the objects of certain stereotypes from society (Tajfel,

1981). Williams (2006) explained that the popular stereotype associated with the term gamer is “isolated, pale-skinned teenage boys [who] sit hunched forward on a sofa in some dark basement space, obsessively mashing buttons” (p. 1). In Saudi Arabia, gamers were subject to religious considerations that linked gaming with negative connotations, such as containing elements that are contemptuous of Islam. As a result, many scholars have issued *fatwas* (religious orders) about video games.

Islam does not forbid leisure or having fun in permissible ways. The basic rule concerning these games is that they are permissible so long as they do not get in the way of obligatory duties such as establishing prayer [i.e., praying properly and on time] and honoring one’s parents, and so long as they do not include anything that is *haram* (religiously forbidden). (Electronic games in Islam, 1999)

Some of the examples of content that may make video games forbidden in Islam are "Games that include depictions of nudity," "Games based on ideas of gambling," games that teach children to "take killing and murder lightly," and "Games which are based on hatred of Islam and Muslims" (Electronic games in Islam, 1999). Such acts foster a negative attitude toward gamers and video games in general.

These negative religious views on games can be extended to reflect the social attitude toward games and gamers. Many families in Saudi Arabia perceive gamers as immoral on the basis that they waste their time and do not contribute to the betterment of the family and society. Videos on social media have been posted showing parents smashing gaming consoles, stating that this machine was the reason that their children started insulting their parents and negatively affected their mental health. In one of the videos, the father, who was smashing the gaming console with a hammer, said that these

tools stopped children from reading and memorizing the *Quran* (the Islamic holy book) and stopped them from performing their prayers. This act and the emphasis on religion and morality could be because Islam plays a central role in determining Saudi society's practices, values, and attitudes (Almunajjed, 1997).

In Islam, morality and religion are intertwined. Muslims have difficulty discussing morality without referring to Islam because, unlike other societies, there is not a body of work that proposes a secular framework for moral decision-making (Halstead, 2007). According to Halstead (2007), the conceptualization of the moral domain in Islam is wider than Western conceptualizations of morality. This is because morality is not an individual matter; society is also responsible for publicly upholding moral behavior and religious practices (Halstead, 2007). Consequently, explaining the negative public attitude toward gamers in Saudi Arabia further illustrates the importance of considering the social context in which the social identity is formed.

Tajfel (1981) explained that social identity is part of self-concept. It is composed of three elements: 1) a cognitive element that includes the knowledge of belonging to a social group; 2) an evaluative element that refers to the tendency to ascribe positive and negative evaluation to the social group and its membership; 3) an emotional element that involves the members' attitudes and emotions toward the membership and the social group they belong to.

Application of the Cognitive Component

In the cognitive component, Tajfel (1981) urged researchers to start their understanding of social groups by unveiling information about the group from the perspective of the group's members. According to Tajfel (1981), it is essential to acquire

such information from the group members as it is bound to the time and context where the group is formed. This was affirmed by Ówil and Howe (2020) when they compared gamer identity between the United States and Poland. Their findings showed that there were cross-cultural differences between the two countries. Additionally, it is important to allow the group members to define themselves because the out-groups may differ depending on time and context (Tajfel, 1981). For instance, a Saudi religious group had spoken against video games and gamers in the 1990s; however, with the social changes that the country is experiencing due to the 2030 Vision, these opinions may not remain. This could also be extended to how these two groups manage their conflict.

To elaborate, in the 1990s, the religious group and their views had more power socially; thus, gamers may have hidden their gamer identity to avoid conflict with the dominant group. An example of such action was evident in Shaw's (2012) study, where many of the participants chose not to identify as a gamer due to the social stigma associated with the gamer tag. Moving to the current time, where the religious views are less powerful and with the emphasis on gaming from the government of Saudi Arabia that has changed the power dynamics between the two groups, gamers may tend to be more open about their gamer identity.

For the Saudi gamer group, the cognitive component may include information about who is in the group and who is not a group member. For example, based on similar research conducted in the United States (De Grove et al., 2015; Deshbandhu, 2016; Shaw, 2012), the Saudi gamer group may include people who play a variety of games and are not dedicated to a single game as in-group members. Further, the cognitive component may also show information about behavior or activities specific to the Saudi

gamer group, such as having an unhealthy lifestyle due to gamers' tendency to sit for long periods of time playing video games or being socially introverted as the stereotype of the group may suggest (Williams, 2006). It may also include information about their language and system of beliefs regarding gender or physical features such as being overweight and sexist.

The cognitive component may include information about how the out-groups think about the in-group. In the case of the gamer social group, it is important to understand this issue because, according to Kowert et al. (2012), most of the negative characterizations attached to the gamer group are held by people who do not consider themselves a member of the gaming community. As a result, some self-identified gamers may define being a gamer in contrast to these widely held beliefs (Hall, 1996; Hebdige, 2002). Others may attach the perceived stereotypes to other gamers rather than themselves to show that the stereotypes do not apply to their own self-concept (Bergstrom et al., 2014).

Application of the Evaluating Component

Tajfel (1981) finished his triangle of identifying with a group by addressing two more components. The first is the evaluating component which relates to an evaluation of the group and its membership. According to Tajfel (1981), there should be a tendency to ascribe more positive traits and values to one's own social group as this helps improve self-esteem. Such an evaluation could result from what Tajfel (1981) referred to as social comparison. Thus, the members of a social group compare their group to another out-group, aiming to acquire a favorable comparison that boosts their self-esteem. In applying this component to the gamer social group, Yee (2006) stated reasons that drive gamers to

play video games. He mentioned that gamers are drawn to video games because it gives them a sense of accomplishment as they watch their progress in the games. In addition, it allows players to meet and build social relations that ultimately work as a social support provider for gamers. Lastly, some games offer access to different types of knowledge that players would not easily gain in the real world. Demetrovics et al. (2011) added other reasons for gamers to play video games, such as escapism and coping. Escapism means that players use video games as a tool to avoid facing real-life problems, whereas coping entails "gaming as a way of channeling distress and aggression in order to improve mood" (Caro & Popovac, 2020, p. 2).

Application of the Emotional Component

All these variables are expected to emerge when exploring the evaluation component of the gamer social group. Consequently, this evaluation will result in positive emotions toward the group from its members. This is because, according to Tajfel (1981), the emotional component includes descriptions such as a feeling of belonging or not belonging. For example, if a gamer evaluates the group as the best social group because it provides social support to its members, then the in-group would likely feel that they belong to the group. On the other hand, if the evaluation turned out to be negative, the in-group might feel like they do not belong to the group or hate the group.

Shaw (2011) investigated how people identify themselves as gamers and why they do so. Her findings did not only show that gamers are aware of their social identity but also showed that many of her participants considered themselves gamers at a particular time. However, due to the stigma associated with the term gamer, the participants decided not to identify themselves as gamers.

Shaw's (2011) findings speak to what Tajfel (1986) considered to be social mobility. Social identity theory suggests that if a social group fails to provide individuals with a positive social identity, certain social maneuvers are used to solve such an issue. One of these social behaviors is called social mobility, which depends on an individual's ability to leave the social group, as explained earlier in this paper. However, this is not the only solution that gamers may refer to when facing identity threats or conflicts. There are other solutions that the theory predicts. For example, in the case of the conflict between the religious identity and the gamer identity in Saudi Arabia, gamers may tend to adopt what SIT refers to as social creativity.

Social creativity is a cognitive strategy whereby people try to alter their perception of the current social situation of the group. This can be achieved by introducing alternative dimensions of the comparison between the groups. To elaborate, gamers may introduce more modern religious views that have lenient opinions about gaming. Thus, eliminating the conflict between the two identities. Another strategy for dealing with such a conflict would be reevaluating the group characteristics to enhance its perception. For example, gamers may emphasize how games can teach religious and social moral codes. By doing this, the gamer social group focuses on the educational aspect of the group to promote its image, resulting in a positive evaluation of the group. The last social creativity strategy compares the gaming social group with another reference group to make the standing of the gamer group more positive. In such a strategy, gamers may compare themselves with a lower status group in society to make the comparison more favorable to the gamer group (downward comparison).

Another technique that the gamer social group may use in such situations is to compete with the religious group directly. Tajfel (1986) referred to this method as social competition. In his view, social groups strive to equal or surpass the dominant group on the same dimension in social competition. To clarify, both the gamer group and the religious group would compete on a particular dimension, such as which group could provide better social support to its members.

In summary, we can utilize the tenets of SIT to understand gamers as a social group as they offer a theoretical lens to develop a conceptual framework specific to the gamer group. Doing so will lead to an initial understanding of the group, as SIT is suitable for such topics. Tajfel (1981) indicated the necessity of beginning such exploration of a social group with a definition of the group that reflects the way it is constructed by those who are members of the group itself. Therefore, before applying SIT to understand the inter or intra-behavior of the gamers' social group and, as per Tajfel's recommendation, an understanding of the construction of gamers' social identity from their perspective should be the starting point. This can be achieved by utilizing the three elements of SIT to obtain information about the meanings attached to self-identification as gamers and explain the inter or intra behaviors of the gamers' social group. Therefore, this is the aim of this study.

Factors That Influence the Saudi Identity

Miskovic (2007) stated that “Individual identities are inseparable from their socio-cultural environment, as each individual’s subjectivity is shaped by the searching for meaning in that environment” (p. 514). Therefore, people’s experiences and meaning-making in a specific context positively or negatively shapes their identity. This means

that when discussing the social identity in Saudi Arabia, it is essential to explore social and cultural elements that may influence Saudi's social identity.

According to Alsubaie (2019), three main factors influence Saudis' social identity. These are the Arabic language, the Arabian origin, and Islam. Hence, below is a discussion of these elements and their influences on shaping the Saudi identity.

The Influence of the Arabic Language on Saudi Identity

The Arabic language is one of the most essential components of Saudi society. This is because it is considered to be a unifying and 'belonging' element. It is the bearer of Saudi society's culture and civilization (Keneyeer, 2013). It could be argued that Saudis, as Arabs and like other Arabs, see their language "as a powerful symbol that reflects their national identity and their sense of belonging to past glory, a combatant present and a bright future" (Alsohaibani, 2016, p. 19). Hourani (1962) described the emotions of Arabs toward their language as:

More conscious of their language than any people in the world, seeing it not only as the greatest of their arts but also as their common good, most Arabs, if asked to define what they meant by the 'Arab nation,' would begin saying that it included all those who spoke the Arabic language. (p. 1)

Saudis are among many nations keen to protect their language and spread it. This might be because of the relationship between the Arabic language and Islam. The Arabic language is closely linked to the Quran and the *Hadiths* (sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions). It is also linked to the scientific developments in the Iberian Peninsula during Islamic rule (Alsohaibani, 2016). The inseparable

relationship between the Arabic language and Islam, including how the Arabic language has been utilized to resist cultural and political challenges to Arab identities, infuses the Arabic language with ideology (Alsohaibani, 2016). In a historical context, the Arabian nationalist movement in 1916, which rose against the Turknazation of the Ottoman Empire, was a clear example of how Arabs generally considered their language a fundamental source of their unity and belonging. Consequently, they strive to preserve and promote their language.

Attempts were made to protect and spread the Arabic language by the Saudis. For instance, in 2012, Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Harbi, a Saudi Islamic scholar and associate professor at Umm al-Qura University in Makkah, founded the Arabic Language Academy on the Worldwide Web. The mission statement stated that the Arabic Language Academy was founded so that the watchers and protectors of the Arabic language, "the language of Quran," can find a place. It also mentioned that the Academy aims to guard the Arabic language from distortion (Arabic Language Academy, n.d). The use of words such as "watchers," "protectors," and "guard" affirms that the Arabic language is considered to be an asset that needs to be kept safe and pure. Also, the use of the phrase "the language of the Quran" shows how Saudis link their language to their religion.

At the governmental level in Saudi Arabia, Arabic is the country's official language. It is the only language used in the government sectors and by the local people of the Kingdom. This is reflected by the first article in the Basic Law of Governance (1992):

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Arab, Islamic, fully sovereign state whose religion is Islam, its constitution is the Book of God Almighty and the Sunnah

[the body of traditional social and legal custom and practice of the Islamic community] of His Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, and its language is Arabic with the capital at Riyadh. (p. 3)

The Arabic language is the language of instruction and the language to be taught at all educational levels. Moreover, one of the purposes of the educational system of Saudi Arabia is "developing the linguistic ability in various means that nourish the Arabic language and help to taste and realize its beauty aspects, in style and idea" (Saudi Education Policy Document, 1995, p. 6). In 2020, the government announced the establishment of the King Salman International Academy of Arabic Language, the second major initiative after the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Serving the Arabic Language in 2008. In addition to this, the government established seven non-profit-making Arabic teaching institutions inside the country and eight similar institutions in other countries (Alsubaie, 2019), whose funds all derive from Saudi Arabia.

As discussed, the Arabic language plays a significant role in the sense of belonging for Saudis. However, it is important to consider whether the Arabic language would affect a Saudi's decision to be a member of a gamer group or whether the ability to speak English is necessary to be a part of a gamer group. These issues are crucial because the video game industry is largely an English-speaking sector.

The Influence of the Arabian Origin on the Saudi Identity

Ethnicity has a vital role in shaping the social identity of Saudi society. This is reflected in the founding King's statement, as cited in Alsubaie (2019), which stated, "our people are the Arabs, we are from, and to the Arabs, the service of Islam and Arabs is

generally due to us, and the service of our people and our nation is particularly due to us" (p. 82). Historically, the term 'Arabs' refers to the tribes located in and around the borders of the Arabian Peninsula for hundreds of years before Islam. After the rise of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic Empire, some Arabs moved to live in the conquered territories, carrying with them their language and religion, which later became the language and religion of the inhabitants (Alsohaibani, 2016). The first article of the Basic Law of Governance also affirmed that the State is Arabic and Islamic. However, this origin did not manifest in a closed identity; instead, it incorporated other ethnicities, specifically in the *Alhejaz* region, where many who settled in the area even before the unification of the KSA are from non-Arabic origins (Alsubaie, 2019). Besides, the Kingdom's land was a passage for convoys and human migration between the continents of Asia and Africa. The land also included many ancient pilgrimage routes and old trade routes. All these elements contributed to the production of a diverse popular heritage in customs, traditions, arts, decorations, and clothes, giving Saudi society a distinct identity (Alsubaie, 2019). These factors were essential for establishing the Arabian culture that manifested itself in Saudi Arabia.

According to Doumato (1993), tribalism is the pinnacle of Arabic culture as it considers the tribe to be a large extended family where the group's welfare is prioritized over any individual or other tribe's welfare. In her explanation of how Saudis' identity is traditionally formed, Doumato (1993) stated that the rise of the patriarchal family was due to cultural values and religious beliefs permeating society, thereby making its most clear articulation in tribal values and practices. Doumato (1993) continued her explanation by saying, "families share a sense of corporate identity, and the esteem of the

family was measured by the individual's capacity to live up to socially prescribed ideals of honor" (p. 67). For Saudis, the family forms the basis of society:

Family is a central pillar of Saudi Arabian society. Family forms the basis of most people's social circles (particularly for women), and also provides financial and emotional support. Saudis are expected to have the loyalty and willingness to do anything for their family, especially in the spirit of protecting one's female family members (see *Gheera* in Core Concepts). Individuals generally privilege their family's wishes (especially their parents) over their own and are expected to forfeit certain interests if doing so will improve their family's well-being and happiness. (Saudi Arabian Culture - Family, n.d., p.1)

In contrast to the values of individualistic societies where individualism is promoted, this collective mindset in a group-oriented society is valuable (Hyland, 2012). It is a worthwhile aspect to study as it may affect the willingness to join the gamer group. It also affects the evaluation of the membership and the value one may gain by being a member of that particular group. Finally, the competitive nature of video games, the idea of individual gains, and the concept of one winner, may also affect how Saudis view the gaming community.

The Influence of Religion on Saudi Identity

Within the Saudis' collective orientation, religion, in its Salafi image (one of the Sunni schools of religious thoughts), is the main component of the Saudi identity. It is the source of the fundamental values affecting all fields: political, judicial, legislative, educational, social, economic, and media. In addition, it influences public policies and

foreign relations because Islam plays a central role in determining society's practices, values, and attitudes (Almunajjed, 1997). The Saudi flag carries the sentence "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his prophet" which is the phrase that must be announced by any person who wants to convert to Islam. This shows the role of religion in Saudi identity. This version of Islam is central to Saudi Arabia's laws, education, and even television programs (Van Geel et al., 2012).

This ideological perspective influences Saudi society in many ways, for example, its moral code. In Islam, morality and religion are intertwined. Muslims experience difficulties discussing morality without referring to Islam because, unlike other societies, there is not a body of work that proposes a secular framework for moral decision-making (Halstead, 2007). Morality in Islam is a collection of rules, duties, and responsibilities found in the Quran and *hadith*; justice, benevolence, piety, honesty, integrity, gratitude, and chastity are some of the virtues taught in the Quran (Halstead, 2007). According to Halstead (2007), Islamic values consist of three components:

(a) *akhlaq*, which refers to the duties and responsibilities set out in the *shari'ah* and in Islamic teaching generally; (b) *adab*, which refers to the manners associated with good breeding; and (c) the qualities of character possessed by a good Muslim. (p. 283)

As cited in Halstead (2007), Al-Qardawi (1981) classifies *akhlaq* into six categories: *akhlaq* relating to self, family, society, the animal world, physical environment, and relating to God. *Adab*, on the other hand, is a way of understanding good conduct such as politeness, courtesy, good upbringing, and good manners or morality and values (Halstead, 2007).

According to Halstead (2007), Islam has a wider conceptualization of the moral domain than Western conceptualizations of morality. Morality is not an individual matter; society is also responsible for publicly upholding moral behavior and religious practices. This responsibility might be why The General Presidency of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (religious police) was established in the KSA. Furthermore, it also allows society members to publicly address any issues or acts that are not in alignment with the society's moral code, which is arguably a typical aspect of a group-oriented society such as the Saudi society. This wider conceptualization of morality pushes and facilitates the performance of religious practices, such as praying publicly five times a day, avoiding eating or drinking certain foods, dressing in a certain way, and sometimes socializing with certain people. Consequently, Saudis generally have a strong religious identity (Saudi Embassy, 2015).

A major product of this religious influence is gender segregation. This profoundly affects many aspects of public and social life in Saudi Arabia (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004). It is also the subject of one of the country's most heated religious and social debates. The debates are usually linked to the segregation's social, economic implications, origin, and the Islamic point of view on the matter.

Many Saudi religious scholars have issued *fatwas* indicating that no clear Islamic text forbids the mixing of genders. Furthermore, they are opposed to what is known historically about the Prophet Mohammad and his companions, who regularly mixed with women who had no family ties with them (Van Geel et al., 2012). Others, such as Ibn Baz, a Saudi Arabian Islamic scholar and the Grand Mufti of KSA, who passed away in 1999, stated that "There is no doubt that mixing men with women in a manner that is not

modest and does not have a veil is one of the greatest causes of *fitnah* (temptation), and that is not permissible” (Ibn Banz, n.d.). This shows that the mixing of the two genders is forbidden only if it is practiced in a liberal way without some sort of boundaries.

Gender segregation which can be linked to traditional values gains its power from its association with Islamic teachings (Hamdan, 2005). To put this matter into perspective, and to explain the influence of gender segregation in forming the Saudi identity, Wagemakers (2016) wrote *Salafi Scholarly Views on Gender-Mixing (Ikhtila) in Saudi Arabia*. Wagemakers mentioned three contextual factors that help to understand the gender mixing topic in Saudi Arabia. The first factor is women's influence in the Saudi national-religious identity; that is, as an Islamic country with Salafi scholars acting as the defenders of this status, women's position becomes a litmus test of the religious characters of the State. Secondly, the impact of the wealth generated from the oil industry allowed women to leave the workforce instead of being incorporated into it. In addition, this wealth allowed many Saudi families to hire maids, which resulted in Saudi women losing control of their own household, turning them into people who should be taken care of by men instead of being active members of society. This situation "reinforced the religious idea of keeping women indoors" (p. 42). Thirdly, the increase of power that the Saudi Salafi scholarly establishment had during the history of Saudi Arabia led the State to give the scholars more influence on social and personal matters. As a result, "[they] exploited this mandate to the full by focusing almost entirely on relatively minor doctrinal issues, including aspects of gender relations, like *ikhtilat* [gender mixing]" (p. 42). Nevertheless, gender ideologies, which can be attributed to traditional values,

continue to gain power in Saudi society by being associated with strict Islamic teaching (Hamdan, 2005).

Wagemakers (2016) reported that some Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia feel the need to provide other evidence and arguments to support their views on gender segregation because many Saudis do not accept the prohibition of gender mixing. One of the reasons used by Saudi Salafi scholars is that gender mixing leads to *fitnah* (temptation); therefore, they use the concept of *sadd aldhara'i* (blocking excuses), which means that “the harmful nature of some matters may not be immediately apparent, but that they may nevertheless lead to forbidden acts” (p. 42). Their attempts to strengthen their argument about gender segregation reach far to the extent that they state that homosexuality, sexual harassment, rape, abortion, adultery, and children born out of wedlock are caused by the temptations that happen with gender mixing (Wagemakers, 2016).

To this end, the segregation of gender in Saudi Arabia, and its implications, is an invitation to understand how some practices and values are shaped from the Saudi point of view (Sakr, 2008). The endless debate on segregation in Saudi society implies that Saudis view women as bearers of culture and morality and that segregation is to protect the chastity and the honor of the family (Almunajjed, 1997). Therefore, the restriction of women’s access to public space is a defensive act aligned with the Saudi belief in family honor (Baki, 2004).

Carrying these beliefs into an educational setting, Islam profoundly assures the right to education for both genders and grants women the right to work (Almunajjed, 1997). Incorporating this right into the Saudi Salafi society led to the creation of many

rules for women in order for them to be educated in schools. Thus, segregation is required at all education levels, and when male instructors are necessary, video conferencing and other tools are used (Baki, 2004; Mackey, 2002). However, with recent reforms following the 2030 Economic Vision in Saudi Arabia, gender mixing in schools is now allowed, except for the first, second, and third grades.

The sensitivity of family honor and gender segregation resulted in a way of life that attends to these matters (Baki, 2004). According to Van Geel et al. (2012), most women accept these rules and limitations as part of the Saudi cultural heritage. However, Saudi women are asking for control in places where they deem fit, but they do not wish to change these rules as they respect their culture. This implies that they are evolving suitable strategies to gain social rights within a conservative and gender inequality context (Hamdan, 2005). Although Saudi females are granted a higher level of education, including fully funded scholarship programs to study abroad, issues related to women's rights and responsibilities are controversial in Saudi society (Hamdan, 2005).

Religion has also played a role in shaping the Saudi perspective on video games as many scholars have issued *fatwas* about video games, as mentioned before in this paper. The religious factor and its influence have created a unique point of view on life for Saudis, which motivated the decision to consider Saudi Arabia as a context of research for the gamers' identity study. The views on morality, gender, and video games affected by Islam will likely also influence Saudis' willingness to adopt the gamers' identity. A clear example of this aspect is whether Saudi females will identify themselves as gamers or not if the gaming atmosphere is predominantly masculine. It is also important to consider the perspective of Saudi Muslim gamers as some elements of

games that oppose Islamic tradition and morality may influence their decision to join the gaming community.

From the discussion above, we can conclude that Saudi society's peculiarity is influenced by three major contributing factors: language, origin, and religion. The Arabic language is an essential element to be considered when exploring the topic of identity. Both social identity and individual identity need to be considered since the Arabic language plays a role in Saudis' sense of belonging. Saudis also take significant measures to protect and spread their language. Their origin as Arabs is another component for consideration as it has resulted in a group-oriented society that promotes the group's benefits over the individual's rights or interests. Finally, the influence of the Islamic teachings and practices has resulted in a perspective of life that is different from other secular societies. This may suggest the necessity of conducting more research in this context because these factors show that studies conducted in other societies may not be suitable in the Saudi context, and using Saudi Arabia as a research context is more likely to yield different results.

Social Identity and Education

The importance of researching the role that social identity plays in education was emphasized by Goodnow many years ago. Goodnow (1992) stated that "... concepts of self and identity are receiving increased attention, research in educational psychology may benefit from exploring more explicitly the links between students' self-categorizations and group identities, on the one hand, and their behavior, motivation, and learning on the other." (182). Kuh (1995) also indicated the importance of considering learning community variables in learning at the university level. Exploring students'

social identity in learning is essential since the way that university students learn is, to some extent, influenced by their memberships in social groups (Bliuc et al., 2011). Social identity affects learning from two angles. The first is social identification with the academic institution, and the second is the social identities that the students bring to the school environment.

To start, social identity explains a wide range of complex choices and behaviors such as intergroup conflict, becoming an activist, motivation, and psychological well-being (e.g., Ashford and Mael, 1989; Haslam et al., 2009; Jussim et al., 2001; Terry et al., 1999). In other words, our everyday life choices and our daily responses to simple and complex situations are driven significantly by our association with a particular social group. Tajfel (1981) indicated that social groups provide norms, standard behaviors, and expectations to their members, and group members will likely follow these expectations. Ellemers et al. (1997) indicated that people who strongly identify with a social group are more likely to follow the group's norms than those with less attachment. For example, social identification with an organization plays a role in how workers act regarding attitudes, effort, loyalty, and motivation (Ellemers et al., 2004; Haslam et al., 2001; Ouwerkerk et al., 1999). Similarly, social identification with an educational institution may result in certain behaviors and attitudes that its students follow and incorporate into their identity.

An example of how social identification with a school can affect students' behavior and learning is King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals students (KFUPM). In Saudi society, a common stereotype of KFUPM students is that they are punctual and very high achievers. Since these two elements are positive, some KFUPM

students internalize them in everyday activities and behavior and try their best to keep this positive image (Tajfel, 1981). Internalization refers to transforming external regulations into internal ones and developing personal values through external ones (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Vansteenkiste et al., 2018; Wang & Wind, 2020). In this example, KFUPM students internalized the positive stereotypes of the educational organization they chose to associate themselves with; thus, they may try to keep this positive image by acting according to these stereotypes. Consequently, this positive stereotype associated with the social identification with a school motivated the students to act in a certain way regarding their learning and daily life practices.

Another example would be Harvard University students, whose students socially identify with the establishment and internalize its standards. Thus, there is a link between social identification with a school and students' achievement, behavior, and motivation. If this relationship is linked to a positive trait, then students are more likely to be motivated (Tajfel, 1982) to learn and vice versa. Nonetheless, there is also an effect of students' social identities outside the school environment on their learning.

The second way social identity affects learning is related to the stereotypes associated with students' social identities. Almost all social groups are generally associated with positive or negative stereotypes. Aronson et al. (2002) explained that negative stereotypes linked to a social group toward education could affect students' academic achievement and build a sense of unworthiness and defeated attitude. This is because students from these stigmatized social groups internalize these stereotypes. In other words, internalizing the negative stereotype of a social group toward learning can influence the self; hence this influence on the self contributes to the student's academic

achievement motivation (Barnes, 2021). In addition, these negative stereotypes may result in psychological barriers and social impacts known as stereotype threats (Owens, 2012; Guyll et al., 2010; Massey & Fischer, 2005). Steele (2010) explained stereotype threat as the fear and anxiety of confirming stereotypes experienced in situations where the stereotype is relevant, and the situation is valued. Similarly, it could also affect how members of the stigmatized group think and act. Derks et al. (2007) expressed that,

depending on how important the group is for an individual's self-definition and how contextually salient that identity is, being in an educational or employment setting in which this group is devalued or stigmatized negatively affects one's social identity and self-concept (p. 221).

It seems that this effect can go in four directions. The first direction is that the stigmatized group's academic achievement is hindered by their fear and anxiety of confirming the stereotypes about their group. The second direction is that their academic achievement will improve because they want to prove that the stereotype is false. The third direction is that the stigmatized group internalizes the negative stereotype; thus, they will be less motivated to work or learn. Finally, if the stereotype is positive, they will be motivated to work harder to preserve their positive image.

Such an effect of social identity on learners could be higher in a collectivistic society as people are more motivated by the status of their social group, and individuals' self-esteem is correlated with their social group's status. The higher the status of a social group, the higher self-esteem its members have (Gilovich et al., 2019). In our case, Saudi society is a collectivist society where groups and their status are more valued than individual achievements. Furthermore, Gamers in Saudi Arabia is a group that suffers

from negative stereotype such as being useless to the community, lazy, and immoral. They are also suffering from some negative religious views. All these aspects will be discussed in different parts of the literature.

All in all, strong social identification with schools and the social identities that students bring to schools influence their learning. This effect is mainly related to the stereotype associated with social identity. Students with strong social identification may experience this effect in four ways. They may be afraid of confirming the negative stereotype, or they may internalize it, in which their performance will be hindered, and they will be less motivated to learn. On the other hand, they may be motivated to work hard to show that the stereotype is wrong. If the stereotype is positive, they may try to follow it to keep their positive image. The status of Saudi gamer social groups in Saudi Arabia drives us to pay attention to their social group. Based on the discussion above, if they were to internalize the stereotype, it would lead to poor academic performance. The consciousness of neglecting them could be heavier in Saudi Arabia for two reasons; first, Saudi Arabia is a collectivist tribal society. Second, almost 63% of the Saudi population is self-identified gamers.

Gamers

The Meaning of a Gamer

There is no consensus in the literature on the definition of the term gamer (Paaßen et al., 2017). Deshbandhu (2016) suggested that although the term gamer has sparked many heated debates on issues such as the perpetuation of stereotypes and gender inequality, it has been frequently used simplistically as a label for “anyone who plays

video games as a preferred leisure activity” (p. 48). This could be the reason why the Entertainment Software Association’s Annual reports proclaim gamers as older and more diverse than the typical stereotype (Shaw, 2011).

Kerr (2006) also suggested that the gaming industry constructed the term gamer as an adjective for a person who engages with video games intensively and wishes to acquire the newest and best games. However, such a definition simply means that a person can choose to be a gamer by engaging with video games despite the fact that the term implies much more about the individual (Deshbandhu, 2016). For example, the term gamer sparks a stereotypical image that comes to mind when mentioning this word. It also gives rise to a discussion about types of gamers.

The Stereotype of Gamers

Williams (2006) explained that the popular stereotype associated with the term gamer is “isolated, pale-skinned teenage boys [who] sit hunched forward on a sofa in some dark basement space, obsessively mashing buttons” (p. 1). Nevertheless, the gamers' stereotypical image is changing (Paaßen et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2008). Some studies indicated that the public perception of a gamer no longer supports the typical pale-skinned introverted teenager image (e.g., Kowert et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2008). This stereotype of white, heterosexual, male, teen gamers is both popularly and academically discredited (Shaw, 2010).

This change of perspective on gamers’ stereotypes also manifested in the outcome of a survey of massively multiplayer online game (MMO) players, which showed that the players were older and more social than the typical stereotype suggests (Yee, 2006). However, Amby et al. (2020) found that non-gamers stereotyped gamers as smart but

lazy, violent, introverts, and irresponsible. In contrast to the popular beliefs mentioned by Williams (2006), race and age were not considered by the participants as a feature to recognize a gamer (Shaw, 2011).

Types of Gamers

Predominantly, there are two types of gamers: casual and hardcore (Juul, 2010). Although almost every study in this literature discussed gamer types, there is no consensus on their definition. Most of the studies used elements of gaming practices to differentiate between the two types (e.g., Kowert et al., 2014; Poels et al., 2012). However, it is essential to first mention what the gaming industry considers to be the difference between the two types as it is producing products that are targeted at them.

The industry constructs its differentiation between the two types based on need and willingness. Notably, it classifies gamers as hardcore gamers if they need to participate in video games on a 'hardcore' level and are willing to play the newest and all-time best games (Kerr, 2006). It seems that it is to the industry's advantage to make hardcore gaming labels look attractive and then to make consumer behavior an essential part of whether the participants are able to claim the identity. However, it is not clear what is meant by the terms 'participate' and 'hardcore' level. For example, do they consider non-gamer parents who buy up-to-date games for their children and motivate them to play video games to be hardcore gamers? Those parents meet the criteria in the industry's definition; first, they participate in video games by encouraging their children to play, and second, they spend money on the latest games. Such a definition is understandable as the industry needs to build an incentive for consumers to buy their games. Perhaps using loose and undefined terms such as 'participate' and 'hardcore' level

motivates players to consider themselves to be hardcore gamers, thus feeling the need to spend more time playing and more money buying video games.

Some research has used time investment as the standard for differentiating between the two types (e.g., Kowert et al., 2014; Poels et al., 2012; Royse et al., 2007). Others have used different thresholds to define the difference between casual and hardcore gamers (Vanderhoef, 2013; Vermeulen et al., 2011). In their cluster analysis, Ip and Jacobs (2005) identified three main components to differentiate between the two types: gaming and attitude, gaming habits, and purchasing habits. Furthermore, the genres of games were also considered to signify a difference between hardcore gamers and casual gamers in the research of Vanderhoef (2013) and Vermeulen et al. (2011). They suggested that gamers involved in hardcore games such as shooters, MMO (role-playing) games, and strategy games are hardcore gamers.

Jesper Juul (2010), in his book *A Casual Revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players*, stated that a hardcore player is one who stereotypically prefers “emotionally negative fictions ... has played a large number of video games, will invest large amounts of time and resources toward playing video games and enjoys difficult games” (p. 29). While a stereotypical casual player “has a preference for positive and pleasant fictions, has played few video games, is willing to commit small amounts of time and resources toward playing video games, and dislikes difficult games” (p. 29). He also added tolerance of interruptions and usability as distinguishing factors between hardcore and casual gamers.

Nevertheless, the definition of the term gamer in this paper is drawn from the work of Deshbandhu (2016). He concluded his ethnographic study about how gamer

identity is formed by suggesting that game players' self-definition as gamers is determined by the type of games played, the frequency of play, and the overall relationship with gaming practices and gaming culture. This paper also utilizes Juul's (2010) definition of hardcore and casual gamers.

Characteristics of the Social Identity of Gamers by Self-defined Gamers

In this section, I will present themes closely related to the formation of gamers' social identity. These themes relate to their social identity, as they focus on how people identify themselves as gamers rather than the identification ascribed by the gaming industry or the widespread belief that the act of playing video games is what defines one as a gamer.

Self-selected and Subject to Change

Using a reflexive approach to identity, Shaw (2011) explored two areas of a gamer's identity: the first is how they identify themselves as a gamer; second, why they identify themselves as a gamer. The finding of this study showed that the gamer's identity is subject to change. In other words, some of the participants of the studies used to identify themselves as a gamer at a certain time; however, at the time of the interview, they considered they were not gamers because of the stigma that is associated with the word gamer. This could be due to what Tajfel (1981) considered to be the social mobility of social groups. In general, he mentioned that when a social group member feels that their group does not provide them with a positive evaluation, they may leave the group. Brewer (1991) considered such an event as an identity shift. The researcher argued that

self-selected identities are fluid and can change depending on the context of the social situation.

The Use of Particular Gaming Platforms

Shaw (2011) specified that some interviewees agreed that using a particular gaming platform is one reason to be considered when identifying gamers. Similarly, Tylor (2012) noticed that males are thought to consider themselves hardcore gamers when playing complex games on specific and dedicated gaming consoles. Other studies found that, although females play video games, gamers' public perceptions are that they are not true gamers as they play casual games on inferior platforms such as smartphones (Juul, 2009; Shaw & Chess, 2016; Vanderhoef, 2013).

Time and Type of Play

Stone (2019) investigated factors related to self-identification as a 'gamer' in addition to the currently perceived characteristics of a gamer among college-level students in the United States. Using a survey and a mixed approach to analyze data, Stone (2019) found that there were significant differences between people who self-identified as gamers and other groups in terms of frequency of play and duration of gaming exposure. Those who self-identified as gamers spent more time playing video games and had a longer duration of gaming exposure.

According to De Grove et al. (2015), the more a person plays video games, the higher the chance they may identify themselves as a gamer. Additionally, the type of games people play was a factor in identifying themselves as a gamer. In other words,

players who play core genres, such as shooter games, tend to identify themselves as gamers more than those who tend to play relaxed and simple games (casual genres).

Influence of the Immediate Social Groups

Neys et al. (2014) explained that when a social identity group forms, it often does so around shared social practices that bring members together. According to the Entertainment Software Association (2019), 63% of gamers play games with others, and 75% of Americans have at least one gamer in their household. Gamers come together because they enjoy playing video games, and 78% believe that games provide relaxation and stress relief (Entertainment Software Association, 2019).

A year later, the Entertainment Software Association's 2020 report showed that the number of players who play with others had increased by 2% in 2020, where 42% of them played only with friends in contrast to 24% who only played with other family members. They spend almost seven hours a week playing with others online. Some 30% of gamers reported that they had met a good friend, spouse, or significant other through video games. This indicates the importance of conducting gamers' social identity research in a context such as Saudi Arabia, where segregation of genders exists to some extent. For example, would Saudi male gamers try to play games with Saudi female gamers, given the existence of many religious and societal restrictions that prohibit unnecessary interaction between the two genders? Or would such restrictions affect the role of gender in informing gamers' social identity in Saudi Arabia?

De Grove et al. (2015) argued that social networks such as friends could influence how a person sees themselves as a gamer more than individual characteristics and behaviors. Notably, a player who has friends that are part of the gaming culture is more

likely to adopt the gamer identity themselves. Stone (2019) also found that having a member in the immediate social groups who play games would increase the likelihood of self-identification as a gamer.

The Language of Gaming

Gamers use different methods such as written chat or voice to communicate in games or on other online platforms. The method of communication is usually dictated by the games or the online platform. Therefore, language is an important aspect to explore when investigating social identities. It is a factor defining individuals and cultures as well as a facilitator of the interactions among people. It helps with meaning-making, self-representation, and self-identification (Elbih, 2016). Language is also important since "the meaning of one's identity derives from the interdependence between the personal and societal" (Miskovic, 2007, p. 514).

Malisi et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between language, identity, and community in an online gamer community. Specifically, they examined the difference in choice of words between groups and the implication of types of posts in each group. They used observation and interviews to collect data from four online gaming groups. Data from each group were compared to other groups in their study. Their findings stated that, although the games selected in the study had a similar system, "each group has different ways to refer to the same thing," (p. 1). Additionally, each group had a different understanding of a specific element in its group, indicating that gamer groups use language as an identity marker.

Cade and Gates (2017) also suggested, in their paper, that gamers built their own terminologies that are inspired by their games. In other words, if each community is

gathered around a specific game, the members are more likely to use particular words associated with this game. According to Cade and Gates (2017), gamers use these terms for many reasons, such as to “describe themselves, other players, or characters in a game; their behavior; or function within the game” (p. 71). Gamers use the term ‘griever’ to label annoying or aggravating players. For example, when a player in a game starts to behave in ways that irritate other gamers or say things that annoy other players, he is ‘griefing,’ or he is a griever.

Another example is the term ‘noob,’ a word used by gamers to describe others negatively. For example, they use the term noob players to describe people who are either new to the game or who are underperforming. When gamers quit the game abruptly out of anger, then they are “rage quitters.” Cade and Gates (2017) mentioned other terminologies that describe functions in games. For example, a non-player character (NPC) is an in-game character that players can interact with; however, they cannot play as this character. Levels, save points, and permanent death are other terms used by gamers to describe the game’s functions.

This signifies the importance of studying gamers’ social identity in a context other than English-speaking countries, as these countries may have different terminology influenced by their language and culture. From practical experience as a gamer, I noticed that some of these terminologies were affected by Saudi gamers’ Arabian language. For example, the term noob changed to *manwab* in Arabic. This change is interesting as it is not just a change in the pronunciation of the word. It also uses an Arabic verb root that shows strong continuity regardless of time or place. It is also a verb root that is usually

used to mainly enrich the Arabic language by borrowing from other languages (Hassan, 2018).

Cultural Comparison

According to Shaw (2011), as social identity changes through time, it also changes depending on the place in which it is formed. Tajfel (1981) indicated that social identities are bound to the time and context in which they formed, which implies that similar social identities can have different meanings and values if formed in a different place. Ówil and Howe (2020) conducted a cross-cultural analysis of gamer identity between the United States and Poland. Using a multinational perspective, they investigated gamers' concepts, the kind of people perceived as gamers, and self-identified gamers. Their study aimed to understand the characteristics of players who self-identified as gamers by comparing the results of a survey conducted in two different countries.

There were 223 participants distributed almost equally between the US and Poland. The participants' main criteria were that they played any kind of video game, which meant non-gamers were excluded. Ówil and Howe (2020) explained this exclusion was due to their intended purpose of studying elements that non-gamers cannot help with, such as the types of games played and the ways of playing, which only people who actually play video games can offer information on. Additionally, they found that non-gamers have negative attitudes and beliefs about games, affecting the study's result. The main result was that there were cross-cultural differences between the two countries in terms of gamer identity, time spent, platforms used, preferred games, and styles of playing games. For example, male players were more likely to identify as a gamer in both countries than females. However, women who play video games in Poland tended to

identify themselves as gamers more than female participants from the U.S. The research found that “4 of the 39 female U.S. participants identified as a gamer whereas 10 of the 35 female Polish participants identified as a gamer” (p. 9).

In alignment with previous findings (De Grove et al., 2015; Stone, 2019), the study also found that people who spend more time playing video games are more likely to identify themselves as a gamer. The U.S. gamers spent more time playing co-present games than their counterparts in Poland. There was no statistical difference between the two genders in terms of time spent playing alone, yet they differed in terms of time spent playing co-present, online, and in parties' games, as men spent more time playing these categories. In terms of genres, Polish self-identified gamers and non-gamers played the same types of games. On the other hand, in the U.S., gamers played role-playing games more often than non-gamers, while non-gamers liked to play more social or sports games.

Gaming and Gender

Gamer Gender Stereotypes

Although there is a strong relationship between masculinity and the typical stereotype of gamers (Shaw, 2010), more than 40% of the gamers in the United States are females (Entertainment Software Association, 2019, 2020). This contradiction can be explained by the fact that, even though females play video games, they are not considered to be real gamers. This is due to the genre of video games they play, which requires less commitment and skill (Paaßen et al., 2017). In contrast, males are predominantly considered hardcore gamers because they play more intensive and competitive games on dedicated consoles such as Xbox or PlayStation. They also are more likely to identify as

gamers than females. Shaw (2011) noted that gender was not mentioned explicitly by the participants as a quality of a gamer even though “there is a definite correlation between gender and gamer identity” (p. 34). In other words, male interviewees were more likely to identify themselves as gamers. Stone (2019) reported that self-identification as a gamer was found to correlate with gender significantly. Stone added that males are more likely to identify as a gamer than females, and males significantly play more and have a longer gaming exposure duration. Similarly, De Grove et al. (2015) found that gender was relevant to gamers’ identity as females are less likely to self-identify as a gamer.

Gender Exclusion

The video game industry still creates content that either lacks female video game characters or hyper-sexualizes female characters to fulfill the presumed preferences of the young, male, heterosexual audience (Williams et al., 2009). This may result in a conflict between women’s gender identity and gamer identity (Taylor, 2012). Kowert et al. (2012) and Burch and Wiseman (2015) reported that 14.4% of the participants in a study of self-identified gamers were female, and only 35% of female adolescents identified themselves as gamers, in comparison to 70% of self-reported male gamers.

In an effort to change this situation, #GamerGate was launched in 2014 as a campaign seeking more inclusion in video games. It later became dominated by targeted harassment (Paaßen et al., 2017). #GamerGate was a social media movement launched in 2014 that critiqued the current state of the gaming industry and demanded greater inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups. *The Washington Post* described #GamerGate as:

Whatever Gamergate may have started as, it is now an Internet culture war. On one side are independent game-makers and critics, many of them women, who advocate for greater inclusion in gaming. On the other side of the equation are a motley alliance of vitriolic naysayers: misogynists, anti-feminists, trolls, people convinced they're being manipulated by a left-leaning and/or corrupt press, and traditionalists who just don't want their games to change. (Dewey, 2014, What is Gamergate section, para. 1)

Although in the midst of #GamerGate, the number of white, young, male stereotype of gamer was exact, the number of women identified as gamers more than doubled (Ćwil & Howe, 2020). The rise of #GamerGate and the resistance to diversification showed the gaming community's bias as their attitude toward critics, outsiders, female developers and scholars who were perceived to be invading their community were primarily negative (Todd, 2015). The #GamerGate campaign enabled the formation of particular groups that differed from the dominant gamer identity group. This particular group of misogynistic, angry gamers stood against the more inclusive group of gamers (Hoffswell, 2017).

Invested Time

The average time of playing a video game is another difference between male and female gamers. Many studies have found that female gamers, on average, spend less time playing video games (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006; Paaßen et al., 2017; Poels et al., 2012; Vermeulen et al., 2011). However, many of these studies are based on self-reporting, which could be misleading since participants may underestimate their time playing (Paaßen et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2009). For example, Williams et al. (2009) reported

that females underestimated their weekly playing time by three times (3 hours) more than men (1 hour).

Conclusion

Research on gamers' social identity shows that there is no consensus on the meaning of the term gamer. Many studies relied on self-identification as a way to establish a meaning for the term. Further, many of the participants of these studies used gaming aspects such as platforms, time, and types of games to establish such meaning, thus providing information on their social identity as gamers. The literature also shows that gender is an important aspect to be considered when investigating gamers' social identity. Therefore, this study will try to recruit female participants.

The literature indicates two significant gaps that need to be addressed. First, it showed that social identity is related to the place and time of its formation. Hence, more research on the topic is needed in cultures where it has not been explored before. The second gap is that, although the literature explains what makes a gamer's social identity, it did not investigate the values or emotions gained by being a member of this social group. Tajfel (1981) associated the definition of a social group with three elements. First, a cognitive awareness that individuals are members of the social group, which is what most of the studies in the literature sought to achieve. Second, an evaluation of the group and its membership, and third, an emotional impact that contains feelings such as hate, dislike, belonging, or not belonging to the social group. The last two elements were not heavily apparent in the literature, which can be considered to be a gap that needs to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

When I began to plan this study, I had a few essential aspects in mind that I wanted my research to achieve. First, the representation of the Saudi gamer group from in-group members. In other words, I wanted people who self-identify as Saudi gamers to elaborate on their thoughts, ideas, and experiences. I wanted Saudi gamers to express themselves because I believe that the term 'gamer' as an identity is mostly a self-selected identity. This type of identity means that identity is internally defined as opposed to ascribed identities which are externally imposed (Hecht et al., 1993). Therefore, the data needed to be gathered from self-identified Saudi gamers.

Second, my conversations with my students drew my attention to this topic and sparked my interest. In these conversations, we usually talk about the meaning of being a gamer and what values or emotions are associated with being a member of the gaming group. Therefore, it was important for me to find a framework that represents these elements, as I want to continue the conversations with my students. These elements were presented in Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory; consequently, it was chosen as a theoretical framework.

Third, similar to Tajfel (1981), I also believe that before exploring a social group, researchers should allow group members to define the group. A definition of the group should be internally constructed rather than being imposed by others. This matter is crucial as some self-selected identities may be subject to stigma from other social groups.

While delving into the literature covering Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory, I found Halldorson's (2009) study, which contained all of these elements. Although her

research aimed to explore a different population, I believed her study design aligned with the goals of my study.

Rational For the Study Design

This research is a qualitative study that aims to achieve two things. First, to respond to the gap in the research related to gamers' social identity in Saudi Arabia. Second, to apply Tajfel's (1981) SIT to Saudi college students in Saudi Arabia who self-identify as gamers. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explained that knowledge is constructed through research that builds on other studies; thus, it is acceptable for researchers to adopt others' research or "replicate it" (p. 70). Therefore, I replicated Halldorson's (2009) grounded theory study design and adjusted it to suit the target of this research better. In this regard, I replicated the research questions, data collection method, and data analysis method. However, the population and the context of the study were different. In the following paragraphs, I explained and critiqued Halldorson's (2009) methodological choices, thus providing a rationale for the design of this study.

Rationale For Using Grounded Theory Methodology

Halldorson (2009) used social identity theory to understand Metis as a social identity. In doing so, she utilized qualitative grounded theory methodology to achieve this aim. Grounded theory, as defined by Creswell (2007), is "a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants" (p. 83). It was developed in the late 1960s by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, who felt that the theories used in research at the time were often inadequate for participants. In contrast to

previous theoretical orientations in sociology, these researchers believed that theories should be grounded in the data (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of the grounded theory approach is to "demonstrate relations between conceptual categories and to specify the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerge, change, or are maintained" (Charmaz, 2002, p. 675).

According to Creswell (2007), the grounded theory design is suitable when there is no theory to explain a process or when a theory does exist but is incomplete. Schram (2006), Stated that there is a fundamental common misunderstanding about grounded theory revolving around entering the setting as a "blank slate" and only watching the theory emerge from the data. Generally, investigators can use grounded theory if they want to extend or elaborate on an existing theory; In such a case, researchers compare the findings to the theory and the literature to elaborate, validate, or add to the existing knowledge on the subject (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Since Halldorson (2009) wanted to apply and explore Tajfel's (1981) theory of social groups to understand Metis, her choice of the grounded theory design was appropriate.

Using a grounded theory approach implies some philosophical assumptions.

According to Schram (2006), these assumptions are:

- (1) Human beings are purposive agents who take an active role in interpreting and responding to problematic situations rather than simply reacting to experiences and stimuli.
- (2) People act on this basis of meaning, and this meaning is defined and redefined through interaction.
- (3) Reality is negotiated between people (that is, socially constructed) and is constantly changing and evolving.
- (4) Central to understanding the evolving nature of events is an awareness of the

interrelationship among causes, conditions, and consequences. (5) A theory is not the formulation of some discovered aspect of a reality that already “exists out there.” Rather, theories are provisional and fallible interpretations, limited in time (historically embedded), and constantly in need of qualification. (6) Generating theory and doing social research are part of the same process. (p. 102)

Rational For using Snowball Sampling Approach

For the data collection in Halldorson's (2009) research, a snowball sampling method was used to recruit eight self-identified Metis adults residing in Manitoba. Snowball sampling is a technique where the researcher asks a few identified members of a population to "identify other members of the population, those so identified are asked to identify others, and so on, to obtain a nonprobability sample or for constructing a frame from which to sample" (Thompson, 2002, p. 183).

The standard sampling strategies in qualitative research are neither probability sampling nor convenience sampling. Rather, it is a purposeful selection, or in other terms, purposive sampling (Light et al., 1990; Palys, 2008). This selection method chooses the setting, participants, or activities to provide information related to the research questions and aims. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explained that one method of purposeful selection is snowball sampling, which means obtaining “knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests” (Glesne, 2016, p. 51). A disadvantage of using snowball sampling is that it affects the generalizability of the findings. However, qualitative researchers usually do not work with a large number of participants to make generalizations about the larger community, nor is it a purpose of their study (Glesne, 2016).

Maxwell (2013) indicated five reasons to use purposeful selection. First, the researcher wants to represent the selected settings, individuals, or activities. Second, the researcher aims to capture the heterogeneity in the population. Third, the researcher wants to select suitable participants to evaluate a theory in mind. Fourth, purposeful selection can be used when the researcher aims to make comparisons between two different settings or individuals. Lastly, the purposeful selection is suitable when a researcher wants to establish a "productive relationship" that enables them to answer their research questions (p. 101).

Halldorson's (2009) use of the snowball sampling strategy to recruit participants was suitable for her study. Her choice of this method was due to two main factors. First, she wanted to explore the SIT theory on self-identified Metis, which, according to Maxwell (2013), is an adequate justification for using this approach. Second, the time limit that Halldorson (2009) had to finish the research prompted her to use snowball sampling to recruit participants. Regarding the generalizability of the findings, Halldorson (2009) explained that the study was an exploratory and descriptive qualitative design, which used a small snowball sample to best investigate the research questions. The results of this study contributed to and were compared with the limited data on the Metis identity in Manitoba. Therefore, the findings were not generalized to the larger Metis population in the province. However, she provided a thick description of the participants and the context, which may help readers evaluate the study's applicability in their context.

Rationale For Using Semi-Structured Interviews for Data Collection

After recruiting participants, Halldorson (2009) used one round of semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were divided into three sections; each was targeted to explore an element of social identity theory. For example, questions such as:

- “How do you define a Metis?” or “How long have you known that you were a Metis?” aimed to investigate the cognitive component of social self-identification (p. 42).
- Questions such as “What are the positive/good things about being a Metis?” were targeted to investigate the evaluative component (p. 42).
- For investigating the emotional component, a question such as “What does be Metis mean to you?” was used (p. 43).

Interviews are a major tool in qualitative research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Seidman, 2012). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) described an interview as an "attempt to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of the subject's experiences, to uncover their lived world" (p. 1). Similarly, Patton (1990) elaborated that "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), in-depth interviews for qualitative researchers are a method to capture the perceptions, attitudes, and emotions of the participants. Their purpose is to "elicit participants' views of their lives, as portrayed in their stories, and so gain access to their experiences, feelings, and social worlds" (p. 317). They continued, interviews can be unstructured or semi-structured. In other words, they can be conducted

in an everyday conversational style, or they can be used to investigate a specific topic using an interview guide.

Using interviews as a data collection method in qualitative research has many advantages. First, it allows the researcher to directly check their understanding of what the participants said during the interview. Second, interviews can provide thick and rich descriptions of a phenomenon. Lastly, collecting data through interviews helps capture the full breadth of an experience from the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, there are some disadvantages of using interviews. For instance, not every participant is cooperative, and the interview results depend heavily on the researchers' skills and ability to manage the interaction with participants (Fontana & Frey, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2012). Although there are some disadvantages of using interviews as a data collection method in general, it is still a valid method for answering the research questions. In Halldorson's (2009) study, the interview questions were linked to both the theory and the research questions and were able to provide answers to the research questions.

Since investigating identities requires an in-depth exploration of experience and realities, the use of interviews in Halldorson's (2009) study is appropriate in such situations. Interviews also give the participants the time and space needed to elaborate on their subjective experiences and attitudes (Peräkylä, 2005). Halldorson's (2009) interview questions were designed to tackle the three elements of Tajfel's (1981) definition of social identity. These are the cognitive component, which includes knowledge of belonging to a group; an evaluative component that shows a positive or negative evaluation of both the group and the membership of it. Finally, an emotional component that reflects the

participant's feeling of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981).

Nevertheless, before the start of the interviews, Halldorson (2009) collected demographic information to identify research-related information from the participants, such as age and gender.

To access information regarding the cognitive component of social identification, Halldorson (2009) used the following interview questions:

1). How do you define Metis?

2a). How long have you known that you were Metis? Tell me about the circumstances.

2b). How long have you chosen to identify as Metis?

2c). What prompted your identification?

3). Are there activities, characteristics, or behaviors that are typical to the Metis as a group? Examples? (p. 42)

According to Tajfel (1981), the cognitive component of an individual's social identity contains information about belonging to a group. This demonstrates the necessity of understanding the group from the perspective of its members. Tajfel (1981) stated that it is important to understand groups from their own perspectives, as they define themselves by adopting or dictating (or not) definitions from other groups. Hence, these questions are suitable for the study as they provide a way for researchers to understand participants' definitions of their social identity from their perspectives and the reasons behind their choice to identify with a particular group. Thus, this set of questions

provides answers that contain knowledge of belonging to a group and information about the group (Halldorson, 2009).

The second set of interview questions was used by Halldorson (2009) to access information about the evaluative component of self-identification. This set contained the following questions:

- 1a. What are the positive/good things about being Metis?
- 1b. What are the negative/bad things about being Metis?
- 2a. What are the positive/good things about the Metis as a group?
- 2b. What are the negative/bad things about the Metis as a group?
- 3. Do you see yourself as similar to other Metis? Why or why not? Example? (p. 42)

Tajfel (1981) suggested that the evaluative component of a group may contain positive or negative evaluative characteristics ascribed to the group and the individual's membership of it by the group members. In other words, it reflects a person's tendency to positively or negatively evaluate both in-group attributes and one's own membership within the group. Halldorson's (2009) questions were consequently aligned with the study objectives as they directly allow for answers related to the evaluative component of the participant's identity.

The last set of interview questions was used to gather information about the emotional component of self-identification. This included these questions:

- 1. What does being Metis mean to you?

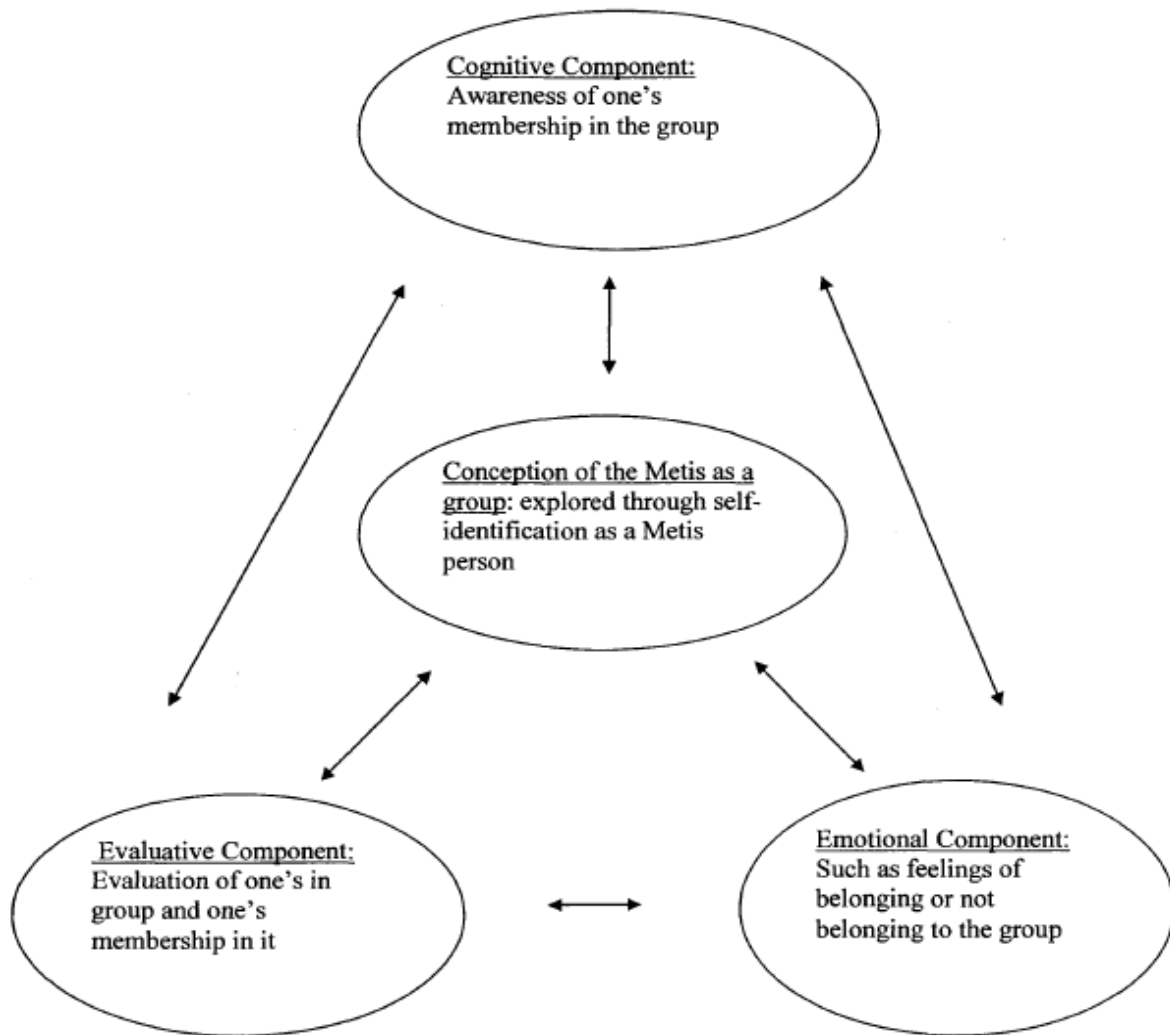
2. Do you feel like you belong or fit into the Metis as a group? Why or why not? Can you give me an example?
3. Are there different contexts/situations in which you identify/do not identify as being Metis? Can you give me an example?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of being Metis? (p. 42)

This set of interview questions was appropriate as SIT suggests that the emotional evaluation should be examined separately from other components (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel's SIT contains an emotional component associated with the in-group members' emotional investment in their group membership. It represents descriptions such as feelings of belonging or not belonging directed toward the in-group. Ultimately, these questions will lead to answers representing the emotional investment in the group membership and the belonging aspect to the group, making these questions suitable for the study (Halldorson, 2009).

Halldorson (2009) also developed a conceptual framework for a group based on Tajfel's (1981) SIT. The purpose of this conceptual framework, according to Halldorson (2009), was to guide the exploration of the study as it contains SIT's three components. The responses generated from the participants will serve to operationalize the concepts since they are related to their identity. Finally, Halldorson (2009) used arrows to represent the interactive nature of SIT components. The following figure shows Halldorson's (2009) conceptual framework.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework of a Group-Based of Tajfel's (1981) SIT



Note. Halldorson, 2009, p. 40

Rational For Method of Data Analysis

Halldorson (2009) used Miles and Huberman's (1994) deductive approach for the analysis process. This approach entails designing the conceptual framework, research

questions, categories, and preliminary codes based on the study's theory. Then, an inductive approach (data-driven method) is created as the variables within the conceptual structure are operationalized by using knowledge gathered from the study participants. The author's list of codes and their definition were based on social identity theory components. Answers for each interview question were then placed in a conceptually clustered matrix. Then, an open, deductive coding process was used based on the code list. Each code was assigned to either a word or phrase that represented elements of the SIT theory. Those words and phrases were later grouped based on similarities to form themes. The findings were then compared and contrasted with the literature.

Overall, Halldorson (2009) aimed to apply social identity theory to a social group, and the methodology used in the research allowed for such an application. Hence, the credibility of the study can be established. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), credibility refers to the accuracy of representing participants' emotions, ideas, and activities. It "involves consideration of the interrelationship between the research design components—the study's purpose, theoretical or conceptual framework, research questions, and methods" (p. 360). Halldorson's (2009) choice of grounded theory methodology allowed the theory to shape the study's design as research questions, interview questions, and codes were based on the SIT.

The data collection method allowed for gathering thick descriptions of the social identity from the participants' points of view. Using semi-structured interviews meant that each participant had to answer the same questions. Consequently, it allowed for data comparisons (Biber & Leavy, 2006). To elaborate, the data was verified using semi-structured interviews as each new response confirms or weakens previous data by

evaluating their generality (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Member checks and a reflexive journal were used in the study, thus, further increasing the credibility and confirmability of the study.

The data collection method and analysis helped with the study's dependability. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explained that dependability in qualitative research refers to the consistency of the data and their ability to answer the research questions. It includes tracking all the steps in data collection and interpretation. For Halldorson's (2009) study, the interview questions' design increased the study's dependability. This is because each set of interview questions was targeted to tackle both an element of the theory and a research question. Using a conceptually clustered matrix, reflexive journal, and member checking allowed for adequately tracking all the processes and procedures used in the study.

Finally, her design is reliable as the results can be reproduced in different research contexts. The results will not be identical; for example, gamers in the US may not have a similar evaluation of their social identity as Saudi gamers. Nevertheless, both groups will have an evaluation of their social group. Ultimately, this methodology will provide results related to the theory, which will help in testing and exploring SIT. For all these reasons, I believe Halldorson's (2009) study design is suitable for exploring the construction of Saudi gamers' social identity from the perspective of self-identified gamers in a Saudi university. Hence, I replicated her study design.

The Design of This Study

In the following sections, I present how I conducted this study. The section begins with my role as a researcher, sample and sampling approach, then explains how I

collected and analyzed the data. Finally, this section will conclude with the methods of verification and ethical considerations used in this study.

My Role as a Researcher

“Research is a process, not just a product” (England, 1994, p. 82). Yet, a researcher’s positionality would very likely influence all aspects and stages of his or her research process, as Foot and Bartell mentioned:

The positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes (Foote & Bartell, 2011, p. 46).

It is essential for researchers to provide sufficient information about their positionalities. It not only helps to ensure the validity of the result but also helps readers to contextualize the researchers' subjectivity. Hence, in this research, my positionality is that of an insider and an outsider.

My experiences, assumptions, and goals shaped my choice of this topic and how I approached the project. Throughout my years of teaching English to Saudi college-level students, many have told me that they are gamers. This topic was a middle ground where my students and I could meet and start conversations as I also identify as a gamer. Being a gamer and educator pursuing my Ph.D. in the United States and my direct interaction with the Saudi gaming community made me realize that it is my responsibility to ensure that my students are appropriately represented in the curriculum. Although the government of Saudi Arabia is considering gamers in their economic 2030 Vision, and

the Saudi Ministry of Education wants to shift to student-centered education, little to no consideration has been given to gamers in the curriculum. It is important to consider them in the curriculum design as gamers may have their own learning strategies and attitude toward achieving tasks.

As part of the Saudi gamers' community, I have intensively played online and offline games since I was six years old. Online games are those that require an internet connection to be played as opposed to offline games that do not. Additionally, I have played games on many gaming consoles such as PlayStation, Xbox, Wii, and on my personal computer. I am also aware of the gaming discourse and register, and I use them during my playing sessions. At a certain point in time, I have used online games' microtransactions (a payment gateway in games that allows players to buy cosmetic parts for their in-game character) as a source of income. To elaborate, some games offer digital merchandise in games where players can spend actual money to obtain them. I was a facilitator for gamers who did not have a way to buy this merchandise. For a small commission, I used to buy these digital merchandise for them.

Furthermore, I follow the Esports scene and am well-invested in gaming news. This includes online gaming magazines, YouTube channels, and other social media platforms. Lastly, I am a moderator in many Saudi online gaming communities.

Being a gamer was an advantage because I shared the same social identity with my participants, which helped when I asked them about gaming and what it means to be a gamer. As an insider, I understood the interviewees' stories and emotions as they related to my own experience. It further helped me establish a partnership with the participants, which resulted in an environment where the interviewees felt comfortable and

encouraged to be more open in their answers. The interviewees need to be open about their identity because social identity can be controversial, and participants may alter their answers to avoid social stigma.

Although I consider myself to be a Saudi gamer, I only play certain types of games. Some gaming categories that I do not play are mobile phone games and horror games. However, I am familiar with these games and follow their current news and updates. In addition, I acknowledge that although I am a Saudi gamer, like the participants of this study, my experience differs from theirs. Thus, I become an outsider. This is because the participants and I do not share aspects such as age, education, race, gender, or class. In this regard, I bring my personal background to this research, being a Saudi male gamer and an educator who is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the United States. Therefore, I know that my background may influence how I analyze and interpret the data, and I had to implement many strategies to reduce my bias.

In this research, I often moved between my insider and outsider positionality. When recruiting participants, I introduced myself as an insider to the community. This positionality played a significant role in convincing people to participate in the study. For example, female participants only agreed to participate because I was an active gamer and a person who would understand their experience. In the data collection, I became an outsider, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences as much as they wanted without any presumptions. To some degree, I adhered to the interview questions and the script for the interview. I was also an outsider while reporting their responses in this paper, as I only summarized their experience based on emerging themes. I returned to being an insider during the data interpretation phase. In the data analysis, I used the

knowledge gained from the literature review and my knowledge as a Saudi gaming social group member to provide an in-depth analysis of their responses.

I adhered to some conditions to achieve the study's objectives and to reduce bias. For example, I maintained and built a relationship of trust with the participants. In the initial interview, I explained to the participants the purpose and processes of the research and openly disclosed my gamer identity. We all shared our experiences as gamers, and I granted them access to my gaming information and profiles. This enabled me to gain their confidence, thus eliciting thick descriptions of their lived experiences as Saudi gamers. I was obligated to create a safe and comfortable environment through interviews because this qualitative study relied heavily on their willingness to share information about their identity. I attempted to minimize bias by taking different measures such as member checking and peer review. Different types of member checking were used as strategies to minimize bias. I used member checking during the interviews and after transcribing the data. Mainly, I went back to the participants and shared with them a summary of their answers, and they provided their insights into whether I had accurately captured their experiences and points of view. In addition, two of my colleagues checked the thematic analysis and coding to double-check for possible bias. These steps were measures I used to avoid allowing my preconceptions, values, beliefs, and biases to distort the research findings.

Sample and Sampling

All participants were recruited and selected based on certain criteria congruent with the purpose of the study and research questions. 11 people, eight males and three females, were chosen as participants in this study because of the following criteria:

- 1) Saudis
- 2) Self-identified as gamers.
- 3) Between 19 and 23 years of age.
- 4) Full-time college-level students.

People who do not play video games were not included in the analysis for two reasons. The first reason was that when asking about the types of games, platforms, or ways of playing, only people who play video games will be able to answer these questions. The second reason was that previous research showed that non-gamers might affect the study's result as they may hold negative attitudes and beliefs about gamers (Amby et al., 2020; Kort-Butler, 2020).

Snowball sampling was the main sampling method in this study for three reasons. First, for convenience, since I am a gamer, I have access to Saudi gamers' communities. Second, the timeline to conduct this research was limited because of restrictions imposed by my sponsor. Finally, to be able to explore SIT with only self-identified Saudi gamers. I was able to recruit 11 participants who matched the criteria of this study by starting with people whom I knew and accepting their referrals.

Having participants known to the researcher or referred by other participants played a role in the reliability of findings. It helped me provide an environment where the participants felt comfortable being open about their identity, resulting in truthful responses and feedback. Some participants told me that after their friend recommended them to participate in this study, they checked my gaming profiles on many platforms such as Steam.com, lolprofile.net, and op.gg websites to ensure that I was a gamer. In addition, I had many problems recruiting female participants due to cultural issues related

to my identity as a male. This is one of the limitations of this study, as discussed later in the discussion chapter. The female group who participated agreed to be part of the study for three reasons. First, I was recommended to them by a person they knew and trusted. Second, they saw that I was an active gamer, not just a person who used to play video games when he was a kid. Lastly, they felt "safe" to share their stories because they knew that I am a gamer who would understand their stories and a father of a four-year-old daughter who would protect them the same as I protect my daughter.

Due to COVID-19 social restrictions, all communication with participants, including interviews, was performed online using the Zoom platform and Discord. Zoom was used to conduct the interviews, and Discord was used to communicate with the participants. Before conducting the study, I explained its purpose and any confidentiality-related issues or concerns, as well as answered questions from the participants. The research was conducted after obtaining research ethics approval from the University of New Mexico Research Ethics Board.

Participants Recruitment

I followed the approved protocol set by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of New Mexico in conducting this study. The following steps were used to recruit participants who meet this study's criteria:

1. I sent an online announcement (See Appendix L) to online Saudi gaming communities on Discord. Discord is an online platform that allows users to create their own communities of interest. I started with communities where I was known or had connections with their administrators. I asked my connections also to spread the online announcement to other Saudi gaming communities.

2. The online announcement contained a link where people who wanted to participate could fill in their information, check their eligibility for the study, and sign the consent.
3. When participants used the link in the online announcement, a survey for eligibility appeared. The survey asked for names, contact information, and demographic information and checked if they were eligible for the study or not.
 - 3A. If they were eligible, an online consent form appeared for them to sign. The consent was in Arabic and English.
 - 3B. If they were not eligible for the study, a thank you message popped out telling them they did not meet the study requirement. Thus their information will be deleted, and they will not be contacted.
4. I contacted eligible participants later through the Discord private messaging system, where I introduced myself and asked for a date to conduct an initial (get to know each other) interview to talk about the study, answer their questions, and set a time for actual interviews.
5. After recruiting the participants, I sent a secured Zoom link to each participant individually to conduct the interview.
6. The choice of participants for the study was first come first serve.

In this step, I had two problems that changed the original design of this study.

This study was spoused to have only four participants, two males and two females. I was planning to have three rounds of interviews with each participant. Each round was spoused to investigate one element of the SIT, thus allowing participants to think about their answers and remember their stories and giving me time to think about the interview

questions and the participants' answers. However, during the initial interviews, almost all participants asked me to do the three interviews in one go. Their reason was that they were approaching Ramadan and, after that, the Muslim Eid season, which requires a significant amount of preparation and time, which they do not have. In addition, all the participants were college-level students who were in the finals season. For all these reasons, I decided to accept their request, and to compensate, I increased the number of participants to eight instead of four.

Another problem in this step was that I could not recruit female participants, even with using a snowball sampling approach and accepting referrals. I believe the reason for this issue was the cultural and religious views on gender interaction held by Saudi society. In other words, Saudi traditions and Islam strictly limit the interaction between genders. Therefore, when I asked male participants to find female participants, they could not do it because they did not have females in their friend group. As a result, I decided to change this study to include only male participants; however, nearing the end of the interviews, a group of three females came and asked me to allow them to participate.

In the initial interviews, some female participants said they only agreed to participate because they did a background check on me by checking my gaming profiles and asking mutual friends about me. Being a father of a girl also played a role in their willingness to participate because they thought it would be safe for them to talk as I will try to protect them the same way I protect my daughter. Consequently, I allowed them to participate and increased the number of participants to 11. This decision was appropriate as it aligned with the purpose of this study.

Data Collection

An important aspect of Halldorson's (2009) design was to develop a measure that accessed participants' information related to their identity. In other words, she designed her data collection method to allow for a better understanding of the meanings attached to self-identification using semi-structured interviews. I used her data collection method in this study, which is one round of semi-structured interviews. Since my study aimed to explore the social identity of Saudi college-level gamers, the demographic information, interview questions, and conceptual framework were adjusted to suit the purpose of the study. In other words, they were changed to ask questions about Saudi college-level self-identified gamers.

The following questions were used for the demographic information to collect information about participants' age, gender, and educational information.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Which Saudi university are you enrolled in?
4. Which major are you enrolled in?
5. At which level are you right now?
6. Do you identify as a Saudi gamer?

The educational information checked for the university name, major, the level of students, and whether or not they identify as Saudi gamers, which was a precondition to be part of the study (Appendix A). This information helped to provide a detailed description of the participants which may enable readers to assess the applicability of the study in their own context.

For the interview questions, I made two major changes to her design. First, I added a fourth interview question to the cognitive component section. The question aimed to explore the role of language in shaping the social identity of Saudi gamers. The question was as follows:

4) How does language play a role in self-identification as a Saudi gamer?

According to Elbih (2016), language should be considered when investigating social identity, as language is a mediator of the interactions between social groups and helps with meaning-making, self-representation, and self-identification. Language is also important since “the meaning of one’s identity derives from the interdependence between the personal and societal” (Miskovic, 2007, p. 514).

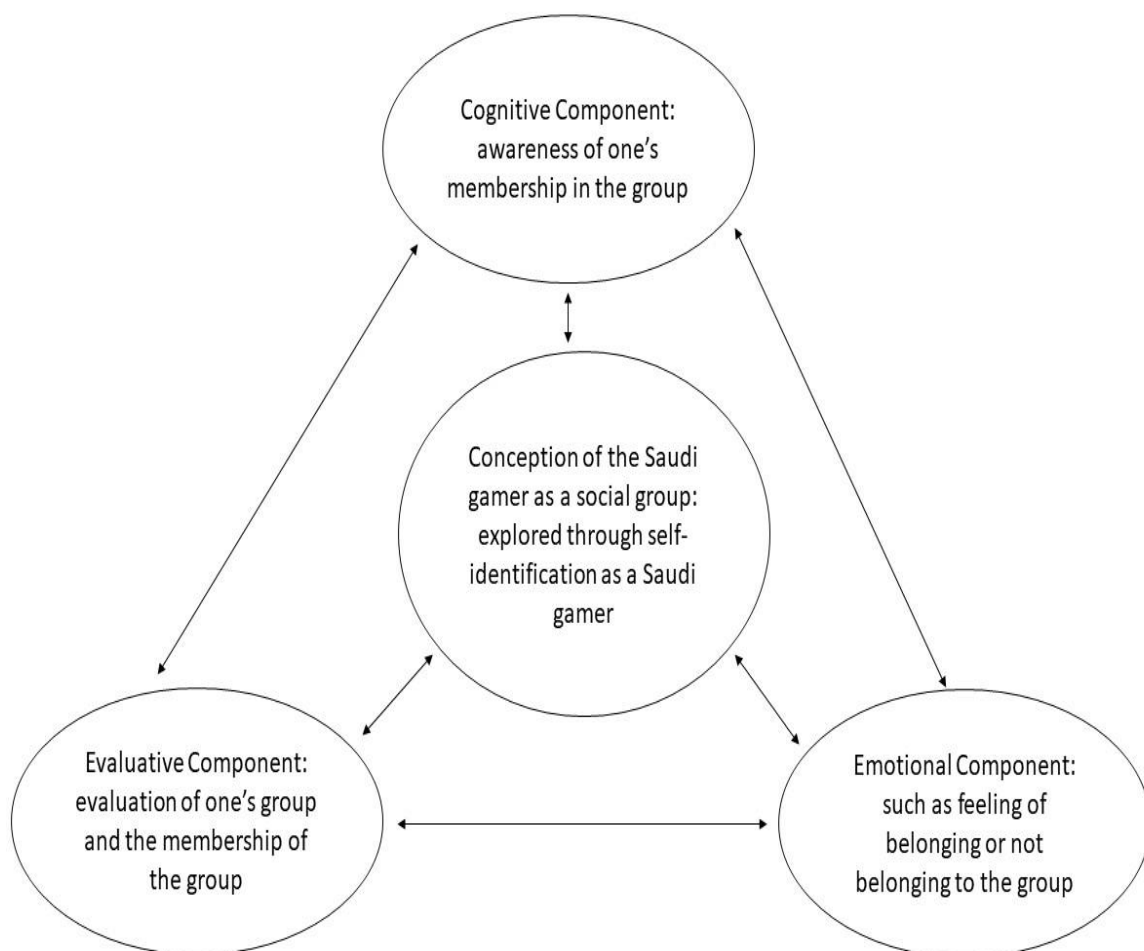
The second major edit was that I translated the interview questions into the Arabic language (Appendix C). The translation was important because the targets of the study were Saudis, whose first language is Arabic. Having the interview questions in the target group's language assisted them in fully expressing their ideas without any language barrier. It also helped support the credibility of the data as using the participants' own language ensures that they understand the questions. I used member checking to ensure the quality of the translation. More information about member checking will be provided in the method of verification section.

The remainder of Halldorson's (2009) interview questions was adjusted to align with the purpose of the study. In particular, the questions were reframed to address Saudi self-identified gamers instead of Metis. The edited version of the questions can be found in Appendix B.

Lastly, Halldorson's (2009) conceptual framework of a group was also adjusted to suit the study's goals. Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of the Saudi gamer group.

Figure 4

The conceptual framework of the Saudi gamer group



Interview Process

After recruiting the participants, I followed these steps:

- 1- I conducted one round of semi-structured interview with each of the participants.
- 2- Each interview was done individually, and each participant took an average of 60 minutes to respond to the questions. The language of the interview was Arabic, as explained in the previous section. However, some of the participants code switched between Arabic and English during the interview.
- 3- At the beginning of the interview, I verbally informed participants about the study's purposes, their rights as participants and checked if they had signed the consent form (Appendix K). After that, I validated their demographic information and ensured that the participants fulfilled the study's preconditions. I also asked them to choose a pseudonym.
- 4- From the three sections of interview questions, I started with the cognitive component. After each set of interview questions, I rearticulated and summarized what the participants said to ensure the study's credibility and to conduct member checking. It was also a way to verify my understanding of what the participants were trying to convey. Although the interviews were recorded, I was writing notes on any ideas I had during the interview.
- 5- After the interview, I immediately wrote a reflexive journal on my experience of the interview then I started transcribing the interviews.
- 6- After transcribing the interview, I read the transcript and then wrote a summary of the interview and sent it to the participant. The summary helped

to ensure the representation of the participant, as they could clarify and edit sections that I may misinterpret. It also helped support the credibility of the study.

Data Analysis

Choosing the appropriate type of analysis entails finding a fit with the study's theoretical assumptions and goals (Tesch, 1990). Saldaña (2012) stated that researchers use a deductive coding approach to align "analysis with the study's conceptual framework, paradigm, or research goals" (p. 75). Since this study used social identity theory as a conceptual framework, a deductive approach to coding was appropriate.

I began analyzing the raw data using Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestions on data analysis. It was important to find a data analysis method that served the purpose of the research and was flexible to allow SIT to work as a guide in the research design. According to Halldorson (2009), this flexibility can be found in Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach. Their deductive approach to data analysis entails three stages: 1) data reduction, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion drawing and verification of data collected.

Data Reduction

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), Data reduction is a process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming the data collected. This process methodologically organizes the data in a way that allows for conclusions and verifications to occur. To do so, coding is an important step as units of meaning should be assigned to sentences or paragraphs collected from the participants. Furthermore, coding is beneficial to the researchers as it helps them review the data and create links between the assigned codes, categories, and theoretical concepts (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Before conducting the interview, a list of codes and their definitions were developed based on the SIT's components. This step was important as it helps to link research questions and the concepts of interest to the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, I used the NVivo program to apply the list of codes to the data.

Data Display

The second step in data analysis is retrieving information using data display (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), displaying the data helps to make sense of the qualitative data collected. 'Display' in this regard is the organization and compression of data that allows for drawing conclusions. In this study, I used NVivo coding program to display the data and to explore similarities, differences, and links between categories. Such an approach is beneficial as it builds a conceptual coherence by arranging similar items (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Conclusion Drawing

The last component in Miles and Huberman's (1994) analysis process involves both conclusion drawing and verification. In the conclusion drawing, the coded data will be transformed into meaningful data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Miles and Huberman (1994) mentioned some strategies to generate meaning from the data. Some of these include 1) checking for any patterns or themes; 2) categorizing things that go together; 3) checking for relations among variables; 4) establishing a theoretical coherence by exploring the validity of the findings and making a decision as to whether or not they fit with the conceptual framework, and 5) keeping a research journal to record any issues encountered while collecting and analyzing the data.

Data Analysis Steps

All interviews were transcribed first. The transcription was in the same language the participants spoke during the interview. Then, each transcript was read for patterns or categories related to SIT and the research questions. In other words, I used the NVivo program to code from the list of codes, whereby the codes were assigned to a chunk of data. Then, I explored coded data searching for similarities, differences, and links between categories.

I marked any patterns that I found in the data. Then, I grouped the data that fit together to form themes. These themes were reported in the findings. In the analysis process, I noted the relationship among variables and their relations. I validated the findings to assess their fit with the conceptual framework. I kept a journal that records any issues that occurred during this process.

Themes were used to describe participants' perceptions and experiences with their social identity as gamers. I translated only the parts I used in the findings as an example of a theme or to elaborate further on an idea. The rest of the transcription was not translated. The data was used to define the social identity of Saudi gamers from the perspective of self-identified Saudi gamers. The definition included the three elements of Tajfel's (1981) SIT. The findings were compared and contrasted with the theory and existing literature on gamers' social identity.

Method of Verification

Any meanings that stem from data should be evaluated for their confirmability or validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Validity and reliability are usually the most common standards for quality quantitative research. Validity means that the research clearly

reflects the phenomena under study, and reliability refers to the ability to replicate the findings. However, the standards differ in qualitative research as they focus on the ability of the analyst to offer evidence that their depictions and investigation speak to the reality of the circumstances and people examined (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (2000) proposed using credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability as terminologies to discuss the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

Credibility

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), credibility refers to the accuracy of representing participants' emotions, ideas, and activities. It "involves consideration of the interrelationship between the research design components—the study's purpose, theoretical or conceptual framework, research questions, and methods" (p. 360).

Dependability

Quantitative researchers usually use the term reliability to refer to the extent that others can replicate research findings. However, as Lincoln and Guba (2000) argued, what is important in qualitative research is the consistency and dependability of findings with the information gathered. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explained that dependability in qualitative research refers to the consistency of the data and their ability to answer the research questions. It includes the ability to track all data collection and interpretation steps clearly.

Confirmability

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), confirmability in qualitative studies is a term that parallels objectivity in quantitative studies. It implies that the findings are derived from the study and not from the researcher's biases. To ensure the confirmability

of a study, the researcher should elaborately illustrate how their data can be tracked to its origins. There are several strategies to achieve this goal and reduce the researcher's biases or influence on the study results. These strategies include an audit trail, using a reflexive journal and memos, and keeping a record of field notes and transcripts. Using these strategies will help readers to evaluate the findings of a study.

Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), qualitative investigators are more concerned about transferability than generalizability, as they usually do not work with many participants as necessary to make generalizations to the larger community. Generalizability is not a purpose in qualitative research because qualitative studies aim to produce "context-relevant findings that can be applied to broader contexts while still maintaining their content-specific richness" (Glesne, 2016, p. 329). Patton (1990) indicated that transferability implies "speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions" (p. 489). Therefore, it is not essential to have representative samples to achieve transferability in qualitative studies since the main concern is the likelihood of the reader assuming that similar processes will be at work in their own settings and communities. Purposeful sampling is one way to ensure the transferability of a study. Another method is to provide a thick description that contains detailed information to allow readers to comprehend the contextual factors, participants, and experiences included in the study (Glesne, 2016).

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) offered a table that provides an overview of trustworthiness criteria. The table contains three columns. The first column shows the qualitative terminology, the second column presents the equivalent terminology in

quantitative research, and the last column shows strategies to ensure trustworthiness and improve its aspects in research. The table is set out below (p. 328).

Table 2

Overview of Trustworthiness Criteria

Qualitative Terminology	Quantitative Terminology	Research Strategies
Credibility	Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Journaling/reflexivity * Prolonged field engagement * Thick description * Triangulation * Seeking negative instances * Member checks * Peer debriefing
Dependability	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Triangulation * Audit trail * Peer examination
Confirmability	Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Audit trail * Triangulation * Journaling/reflexivity
Transferability	External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Purposeful sampling * Thick description * Detailed information

Note. Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019, p. 328

For this study, I used tactics to ensure data quality and increase its trustworthiness. To check for researcher effects, I utilized some of Miles and Huberman's

(1994) and Bloomberg and Volpe's (2019) recommendations. Hence, I disclosed my gamer social identity to participants to avoid researcher bias so that I am not considered to be an outsider. I stated that I am a gamer in the invitation to participate form (Appendix L). I also introduced myself and my gamer identity before conducting the interview.

These steps helped provide a comfortable environment for the participants and allowed them to express their opinions, feelings, and experiences openly. Furthermore, the interviews were conducted individually and at a comfortable, agreed-upon time. The interview questions were designed not to generate any information that would harm the participants (Halldorson, 2009). I clearly explained the purpose of the research, the procedures, and the future use of the data to the participants. The disclosure of my social identity and the method for conducting the interviews allowed me to build a safe and comfortable space for the participants that encouraged them to provide truthful responses.

I used member-checking tactics to avoid any bias that could stem from the effects of the participants and researcher and to weigh the evidence. Member checking "is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. Data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences" (Birt et al., 2016, p. 1802). There are many strategies for member checking. However, in this research, I used three methods. The first method was done during the interviews, as I validated my understanding of the participants' stories by restating or summarizing information and then checking with the participant to determine the accuracy of my understanding.

The second method of member checking was sending the interview summary to the participants. First, I transcribed the interviews and read each one thoroughly. Then, I wrote a summary for each interview and noted sections I did not understand or needed more clarification. Finally, I sent each summary to the participant with a set of clarification questions – if any – and asked for their validation of the summary. I asked the participants to either affirm that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences or not. I also asked them to provide clarification on sections that do not reflect their stories.

I also used member checking to ensure the quality of the translations in this study. In doing so, I asked two of my colleagues to translate and to provide feedback on the translation. My colleagues are Saudis doing their Ph.D. in the United States and majoring in language-related fields. They have experience in translation and speak Arabic and English fluently. They are also EFL instructors teaching English to Saudi Arabia college-level students.

Member checking helped me to increase the credibility of this research. This validation method helps to control researcher bias as the participants will be able to present their comments on the raw data (Carlson, 2010). Furthermore, it allowed participants to correct errors, challenge what they believe to be incorrect representations of their experience, and provide more information on the topic. Finally, it ensured the accuracy of the translation in the study.

In this study, I did not use triangulation of data in its normal sense, that is, collecting data from multiple sources (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Instead, the verification of the data was accomplished by using semi-structured interview questions.

The verification of data happened by asking each participant the same questions, which allowed for comparisons among respondents (Biber & Leavy, 2006). Consequently, each new response confirms or weakens previous data by testing its generality (Miles & Huberman, 1994), thus ensuring the credibility of the findings.

I used peer review as another way of triangulation in this study. Two of my Saudi classmates doing their Ph.D. studies in the United States were involved in the coding and analyzing processes of the study. My choice of Saudis doing their Ph.D. studies in the United States was for two reasons. First, they have a background in research which helps in terms of coding and analyzing the data. Second, they speak the same languages as the participants, which saved a significant amount of time. The actual names of the participants were not shared with the peer reviewers, only the transcripts with pseudonyms.

Generalizability is not a goal in this study. The number of participants in this study was insufficient to generalize to the larger community (Glesne, 2016). However, I attempted to address the issue of transferability by trying to provide a detailed description of the participants and the context. The use of the purposeful sampling method in this study also helped in this regard, as it provides detailed information about the participants, their experience, and the context of the study. Hence, it may allow readers to establish their thoughts about the applicability of the findings in their environment (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations were noted during all phases of this research. The University of New Mexico's ethical research guidelines was followed as a standard.

Before the interview, I explained the study purpose, design, and the risk or benefits of participating in the study. I also informed the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study if they chose to do so without any consequences. Additionally, I informed them that their information would be confidential, and pseudonyms would be used in any publications after this study. This includes information about the participants, such as the university they attend. I ensured they were notified that while I would protect their confidentiality, anonymity among research participants cannot be guaranteed. This is because this study included individuals who may be known to each other. All this information was on the consent form and was articulated to them before the interview.

All the participants' information and recordings were kept in an encrypted file on my personal password-protected computer and will be destroyed after finishing this study. If a participant wished to have a summary of the research results, they were asked for contact information to provide them with the summary.

During the interviews, the participants might have faced minimal risks. For example, the interviewer may have brought up issues that made the participants uncomfortable or stressed. In this case, I informed the participants that they were not required to answer the questions, that they could change the subject, or that the interview could be paused and rescheduled. As a result of the power relationship or cultural issues surrounding the interview, there may have been risks or potential stress; the participant may have felt uncomfortable discussing certain aspects of the interview such as gender and sexual harassment. I assured the participants that all information would be kept confidential and that the names of all individuals, institutions, and locations involved would never be linked to identifying information in any report.

Chapter Summary

This study employed grounded theory methodology to explore Tajfel's (1981) SIT with 11 Saudi college-level who self-identify as Saudi gamers. The sample included both males and females. One round of semi-structured interviews was used to collect the qualitative data. Miles and Huberman's (1994) analysis approach was used to analyze the data. Different forms of member checking and peer review were used as data verification methods. All ethical protocols of the University of New Mexico were used during the process of this research.

Chapter 4: Findings

The research findings are presented in this section. This chapter contains a summary of the participants' responses based on themes that emerged; further interpretation of their answers will be provided in the fifth chapter. This qualitative study aimed to achieve two things. First, to respond to the gap in research related to the social identity of gamers in Saudi Arabia. Second, to apply Tajfel's SIT to Saudi college students in Saudi Arabia who self-identify as gamers in order to obtain a definition of the group by its members. These goals were met by utilizing Tajfel's social identity theory as the guiding theoretical lens to develop a conceptual framework specific to gamers in Saudi universities and obtain an initial understanding of the meanings attached to the self-identification of Saudi gamers in multiple Saudi universities.

According to Tajfel (1981), social and personal identity are hypothetical cognitive structures that form most of the self-concept. In other words, a person's self-concept derives from two primary sources: personal and social identity. Social identity is composed of three elements.

- 1- A cognitive component (knowing about the group membership).
- 2- An evaluative component (positive or negative evaluation of group membership)
- 3- An emotional component (positive or negative emotions associated with the group membership and its evaluation)

Tajfel indicated that the group affiliation's positive or negative significance could be seen by the appraisal and emotional evidence attributed to the group identity.

Demographic Information

Name, age, gender, regions, and major were collected from each participant as elements. The region was added as an element because Saudi Arabia is a vast country with different developmental levels. Thus, it may play a role in how gamers perceive their identity. During the recruitment process, participants were asked if they identified as Saudi gamers to meet the study's criteria. Before the interview, the researcher asked each participant five questions. These questions were used to access demographic information about the participants. The questions were as follows: first, they were asked their names, then their age and gender. Lastly, they were asked for their educational information, such as major and their level in their program. It is essential to mention that none of the participants is a student of mine or a student in the university I am affiliated with.

The study included 11 voluntary participants, eight males, and three females. Their ages ranged between 20 and 23 years. Each participant shared their educational information, as shown in Table 3 below. To protect participants' confidentiality, participants were asked to choose a pseudonym that would hide their identity and would not reflect their in-game identities.

Table 3

Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Gender	Region	Major	Level
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Boy	20	Male	Eastern Region	Information Technology	Freshman
Engineer	20	Male	Western Region	Engineering	Sophomore
Lama	20	Female	Central Region	Computer Science	Freshman
Mefl7	20	Male	Central Region	Radio, Television, and Film	Sophomore
Mis.ksu	21	Male	Central Region	Management Information System	Sophomore
Photoshop	22	Female	Eastern Region	Graphic Design	Senior
Phy	20	Male	Western Region	Marketing	Junior
Scorpion	23	Male	Northern Region	Nursing	Senior
Starlight	22	Female	Eastern Region	Business Administration	Junior
Windows XP	23	Male	Southern Region	Computer Engineering	Senior
Wolf	20	Male	Eastern Region	Scaffolding [tools used in construction]	Sophomore

Components of the Conceptual Framework: Cognitive Component

The first research question explored the cognitive component of belonging to a group. According to Tajfel (1981), the cognitive component of an individual's social

identity contains information about belonging to a group. Each participant was asked if they identified as a gamer. All participants voluntarily identified themselves as gamers. Thus, the requirement for the first element of the framework is met.

However, Halldorson (2009) believed that the cognitive element should also include knowledge of their group. Such information allows for a better understanding of gamers' social identity. This information was investigated using a set of questions.

2a). How long have you known that you were a gamer? Tell me about the circumstances.

2b). How long have you chosen to identify as a gamer?

2c). What encouraged you to identify as a gamer?

These questions aimed to grasp an idea of the length of time the participants had known about their identity when they chose to identify as gamers and, finally, the motivations for their choice. Their answers are displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Exploration of Participants' Knowledge of Group Membership

Participant	Time known	Time identified	The motivation for identifying as a gamer
Boy	12 years ago.	2012-2013	- People understood the meaning of being a gamer.

Engineer	In elementary school.	During PlayStation 1 era	- I wanted to make friends with similar interests.
Lama	When she was six years old.	When she was 15 years old.	- I wanted to make friends with similar interests.
Mefl7	2017	2019	- When he bought a gaming PC.
Mis.ksu	In middle school	Cannot remember a specific time	- I wanted to make friends with similar interests.
Photoshop.	During PlayStation 4 era	When she started to save money to buy PlayStation 4	- Motivation from friends to start streaming. - Knowing she was good at gaming. - Started streaming games on Twitch.tv.
Phy	2011-2012	2019	- Participated in many Esport tournaments.
Scorpion	Early childhood	In middle school	- Played almost every game on the market. - Played a lot of games at a high level.

			- Spent more than 800 hours on some games.
Starlight	17 years old.	When I went to college.	- I wanted to make friends with similar interests. - Started to play more online games.
Windows XP	8 or 9 years ago.	Five years ago.	- Bought a gaming PC. - Started playing a lot of games.
Wolf	2015	2018	- Started streaming games on Twitch.tv.

Length of Time Participants had known of their identity and when Participants chose to Self-identify as Gamers.

All of the participants were playing games before they identified themselves as gamers. Reviewing their answers on when they chose to identify as gamers revealed two overarching themes. The first theme was understanding what being a gamer meant. The second theme revolved around participants getting closer to games.

Understanding The Gamer Identity

Although many Saudis played a significant number of games, Saudi society only recently became aware of what being a gamer entailed. Four participants – Phy, Lama, Starlight, and Boy were doing game-like activities without knowing they were gamers. As soon as the meaning of being a gamer became apparent, they chose to identify as gamers. Phy reported that the only thing people knew was “Youtubers who play many

games. There was no classification for gamers at the time; otherwise, I would have identified myself as one of them.” Similarly, although Lama started gaming when she was a child, she only knew what being a gamer meant when she was 15.

YouTube.com played a significant role in helping Saudis understand their gamer identity, thereby allowing people to start identifying themselves as gamers. Starlight’s journey as a gamer began when she started watching people play video games online, which made her search for games and discover herself as a gamer. Boy explained how YouTube helped him discover his gamer identity:

When this word became popular among people, there was a time when people on YouTube identified themselves as gamers. I started searching for what it meant to be a gamer... at that point, I discovered that I was a gamer without knowing it.

Getting Close to Games

Some of the participants realized that they were getting closer to games. The closeness drove them to recognize their gamer identity. This identity realization manifested itself in many ways; some participants realized they were gamers either when they became emotionally attached to games or when they bought their gaming equipment.

Becoming Emotionally Attached to Games

Emotions helped many participants in this study to realize their gamer identity. Four participants indicated they knew they were gamers when they suddenly realized their emotional attachment to games. Scorpion realized he was a gamer in middle school

when his friends started talking about things they loved. Wolf, who is a gamer and a Twitch.tv streamer, reported

I knew I was a gamer when there was a time in my life when I could not play any games. At that time, I felt something was missing... the days felt long and boring. I had nothing to do. I realized games were missing. So, I started to think about my current situation and what I wanted to do in the future.

Engineer also realized that he had become emotionally attached to games when he started to prefer playing them over any other activity. Additionally, he realized that he enjoyed spending most of his time playing. As a result, he knew he was a gamer.

Windows XP shared a similar experience: “every day I was dying for school to end so I could go back home and start playing with my friends.”

MIS.KSU was the only participant who did not suddenly realize he was a gamer; however, he remembered when he first became emotionally attached to games. He explained

I have been playing games daily for almost ten years. So, to be honest, there was not a time when I suddenly realized that I was a gamer. However, I became more emotionally attached to games. Maybe I became so emotionally attached to games at the end of my middle school years.

Gaming Equipment

Spending money on new gaming gear was also a connecting theme. Two participants linked how they knew they were gamers with their new gaming devices.

Mef17 became closer to games when he bought a new gaming computer. After he started

gaming on his new device, he realized he was a gamer. Consequently, he chose to identify himself as a gamer. Similarly, Photoshop said she chose to identify as a gamer when she saw herself saving money to buy a gaming computer.

Circumstances Behind the Choice to Identify as a Gamer

As all participants practice gaming, the researcher explored why they chose to identify openly as gamers. Therefore, the participants were asked about their motivations for such a choice. Some participants had more than one reason; however, a review of their answers showed similarities and differences in their responses. Three major themes emerged after exploring the interview transcripts as motivations for openly identifying as gamers. All reasons for identifying as a gamer are shown in Table (4). Each of these themes is presented separately below.

Social Reasons

Four participants started to openly identify themselves as gamers because they wanted to meet friends with similar interests. MIS.KSU and Starlight reported that the primary motivation for them was establishing friendships. In similar ways, Engineer told a story about the first time he publicly introduced himself as a gamer when he saw a kid in his neighborhood carrying PlayStation 1 box. Lama reported that she had to disclose her identity because she needed others like her. She talked about building a community of gamers, especially Saudi females.

In the beginning, there was no female gamer community. When Discord [social media platform that gamers use to communicate] became popular, I saw my brother playing video games and talking with his friends on Discord. I wondered

why we did not have a place where we met with other female gamers ... I wanted to make friendships based on games, nothing else.

Boy had a different social reason. He said he only started publicly identifying himself as a gamer when society understood the concept's meaning. He explained that the people around him at that time considered gaming "silly."

Practical Reasons

The majority of the participants in this study had other practical reasons for publicly identifying themselves as a gamer. These reasons ranged from buying gaming gear to establishing a career in the gaming industry. Mfle7 and Windows XP said that buying a gaming computer was their motivation. The reason for Phy was similar to Scorpion, as both participated in many tournaments and played games at a competitive level. Finally, Wolf and Starlight had to openly disclose their identity, as they both started streaming on Twitch.tv as a career.

Information About the Group

As the participants self-identify as gamers, the cognitive component was fulfilled. However, it also served a second purpose, allowing the researcher to access information about the group. Tajfel (1981) indicated that self-identifying as a group is supposed to make the information about the group salient, allowing access to information about the group.

Establishing a definition of the group constructed by its members will yield a better conception of the group. To achieve this, participants were asked to disclose information about the gamer group, including a definition, activities, behaviors, and

characteristics perceived as typical by the participant. The following section will present Saudi gamers' definition of a gamer, followed by common activities, behaviors, and characteristics believed to be common among in-group members.

In-group: Defining Saudi Gamers

All the participants agreed that gamers must dedicate time to playing and enjoying video games. Differences in participants' responses emerged regarding the characteristics gamers should have in addition to playing. For example, Boy is the sole participant to consider people who play video games as a source of income as gamers. Engineer was the only one to consider the nationality aspect of a person to be considered a Saudi gamer. Lama and Starlight, female gamers, were the only ones to consider the emotional attachment in their definition. Finally, three participants – Boy, Mef17m and Starlight – included "being competitive" in their definition of Saudi gamers.

More than one game

Playing more than one game was a common theme among six participants. For Windows XP, playing at least four games is a must to be considered a gamer. For others, however, there were some exceptions. For Scorpion, a person could be called a gamer if they played one game only, so long as they were able to become professional at their game. On the other hand, Wolf believed that people who became professional in one game should be known as Pro players. When I asked him what the difference between a gamer and a Pro player was, he responded: “gamers usually play games to enjoy their time with their friends; a Pro player is a person who becomes professional in one game and plays it as a source of income.”

Gaming device

The type of device that a person uses to play games was also an essential factor for many participants. For most participants, playing on a device built specifically for games was important. Therefore, some participants, such as Mefl7 and Windows XP, did not consider mobile phone players gamers, even if they were at a professional level or participated in tournaments. Others had some conditions for considering mobile phone players as gamers. For example, Photoshop saw them as gamers if they became professional at their games. In contrast, Mis.ksu saw players on any device as gamers, even if they were using mobile phones for gaming.

Table 5*Similarities and Differences in Participants' Definition of Saudi Gamers*

Participant	Similarity	Differences
Boy	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play games at a competitive level. - Play games as a source of income.
Engineer	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officially holds the Saudi nationality.
Lama	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have an emotional attachment to games that starts from a young age. - Play more than one game.
Mefl7	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must play on a gaming console (mobile phone players are not gamers). - Play games at a competitive level.
Mis.ksu	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play on any console, including a mobile phone.
Photoshop	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play on any console.

		- Mobile phone players are gamers if they can become professional at their games.
Phy	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	- Play more than one game.
Scorpion	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	- More than one game. - A player who only plays one game must be professional at it to be called a gamer.
Starlight	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	- More than one game. - Play games at a competitive level. - Have an emotional attachment to games.
Windows XP	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	- Play at least four games. - Play on any console, including a mobile phone. - Mobile phone players are (not) gamers, even if they become professional at their game.
Wolf	Dedicate time to playing and enjoying videogames	- More than one game. - A Pro player is a person who becomes professional in one game and plays it as a source of income.

Activities, Behaviors, and Characteristics of the Saudi Gamers

An interview question was designed to explore participants' knowledge of Saudi gamers as a group. It asked participants to list or provide specific examples of activities, behaviors, or characteristics they believed were typical. Although most of their responses overlap, they can, to some extent, be grouped under two themes. These themes are social features and physical traits. The responses to this question are displayed in Table 6.

Social Features

Participants identified social characteristics, which included bonded community, easy-to-start friendships, like to sit together, and always looking for new gamers to play with. On the other hand, the Saudi gamer community can be toxic. When I asked for the meaning of this, Phy responded: "very negative people. If they do not like anything, they will express their opinion harshly... some of them use bad language ... others may break monitors."

Starlight, Lama, and Phy directly reported that Saudi gamers are introverted. Boy, Engineer and Phy believed that the antisocial lifestyle was why most Saudi gamers lacked social skills. For Starlight, some gamers were not entirely introverted, and those were the people who spent time playing video games yet also had a social life in their workplace and with their family or real-life friends. There are also entirely introverted gamers, and people from this category are primarily female. She explained:

There are those who sit at home almost all the time. Unfortunately, the majority of these people are female. Because they are girls, they do not have friends in real life. So, they try to build a social life inside games to solve this issue.

Physical Traits

Some participants indicated that how a person talks can be a physical sign of whether they belong to the gamer community. Mostly, they have better English skills and use words or phrases from games in their everyday speech. More detail on this topic will be provided under the language influence section in this chapter. Other physical aspects of the Saudi gamers group included health issues, such as being overweight, acne, and bad posture. Cosplaying (making self-made costumes that are inspired by game characters) or how they dress was another physical feature of the gaming community mentioned by Photoshop.

The researcher also explored whether participants viewed themselves similar to other Saudi gamers. Seven participants indicated they were similar to other Saudi gamers, whereas only Lama felt that she was different from other Saudi gamers. She explained, “until now, I have not met any gamer similar to me in my style and how I think. Hopefully, I can meet someone like me. If I did, I know they would be my best friend.” Others, such as Boy and Engineer, reported that although they were similar to other Saudi gamers, they felt they were also different in terms of personality and social skills. Scorpion reported that he had been similar to other Saudi gamers. However, he was not similar anymore, as his social skills had improved, and he was no longer introverted.

Influence of the Language

This researcher believes that languages play a significant role in forming social identities and in the interaction between in-group members. This role can be as minor as markers for people within a social group or, to a more considerable extent, a discourse the in-group uses to present themselves or their issues. For that reason, a general question

about the presence of languages among the Saudi gamer community was added. The question was formed in a general way because this study aimed to build a conceptual framework of the Saudi gamer community and not to delve into specific aspects of languages and discourse within a particular social identity. Participants' responses to this question established interaction between their gamer social identity and the languages used among them, particularly the English and Arabic languages.

The English Language

For the English language, almost all participants agreed that Saudi gamers have better English language skills than other people who do not play video games. They also agreed that better English skills did not mean "fluent"; instead, they could better understand English. Mefl7 noted, "if they cannot speak English, they will start mixing English and Arabic just to get by."

Some participants hinted at the type of English they learned from playing games. Engineer, Boy, Scorpion, Phy, and wolf mentioned that most of the English they acquired through games was English to conduct small talks, game-related English, and slang English. All of those four participants shared that they learned how to conduct small talks with other non-Arabic gamers. Scorpion describes small talk English as "English that you use to ask someone about their day, their emotion, and of course, if they want to play or not." He also added that he became aware of old English words such as "thy and thus" from playing games such as Dark soul. When I asked him why it was important to understand this type of English, he replied, "to enjoy the story and complete missions in the game." However, he only understands some of these "old words" and does not consider himself fluent.

They also shared that they had to learn game-related English to play games with other members. Wolf explained, "in the beginning, I had to learn words from games such as engage, retreat, and push. After that, I learned how to say sentences such as do not engage, let us fall back, and I need this item." Scorpion mentioned that he uses English mainly to give descriptions and directions in games, such as "this red item is used for damage, and you can find it if you go left at the fountain." Phy stated that he had to learn game-related English to better communicate with team members in tournaments.

The third type of English mentioned is "slang English" or "street English." Engineer became aware of "slang English" from playing Call of Duty. Boy learned street English from watching YouTubers and in-game communication with other non-Arabic players. Boy stated that

the problem with our schools is that they teach us English that we do not hear in the street, and people do not use it. Gaming made me aware of street English that people use in their daily life words such as cap, which means a lie, or dope, which means something beautiful, are words used every day, and no one taught us that in schools.

The participants talked about English skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing. In general, they attributed the improvement of their English skills to three elements: language exposure, communication, and common goals. According to Phy, "English is the most common language in online games. When you go online, you play with people from all around the world." Engineer and Wolf specifically mentioned improvements in their English spelling and reading due to prolonged exposure to English materials in games. Similarly, almost all the participants reported that communication with non-Arabic speakers or playing games in English were essential if you were a

gamer. MIS.KSU indicated that he started to understand English words because he heard them many times while communicating with non-Arabs when playing. Starlight mentioned that one of her friends learned the Japanese language because of her exposure to and communication with a Japanese person in a game.

Besides language exposure and communication, having a common goal was a motivational aspect of learning English. This motivation was present in two forms among the participants' answers. First, games contain objectives that need to be finished to complete the game. Therefore, many participants, such as Lama and Phy, reported learning English to understand these objects. Scorpion, who lives in the northern region, which is less developed than other parts of Saudi Arabia, explained.

Unfortunately, we in the northern part have really bad English. Almost anyone who speaks English is one of two kinds of people. Either they were born in another region, or they are gamers. Almost 90% of games do not support the Arabic language. So, at worst they will not be fluent in English; instead, they will at least be able to compile some words to communicate ... take me as an example, I am not fluent, but I can now watch an entire English movie without Arabic subtitles.

The second common goal that motivated some participants to learn English or improve their skills was playing games in a different language with others who wanted to play them. Lama reported that some games are not popular in the Arab region; therefore, many Saudi gamers go online to different regions to play these games. Phy talked about his experience as a professional player who joined many tournaments and how team players had to learn English to communicate and win tournaments.

The Arabic language

Four participants spoke about the interaction between their social identity as gamers and the Arabic language. Engineer mentioned that because most games do not support the Arabic language, he had to learn "Arabizy" to communicate with other Arabic players. According to Engineer, Arabizy is a writing system that transfers Arabic sounds using English letters. He provided an example such as the number "3" to represent the letter "ع" and "5" to represent "ح" in Arabic. However, this was before he started to learn English spelling.

Lama, Photoshop, and MIS.KSU talked about how their gamer identity made them familiar with other Arabic dialects. They all stated that they did not simply recognize these dialects but incorporated some of the words into their speech. MIS.KSU added that Saudi gamers' usage of some Arabic words made them popular among Arabic speakers. For example, "*Algom*," which means (take it), is usually said to the person who just lost a game.

Another theme that emerged from the participants' answers is the implantation of specific gaming terminologies. Six of the participants reported that gamers switch between Arabic and English. Mefl7 indicated that Saudi gamers usually implement English when they speak, even if they are not playing. In her opinion, Photoshop mentioned that the way Saudi gamers speak is a language. According to Lama and others, they are primarily games-related English terminologies such as attack, defend and defuse. Boy and Windows XP provided other examples, such as AFK (away from keyboard) and GG (good game).

The Out-group

In accordance with Tajfel (1981), it is essential to define the related out-groups that are important for the in-group. The out-groups are tied to the environment and the social atmosphere they are in. They are essential because they provide the in-group with a comparison of their group characteristics. This evaluation of one's group characteristics is significant, as it usually results in a positive group assessment compared with one relevant out-group. For Tajfel (1981), the attribution to a group of positive values and emotional qualities offers a positive social self-definition relating to oneself.

A clear understanding of who is not a Saudi gamer emerged by defining Saudi gamers, thus identifying the out-groups. A Saudi gamer is a person who finds the time to play more than one game and enjoys playing them on a gaming console. The out-groups are people who do not play games or play only one game and are not dedicated.

The information provided by participants in response to the research questions exploring the nature of the group – including the definition of Saudi gamers, identification of the out-group, and the activities, behaviors, and characteristics typical of the Saudi gamer social group – is presented below.

Table 6*Information About the Saudi Gamer Group*

Definition of Saudi gamers	<u>In-group</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons that find time to play more than one game and enjoy playing them on a gaming console <u>Out-group.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who do not play games or play only one game and are not dedicated.
Behavior/Activities/ Characteristics	<u>Social Features</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertwined community • Easy to start friendships • Like to sit together • Are always looking for new gamers to play with • Toxic • Introverted • Lack social skills <u>Physical Traits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better English skills • Overweight • Acne • Bad posture • Cosplaying
Language influence	<u>English language</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve various English skills through exposure to language, communication and a common goal • Motivation to learn English <u>Arabic language</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabizy • Learn about other Arabic dialects • Spread of some Arabic words • The use of gaming terminologies and code-switching

Components of the Conceptual Framework: Evaluative Component

The social identity theory's evaluative component reflects a person's tendency to positively or negatively evaluate in-group attributes and their membership in the group. Two interview questions were designed to explore this aspect of Saudi gamers' social identity on a personal and group level. The first research question focused on the individual level of a group membership. This question was split into two parts: the first part asked what the positive or good things are about being a Saudi gamer; the second part asked what the negative or bad things are about being a Saudi gamer.

The second interview question was designed to explore group members' evaluation of the group. Like the previous question, it was divided into two parts: the first part asked about the positive or good things about Saudi gamers as a group. The second part asked about the negative aspects of the Saudi gamer group.

Positive Evaluation of One's Membership in the Gamers Group

Five themes emerged regarding the positive evaluation of being a Saudi gamer; these themes are presented and discussed below. Some participants offered more than one answer to this question.

Meeting New People

The majority of the participants, seven out of 11, indicated that being Saudi gamers positively helped them meet new people. Boy and Engineer reported that it is hard to get to know new people, but in gaming, it becomes easier since they share a common interest. Along the same lines, Windows XP and Starlight described how easy it was to start a relationship as a gamer since most Saudi gamers are friendly. Lama

mentioned that being a Saudi gamer allowed her to meet new people with different backgrounds, ages, and cultures. Photoshops explained that some new people she had met had become like "brothers and sisters."

Personality Improvement

Three participants reported that one of the positive aspects of being a Saudi gamer is improving their personalities. Scorpion indicated that Saudi gamers intensively critique others on how they play, which helped him build a tolerance. This tolerance positively affected his managing of other relationships. For Starlight, being a Saudi gamer helped her develop a stronger personality, thus becoming less introverted. Finally, being a gamer helped Wolf overcome his shyness when talking to others.

Improving Personal Skills

Three participants indicated improving personal skills as one of the positive aspects of being a Saudi gamer. For Wolf, being a gamer forced him to learn English so he could enjoy games. Boy felt that his reaction time had improved. Windows XP mentioned that being a gamer who plays strategic games increased his intelligence quotient, positively affecting school and workplace productivity.

Career Opportunities

Being a Saudi gamer may provide opportunities for some career paths, such as streaming or becoming a professional player. Three participants related the benefits of being a gamer to career opportunities. Boy reported that being a Saudi gamer helped him choose his school major. Thus, he feels comfortable with this future career decision. Wolf and Photoshop are already Twitch.tv streamers who make income from streaming their playing sessions online. Photoshop also mentioned that she had received a call from one

of the Esport teams before the interview asking her to join them as a professional Esport player. Regarding her Twitch career as a streamer, she permitted the researcher to report that she was earning around 1,500 U.S. dollars monthly. This amount is double the minimum wage in Saudi Arabia.

Occupies Time

Two participants reported that spending free time playing video games helped them with some issues. Mefl7 stated that gaming helps him release energy. Similarly, Engineer stated that occupying free time playing games helps reduce depression. He explained

Compare gamers and others during the pandemic time; my cousin used to go out every day; suddenly, he got locked up. He almost went insane. However, we gamers stayed four months inside the house and did not feel anything. Actually, we were happy. We did not feel bored. We always had something to do: gaming, and it was fun.

Negative Evaluation of One's Membership in the Gamers Group

The second question was designed to explore the negative evaluation or the bad things about being a Saudi gamer. Three themes emerged in this regard. These themes are time-consuming, short tempers, and a lack of female Saudi gamers.

Time-consuming

Six participants reported that their life as a gamer requires them to spend significant time playing games. As a result, they noticed different issues related to being Saudi gamers. For Engineer, he could not balance his time correctly, so he started to feel

stressed whenever there was a due date in school. Mefl7 mentioned that being a gamer prevented you from focusing on your family or work, "it makes you delay doing your things because you want to play one more game." Photoshops also stated that she does not sit with her family enough because she spends most of her time playing. She mentioned that her health has deteriorated as she does not find time to take care of herself. Similarly, Boy pointed out that he had started wearing glasses because he spent a significant amount of time playing. Scorpion, Starlight, and Windows XP stated that one of the negative things about them being Saudi gamers is that they spend too much time playing to the point where they become introverted. Window XP added that such a behavior reinforces the negative stigma about Saudi gamers.

Short Tempers

Being a Saudi gamer may impact your emotions negatively. Two of the participants reported that one of the downsides of being a Saudi gamer is that they become short-tempered. For Phy, the pressure of tournaments contributed to this issue. "I used to be a very calm person ... After I started participating in tournaments, I began to feel the pressure to win. This pressure made me lose my temper easily." He further explained that when they became gamers, some people also became angrier, "even with their family." Wolf also reported having the same issue, especially in games that he spends a significant amount of time playing them.

Lack of Saudi Female Gamers

Lama was the only participant to report having a problem finding female gamers. She explained that there is still a lack of Saudi female gamers. Consequently, it was hard for her to find Saudi female gamers in her age range. She had to start making friends with

male participants to overcome this issue. This solution had a significant problem. According to her, many thought that she was looking for romance, which resulted in some "awkward situations."

Positive Evaluation of the Saudi Gamers as a Group

The second research question was also split into two parts as it was designed to explore participants' evaluation of Saudi gamers as a group. The questions asked participants about the positive or good things and the negative or bad things about Saudi gamers as a group. Eight themes emerged from the participant's responses to this section. Four themes represented the positive aspect of the group, and four showed the negative side. The following section starts with the positive /good things about Saudi gamers as a group and will include four themes. These themes are easy to start friendships, united, large and diverse community, and polite.

Easy To Start Friendships

Almost half of the participants reported that the ability to make friends easily is a positive aspect of the group. Starlight indicated that it is easier to build relationships with Saudi gamers than with non-gamers. Scorpion explained that it was "easy to get to know them. Easy to have fun with them. Easy to start conversations with them." Phy agreed with Scorpion that starting conversations with group members is easy, which may result in long-term friendships. Wolf and Windows XP agreed that building a friendship with a Saudi gamer can take only one game. Photoshop provided a personal story of how she met her closest friends, which shows how it is easy to start a relationship in the Saudi gamers' community:

I met my closest friends in a game. I was playing solo, and she was playing solo also. The game we were playing was team-based and needed voice communication with others. We started communicating with each other to win the game. After the game, we added each other, and we started to play every day together since that day.

Bonded

Bonded was an overarching theme that emerged from the answers of four participants. Each of those four participants expressed how the gamer community is united in different ways. Engineer reported that the Saudi gamers community feels that the gaming industry neglects them. Therefore, they came together to demand “their rights.” for example, they organized an online movement asking for the Arabic language to be made one of the main languages that any game should have. Additionally, the Saudi gamers boycotted Activision Publishing, Inc. because they disrespected Islam in one of their games. The movement was so successful that "Activation had to issue an update for the game that removed these materials in a few days."

Wolf also stated that the Saudi gamers are united and always try to find time to be together. Lama explained how the Saudi gamers community is emotionally united:

If someone is happy, everyone becomes happy. Take yourself as an example.

When we knew that one of us was getting a Ph.D., everyone was happy for you...

we support each other. Also, when one of us lost a member of his family, we all gave our condolences.

Lama and Photoshop mentioned sharing experiences or transferring knowledge were other forms of unity. Lama indicated that she always benefits from others who share their experience, whether game-related or real-life-related knowledge. Photoshop elaborated on the process of transferring knowledge in the Saudi gaming community:

Here, you always see all kinds of friendly people. Although they may be random people, they willingly offer to teach you the game or help you in games. If they know I am a novice in a game, they directly come to me and offer their expertise and knowledge.

Large and Diverse Community

Three of the respondents viewed the size and the diversity of the Saudi gamer community as positive aspects of the group. Diversity for the participant meant that the community contained people with different backgrounds such as age, region, and gender. It also meant that Saudi gamers are interested in different types of games, such as first-person shooters, MMO, and story-based games. Boy reported that the Saudi gamer community is large, and it is easy to find something in common with anyone. Engineer shared his view that this large community is still growing, and females are becoming an essential element, in contrast to the last ten years. For Mef17, the diversity was related to the types of games Saudi gamers play rather than to people.

Polite

Engineer was the only participant to mention politeness as a positive aspect of the Saudi gamer group. He explained:

Saudi gamers are polite when behind the monitor or when you talk to them in Discord, but not in-game. There is a big difference when you talk to them by voice in Discord. Especially Saudi gamers, they are mostly nice. Talking to them in-game, however, is a different story. Nevertheless, let us focus on the positives for now.

Negative Evaluation of the Saudi Gamers as a Group

The second part of the question was designed to explore the negative evaluation or the bad things about Saudi gamers as a group. Four themes emerged in this regard, and they are explained below.

Toxicity

Toxicity was a theme that emerged from the responses of almost half of the participants. Six participants indicated that toxicity in the community revolves around being angry and insulting others. Wolf stated that being toxic is one of the community's biggest problems. Photoshop indicated that the players of some games, such as Call of Duty, are famous for being toxic among the gamer community. Boy reported that the community could be toxic towards each other based on the game they are fans of. Engineer and Phy agreed that the Saudi gamer community is toxic because they are behind their monitors. They both explained that introverted people could not confront bullies in real life, so they became bullies behind their monitors. Starlight indicated that toxic people could gang up and bully an innocent individual. Phy also mentioned that he is trying his best not to be toxic by playing games for fun and not to win tournaments.

Introverted / Lazy

A theme emerged from the answers of three participants revolved around the Saudi gamers group being introverted. Starlight reported that the Saudi gamer group is antisocial or introverted. Mefl7 mentioned that the main priority of the group is gaming. Thus, they do not want to bother with anything else. As a result, they become “lazy and do not want to take responsibility.” Scorpion explained how the group behaves in a social situation other than gaming:

They are introverted. All of them. All of them love to be introverted; they love to sit at home. They love to be in their isolation. If they go out and meet other people, they will behave in a socially awkward manner. For example, if they go to a wedding or any social occasion, they will be nervous and not know what to do... If someone talks to them, they will stare at them without speaking much.

Negative Stigma

Three participants indicated that one of the negative aspects of the Saudi gamer community was the stigma. Boy indicated that when parents hear that their children want to be gamers, they ask them not to be because of the rumors and bad reputation associated with the community. He stated

Whenever my parents saw me playing, they became angry with me because they thought gaming was a waste of time. For that reason, I tried so hard to get the highest grades in school while also playing games just to show them that I could do both.

Engineer mentions that when he tells others, he is a gamer, some people may perceive him “in a weird way.” Windows XP also considered how society views the gamers group negatively. He stated, “society looks at us as introverted, antisocial people; they do not consider us ordinary people.”

Sexist community

Two female participants indicated that the Saudi gamer group is sexist. Lama complained that the group does not "recognize" her as a gamer and "try their best to show that I am not a gamer." Photoshop also expressed her feelings about this issue:

It is related to my gender. Some people are not used to seeing a girl play. We are in 2022, and the Saudi gamer community is not like it used to be before. Now there are a lot of female gamers. Yet some people, when they see me gaming, insult me with bad words and tell me that this is not your place, your place in the kitchen.

The evaluative component of Saudi gamers' social identity is operationalized with the positive and negative factors identified by participants in their responses to the research questions designed to explore their evaluation of in-group attributes and one's membership within the group. Drawing from the information provided by the participant interviews, the evaluative aspect of Saudi gamers' social group is defined and represented below in Table (7).

Table 7*Evaluative Component of the Conceptual Framework*

Participant evaluation of their	<u>Positive Factors</u>
membership of the group and in group attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting new people • Personality improvement • Improving personal skills • Career opportunities • Occupies time • Easy to start friendships • United • Large and diverse community • Polite
	<u>Negative Factors</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming • Short tempers • Lack of Female Saudi Gamers • Toxicity • Introverted / Lazy • Negative stigma • Sexist community

Components of the Conceptual Framework: Emotional Component

Tajfel indicated that the emotional component of one's social self-identification includes feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, to comprehensively understand what it means to be a Saudi gamer, the researcher explored the participants' feelings of belonging, or not, to the gamer group. To do this, the researcher specifically asked participants if they felt or not that they belonged to the group and the reasons for feeling this.

Not Belonging

Only one participant, Engineer, indicated that although he fits into the Saudi gaming community, he does not feel a sense of belonging to them. He explained, "I am part of them because I am Saudi, and I spend most of my time playing. This makes me one of them based on the definition. However, as for belonging to the group, I do not feel it." When I asked him for a reason, he replied, "I do not feel a sense of belonging because I can leave them anytime. I do not have a problem leaving gaming. I have no attachment to it."

Belonging

All the other participants indicated that they feel they belong to the Saudi gamer group for different reasons, such as sharing similarities with the community, love for the community, acceptance, and support. All these themes are presented below.

Similarities

Sharing similarities with the community was identified as a major theme among five participants. Scorpion indicated that there is a process of becoming a Saudi gamer,

and because he has gone through that process, he has feelings of belonging. Boy stated that although he does not make significant contributions to the Saudi gaming community, he belongs to them because he is Saudi and a gamer. Therefore, he is part of them. MIS.KSU reported that he had been doing game-like activities for an extended period; thus, he felt a sense of belonging to the community. Photoshop said she believed that what the gamer community did represent her and how she felt. Therefore, a sense of belonging emerged. Starlight reported that she belongs to the Saudi gamer community because she "has what it takes to make her a gamer."

Emotional Attachment

Another theme that emerged from three participants was emotional attachment. This theme was presented in participants' responses in different ways. For Wolf, it was his love for the group and his efforts to contribute to the betterment of the Saudi gamer social group. Phy reported that he had loved gaming for a long time, and being part of that group helped him establish many long-lasting relationships. Mefl7 indicated that he loved seeing other people who were like him. He stated, "it brings me joy to see people like me. If they are gamers, I love to approach them and get to know them." Windows XP described how gaming had become a "big thing" in his life. It was a safe place to go and release his negative emotions, thus making him happy.

Acceptance

Only Lama indicated acceptance from some community people as a reason for the feeling of belonging to the Saudi gamer community. As a Saudi female, social and religious boundaries were vital to her. She stated, "There are some people in the

community that made me feel like I belong. They made me feel like I was one of them. They knew my boundaries and theirs.”

Other emotions were attached to self-identification as a Saudi gamer.

Tajfel (1981) indicated that one's social self-identification is supposed to include feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group.

Hogg and Grieve (1999) stated that individuals associate themselves with a group for a sense of pride, involvement, stability, and meaning. The researchers asked the participants what self-identification as Saudi gamers means to them when they choose, or choose not, to present their identity as Saudi gamers. Participants provided more than one answer to these questions. Almost all of them reported being happy and proud that they were Saudi gamers.

Happiness

Six participants reported that being Saudi gamers brings them happiness. Five out of the six participants (Photoshop, Phy, Scorpion, Starlight, and Windows XP) connected their feeling of happiness to having something enjoyable to do in their free time. Lama, however, connected her feeling to being a role model for other Saudi females who want to be gamers. She stated

I am able to be a role model for the younger generation. I am able to contain them. It brings me joy seeing them holding on to their passion and how they are proud of being gamers in the face of everyone who says otherwise.

Sense of Pride

Five participants indicated their self-identification in the Saudi gaming community made them proud. Boy mentioned that he is proud because the community is filled with good people and growing. Lama is proud because she considers herself a role model for other female Saudi gamers. Mefl7 connected his feeling to having something that linked him with others. MIS.KSU is proud because being part of the community provides opportunities to participate in international tournaments, where he and other gamers can represent their country. Wolf is proud of his contribution to the community. He indicated that “being a gamer does not only mean playing games. It is more than that, and I am doing my best to explain that to others.”

To understand the emotions relating to self-identification as Saudi gamers, I asked the participants when, if at all, they chose to show their gamer identity. Starlight, Windows XP and Wolf did not remember a situation where they had had to show their gamer identity. Lama, MIS.KSU, Boy, Engineer, Scorpion, and Phy all reported that they showed their identity in different places, such as school, workplace, and online, mainly to start conversations with other gamers. Mefl7 was the only one to report that he went to "everyone" to tell them that he was a gamer when he bought his new gaming PC.

On the other hand, Lama stated that she usually hides her gamer identity when she is around people who may talk to her in sexual ways. Boy, Mefl7, Scorpion, and Windows XP all stated they hid their identity during family gatherings or when they were around older people because they were afraid of the negative stigma of the group.

The emotional component of Saudi gamers as a social identity is operationalized by participants responding to research questions relating to this aspect which were

intended to tap into feelings of belonging or not belonging to a community and other emotions connected to self-identification as Saudi gamers. Table (8) represents the emotional part of the Saudi gamer identity.

Table 8

The Emotional Component of the Conceptual Framework

Feelings of belonging are connected to:	Similarities, emotional attachment, acceptance
Feelings of not belonging are connected to:	Can leave the group anytime
Other positive emotions connected to:	Happiness, pride
Other negative emotions connected to	Sexual harassment, negative stigma

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the study's findings. I collected the data from 11 participants using semi-structured interviews. The data was then analyzed based on the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994). Their recommendations involved three stages of data analysis. First is the process of data reduction, during which I transcribed the data and reduced it through manual coding. Second, I entered the data into conceptually clustered matrices according to predetermined theoretical categories and

emerging themes to display the data. The conclusion was drawn and then verified using different member checking and peer review techniques.

I organized this chapter into three sections: demographic information, the cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components of the conceptual framework, and a summary of the chapter and presentation of the conceptual framework for Saudi gamers' social identity.

I also included information collected from participants that exceeded both Tajfel's theoretical tenets and Halldorson's (2009) additions to the theory to explore further the influence of language in the Saudi social group. Participants' answers to the research questions were included to represent the identification of similarities, patterns, underlying themes, and differences discovered through the data analysis. The two main reasons for choosing quotations in this chapter are the ability to reflect the results and uniqueness accurately. A summary of the results is presented below in Table (9). This Table displays graphically the conceptual framework operationalized with participant responses, demonstrating the usefulness of Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group as a framework for exploring Saudi gamers' identity.

Table 9*Participant Defined Conceptual Framework: Saudi Gamers' Social Identity*

Cognitive component	
Knowledge of one's gamer identity	All participants identified as gamers
Evaluative Component	
Participant evaluation of their membership of the group and in-group attributes	<u>Positive Factors</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting new people • Personality improvement • Improving personal skills • Career opportunities • Occupies time • Easy to start a friendship • United • Large and diverse community • Polite
	<u>Negative Factors</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming • Short tempers • Lack of female Saudi gamers • Toxicity • Introverted / Lazy • Negative stigma • Sexist community
Emotional Component	
Feelings of belonging are connected to:	Similarities, emotional attachment, acceptance
Feelings of not belonging are connected to:	Can leave the group anytime
Other positive emotions connected to:	Happiness, Pride
Other negative emotions connected to:	Sexual harassment, negative stigma

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the study's results and is organized into three sections. The first section will briefly review the purpose of the study. The second section will present the theoretical interpretation of the results, utilizing Henri Tajfel's social identity theory. This section will also be divided into three sub-sections corresponding to this study's three main research questions. These questions are:

- 1) What are Saudi gamers' characteristics?
- 2) How do Saudi college-level self-identified gamers evaluate the gamer group with which they identify as positive, negative or both?
- 3) To what extent do Saudi college-level self-identified gamers feel like they fit in or belong to the gamer group?

The main themes discovered in connection to the research questions and the findings connected to the existing literature on gamers' social identity are presented and discussed in the sub-sections. The third section will explore the limitations and implementation of the study. The final section will be a summary of this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

Tajfel (1981) theorized that a social group is a cognitive entity containing a cognitive component, which is knowing about the group membership, an evaluative component that includes a positive or negative evaluation of group membership, and an emotional component which means the positive or negative emotions associated with group membership and its evaluation, which may include feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group.

This study was guided by three research questions to operationalize the conceptual framework and three elements of a group. Consequently, it paved the way for a conceptual framework unique to Saudi gamers who participated in this study. The following section will discuss the demographic information, a theoretical interpretation of the three main research questions, and any connection of the results to the existing literature on gamers' social identity.

Demographic Information

The demographic information was obtained for many reasons. First, to provide the reader with a thick description of the participants and the research context. Such information is essential to judge if this study's findings are transferable to the reader's context. Second, demographic information is also helpful in analyzing the data as it may provide elements that could be linked to participants' responses or behaviors. In this study, the demographic information was helpful in two incidents.

The first one is that some answers were provided by only female participants. In their responses, they shared their struggles as females in a male dominant social group. Female participants expressed that the Saudi gamer social group is a sexist community where females are often treated by gender stereotypes or are sexually harassed. Treating female participants with gender stereotypes shows that some Saudi male gamers do not consider Saudi female gamers real gamers. This issue has been found in the literature in different societies. An explanation of such an act can be related to the type of games that female gamers usually play. Paaßen et al. (2017) mentioned that female gamers usually play games that do not require commitment or skill, while male gamers often play hardcore games that are intensive and competitive. For that reason, male gamers look

down on female gamers. The social identity theory explains that some people may use social creativity, such as redefining the comparison element, to acquire a more positive social identity and, thus, a positive self-image (Tajfel, 1982). In other words, male gamers are trying to find a more positive self-image by discriminating against female gamers based on the type of games they play.

Regardless, such an attitude toward female gaming led some participants to hide their gamer identity. Lama mentioned that she hid her gaming identity when she felt that she was around "simps." Simps is a term that spread in the last five years that describes a submissive person who would do anything to get in a sexual relationship with another person. As a gaming community member, I have never heard this term being used in a positive context. In many gaming online communities, such an act could result in the termination of the person's membership. This finding shows that gender plays a role in gamers' social identity and can negatively impact their membership.

The second incident where demographic information was useful was when one of the participants explained the situation of English in his region. He explained that the people who speak English in his town are born in a different region or are gamers. To some extent, the northern part of Saudi Arabia is isolated, where there is no reason for its people to learn English. In other words, most people there are either locals or foreigners who are primarily Muslim and speak some amount of Arabic or other Arabs like Egyptians or Jordanians. Therefore, there is no need to learn English compared to other regions with international companies and many non-Arabic employees or international schools to accommodate those employees' children. This finding shows the degree to which gamers' social identity motivates its members to learn English. It presents that

even in a place where there is no need to learn English, being a gamer motivates and fosters English language learning.

Theoretical Interpretation of the Findings; Connecting the Three Main Research Questions to the Conceptual Framework

This section presents the study's findings related to the three main research questions directing the study. These questions are also connected to the conceptual framework's three components via the theoretical interpretation of the results utilizing the social identity perspective. For Tajfel (1981), the cognitive component is simply the awareness of the membership within a group. He also expressed the necessity of understanding the group from the perspective of its members. Therefore, to fulfill both requirements, information about the Saudi gamer group and its membership, including Halldorson's (2009) and my expansions of the conceptual framework's cognitive component, are presented and discussed below.

The findings are discovered through the main research questions defining Saudi gamers' characteristics connected to the conceptual framework's cognitive component. They are also linked to the existing literature on gamers' social identity.

Research Question One: What Are Saudi Gamers' Characteristics?

Tajfel (1981) stated that it is essential to understand groups from their perspective, as they define themselves, and not by adopting or dictating definitions from other groups. Furthermore, he explained that understanding the social group needs to come before hypothesis testing and making assumptions about their inter-group behavior. Tajfel (1981) developed a conception of a group that helps researchers develop the

relevant questions required to understand a social group from their perspective. This study utilized Halldorson's (2009) expansion of the theory's cognitive component to include characteristics, activities, and behaviors believed to be common amongst group members, as they provide a deeper understanding of the group. Similarly, this researcher's own notion of the cognitive component was expanded to include awareness of the influence of language within the group. Information about Saudi gamers as a group was obtained by applying the self-identification process outlined by Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory.

A primary aim of this study was to understand Saudi gamers as a social group from their perspective. This goal was achieved by applying the social identity theory. Tajfel (1981) theorized that self-identification as an in-group member starts with a categorization process that makes information about the group and its membership cognitively salient, thus bringing details about the entity they associate with to the forefront of one's mind. This categorization makes the information collected unique to the group, as it contains group characteristics and not individual attributes. Asking participants to self-identify as Saudi gamers served the purpose of operationalizing the cognitive component of the framework and allowed the researcher to gain information about the Saudi gamers group from the participants.

Obtaining a definition of the Saudi gamers group constructed by the participants was done by asking them about their definition of the group and information regarding its characteristics, activities, behaviors, and the role of language inside the community. This move was necessary as it allowed for an understanding of how the group members defined themselves and further provided data that presented the similarities and

differences between participants' answers. The researcher started by asking participants to define Saudi gamers.

Defining Saudi Gamers: The In-group

According to Tajfel (1981), group members are not required to have contact or face-to-face interaction because the social group exists within the individual. In addition, a group's information is disseminated among its member in a way that allows for no direct communication. He theorized that an agreement on who is a group member and who is not is most likely to be shared by the group's members. Previous research exploring the social identity of gamers found that the definition of a gamer revolved around the type of games played (Shaw, 2011; Tylor, 2012), the frequency of play (Stone, 2019; De Grove et al., 2015), and the overall relationship with gaming practices and gaming culture (Deshbandhu, 2016).

In general, most of the participants in this study agreed that a Saudi gamer is a person that dedicated time to playing more than one game and enjoys playing them on a gaming console. Differences amongst participants emerged in the specifics of participant responses, where some participants mentioned other characteristics that people should have to be a gamer. For example, female participants considered the emotional attachment to games. Others included aspects such as playing on a competitive level, playing games as a source of income, and Saudi nationality as part of the definition.

In linking the participants' definitions to the existing literature, similarities and differences emerged. Regarding similarities, the participants mentioned time spent playing and aspects related to gaming culture, such as emotional attachment to games and

types of gaming devices. All of these were elements linked to the social identity of gamers mentioned in the literature.

Participants differed in their specifications of playing on a competitive level, playing games as a source of income, and having Saudi nationality. This researcher could not locate current literature reflecting similar aspects in the definition of a gamer. Nonetheless, Tajfel (1981) mentioned that social identities are related to the time and place they are formed in. This study was done during a time when participating in Esport tournaments and streaming on online platforms to accumulate money was a common practice, which may explain why some participants mentioned these aspects. This study was also specific in its aim of exploring only Saudi gamers. Therefore, it is understandable that an element such as nationality arose in the participants' responses.

Defining Saudi Gamers: The Out-group

Tajfel (1981) recommended identifying a relevant and significant out-group before examining the intergroup relations or behavior. He explained that this identification is essential as it provides the in-group with a comparison to evaluate their in-group characteristics. Besides, identifying the out-group may help identify 'who' contributes to the negative attitudes and prejudicial treatment of in-group members. Although this researcher did not ask the participant directly about the out-group, the researcher found some information about the out-group by exploring their definition of Saudi gamers. The study participants implemented two out-groups that the researcher could understand from their responses. The first out-group is people who do not play games; the second is people who play only one game and are not dedicated.

The first out-group is important because all the participants emphasized playing games as part of their definition. According to Tajfel (1981), the out-group identified by in-group members is bound to the time's context and social climate. In the case of Saudi gamers of today, this identification is linked to the current situation where streaming while playing video games is a common practice. Therefore, there are some people who like to watch others playing video games instead of playing by themselves.

In a closer inspection of this phenomenon, there are many online platforms where people can stream their gaming sessions to other people; the most famous ones are Twitch.tv, and YouTube. Sjöblom and Hamari (2017) conducted an empirical study on the motivations of Twitch users watching others play video games. Their findings stated that tension release, social integration, and affective motivations are related to the hours spent watching others on the platform. Nonetheless, all the participants in this study agreed that being a Saudi gamer means practicing gaming, which implies that watching others playing and not participating in the play can be classified as an out-group activity.

The second out-group understood from the responses is people who play one game only. Playing one game is considered an out-group activity for many participants in the study. However, being a professional in one game, which means playing it in tournaments or having a noticeably high rank, may override this element for some. I could not find any literature that tackled the idea of being a professional videogame player and self-identifying as a gamer.

The researcher also collected findings connected to the other information about the Saudi gamers as a group from participants, including activities, behaviors, and

characteristics. It only contained what the participants viewed as being representative of Saudi gamers. These aspects are presented next.

Activities, Behaviors, and Characteristics of the Saudi Gamers Group

As stated by Tajfel (1981), defining a group entails the inclusion of the subjective characteristics of the group, such as (but not limited to) stereotypes and belief systems. He added that for a group to be distinguished as a social entity, an awareness of these socially relevant characteristics should be commonly recognized by most of the group members. This is because these characteristics distinguish them from other social groups in the environment.

In reviewing the literature, Williams (2006) explained the popular stereotype associated with gamers as “isolated, pale-skinned teenage boys [who] sit hunched forward on a sofa in some dark basement space, obsessively mashing buttons” (p. 1). However, this stereotype was popularly and academically discredited (Shaw, 2010) as this image of gamers had changed. Others, such as Amby et al. (2020), found that non-gamers stereotyped gamers as intelligent, lazy, violent, introverted, and irresponsible. The participants of this study mentioned similar negative stereotypes associated with the Saudi gaming social group. Although some participants in the study had to hide their gamer identity because of the stereotypes and negative stigma associated with gamers' social group, none showed evidence of internalizing these stereotypes. Phy and Boy answers showed that they are working to confront these stigmas and to prove they are false.

This finding shows that the gamers' social identity may motivate learning. Gamers are stereotyped as lazy and unproductive, and some participants confirmed these aspects.

However, the participants in this study did not show any evidence of internalizing this stereotype. Instead, this stereotype motivated them to work harder in school to show that the stereotype is false, which is the case with Boy. For Phy, he tried to change the negative aspect associated with gamers, i.e., being toxic. The way gamers interacted with the stereotype is understandable as some games reward competitive players more than casual players. If their lifestyle drives them to be competitive, then it is not strange that they challenge the stereotype. This finding is similar to the existing literature on the interaction of social identity and learning.

This study explored information about the group by asking participants to identify the Saudi gamer group's ordinary activities, behaviors, and characteristics. Participants identified many characteristics common to or typical of the Saudi gamer group and its members. These traits mentioned by the participants revolved around social and physical features. Socially, the Saudi gamer community is a bonded community that likes to sit mostly with in-group members. They are also easy to start a friendship with and always look for new gamers to play with. This finding speaks to what Turner and Giles (1982) explained about social groups. They stated that members of social groups perceive themselves and others as distinct social entities and appear to behave uniformly against the world under some circumstances. I could not find further support in the literature for these characteristics. It seems that most of the literature was concerned about the stereotypes and stigmas, which suggests that more research is needed concerning the behavioral attributes of the gamers' social groups.

Tajfel (1981) explained that in-group members would mostly ascribe positive traits to their community. However, participants also indicated negative social aspects that are, to some extent, similar to what Williams (2006) mentioned. They reported that Saudi gamers are introverted, lack social skills, and are toxic.

Being overweight, suffering from acne, and having a bad posture are visible physical markers of Saudi gamers. Saudi gamers are also famous for cosplaying characters from games. An interesting characteristic mentioned by the participants is that gamers in Saudi Arabia have better English language skills. This is important for the participants as they are Arabic language speakers. English is classified as a foreign language for them and the country. All participants agreed that Saudi gamers might not be "fluent" in English, but they have better skills than their peers in society because of the English language exposure from games. Malisi et al. (2017) investigated language and identity in the online gamer community; their findings stated, "each group has different ways to refer to the same thing, this at the same time also serves as group marker" (p.1). Although their study explored how gamers communicate in a game, it showed a similar result to what this study found. That is, the English language is a marker in the identity of the Saudi gamer group.

How Long Have Participants Known They Were Gamers, and What Prompted Their Choice to Identify with the Saudi Gamers as a Group?

As explained before, SIT underlined four principles of social identity theory that explain typical inter-group behavior. These principles are social categorization, social identification, social comparison, and psychological distinctiveness. Each stage is dependent on the others (Worrall, 1982). Some of these stages, such as social

categorization that leads to social identification, are visible in some of the participants' answers in this section.

SIT suggests that social categorization is a way of sorting individuals into different groups, resulting in group members having distinctive and uniform behaviors. Social categorization helps indicate people's place in the social structure, thereby granting them social identities. According to Tajfel (1981), identifying as a social group member depends on the clarity of boundaries separating the social group from other groups. Knowing what it means to be a gamer and the activities defining this social group helped participants in this study identify themselves as gamers. Six participants openly identified themselves as gamers when they realized they were doing activities specific to the gamers' community. Some of these activities mentioned by the participants were buying new gaming gear, participating in tournaments, and streaming, which are all activities associated with the gamer group.

Furthermore, almost all participants were doing gamers' activities before they started to identify themselves as gamers. Some took a while to adopt this label as they did not know the existence of such a concept. However, Twitch.tv and YouTube played a significant role in explaining and spreading the concept in Saudi society. This allowed some of the participants to start self-identifying as Saudi gamers.

De Grove et al. (2015) argued that social networks, such as friends, could influence how one sees oneself as a gamer more than individual characteristics and behaviors. Notably, a player who has friends that are part of the gaming culture is more likely to adopt the gamer identity for themselves. Stone (2019) also found that having a member in the immediate social group who played games would increase the likelihood

of self-identification as a gamer. In this study, however, four other participants started to self-identify as gamers to others because they wanted to start a friendship. Overall, this finding supports the idea that social influence affects self-identifying as a gamer.

The Interaction Between the Saudi Gamer's Social Identity and Language

This study incorporated the language influence within Tajfel's (1981) cognitive component, as recognizing the interaction between language and social identity suits this category better than the evaluative and emotional components. When studying social identities, it is essential to consider how language influences social groups. Language is essential in this case because it is a defining factor for individuals and cultures as it facilitates their interactions (Elbih, 2016). The Arabic language is a unifying and belonging element for Saudi society, making it the bearer of Saudi culture and civilization (Keneyeer, 2013).

The literature showed that language was an identity marker for the gamer social group (Malisi et al., 2017), mainly using terminologies inspired by their games (Cade & Gates, 2017). This study's findings show similar results as some participants had to learn a specific type of English related to games. They also stated that there is an interaction between their social identity as gamers and between both the English and Arabic languages. One of the participants mentioned that the way the Saudi gamer speaks is a language of its own. Some of them mentioned that they could identify a gamer by how they speak because Saudi gamers usually have better English skills and code-switch between Arabic and English. In addition, some participants indicated that Saudi gamers use words from their games in their speech, such as AFK or GG. Finally, their social

identity as gamers provided motivation for some to learn English. These findings support the literature that exists on this matter.

As an EFL teacher, their responses reminded me of the immersion-based learning approach. Games provide an immersive environment that is contextual and close to real-life scenarios. Although these scenarios may not be realistic, they are, to some extent, made believable through good storytelling and context-setting. There are different levels of complex tasks in games that require complete focus and intensive critical thinking from the players. Players are required to construct meaning through their experience in a game, and sometimes there is an element in games that facilitates that meaning for them. Games such as role-playing and simulators can take students from their environment and immerse them in a completely different environment, which is close to what it feels like when studying abroad. Arguably, it motivated them to learn English as their experience is authentic (real-life-based) and enjoyable. Their immersion in a world mainly in English offered a prolonged language exposure that helped them use their previous language knowledge and accumulate some language skills. The need to communicate with others in the game to achieve goals added another layer of motivation to learn English. All these aspects are similar to the experience that students go through in an immersive learning environment or when traveling abroad.

The findings also showed that the interaction between participants' Arabic language and their gamer social identity resulted in using a hybrid writing system that combined Arabic sounds and English letters. Furthermore, the participants also indicated that they have become more aware of different Arabic dialects, and they started to use

some words from these dialects in their speech. The Saudi gamer group also played a role in spreading some words, such as “*algom*.”

The participants also indicated that the interaction between their social identity as gamers and the English language resulted in better English language skills. Their social identity as gamers made them learn different types of English such as game-related English, slang English, and English for daily conversations. They reported that Saudi gamers improved many English language skills, such as spelling, reading, and writing. From their responses, the prolonged language exposure, the need to communicate, and having a common goal to be completed, were the main contributors to this improvement. All these findings support the notion that language is an identity marker for social groups and thus should be considered when studying them.

Research Question Two: Do Self-Identified Saudi Gamers Evaluate the Saudi Gamer Group and Their Membership in it as Positive, Negative, or Both?

The second research question was designed to explore the evaluative component of one's identity as a member of the Saudi gamer group and the evaluative component of one's group membership. Answers gained from participants concerning this question aimed to operationalize the component from their perspective as Saudi gamers. Tajfel (1981) suggested that the evaluative component may contain positive or negative evaluative characteristics ascribed to the group and the individual's membership in it by the group members. Although Tajfel (1981) acknowledged the connotations of potential negative value associated with an individual's social identity, he postulated that, in general, group members tend to ascribe more positive evaluative traits to the group they

identify with because it provides a positive definition of social self which contributes positively to the self (Tajfel, 1981).

The study participants mentioned positive and negative evaluations of the Saudi gamer group's membership on an individual level. Regarding participants' membership of the Saudi gamers group, they ascribed more positive traits in evaluation, which aligns with Tajfel's hypothesis.

Positive and Negative Evaluation of Membership of the Saudi Gamer Group

On the individual level, all the participants identified positive and negative issues related to their experience as Saudi gamers. The participants named five positive aspects attributed to being Saudi gamers. First, the opportunity to meet new people who became like “brothers and sisters.” Second, the improvement of some personality traits such as relationship management and developing a stronger personality. These points might be because gamers share a common interest that they can join and play, which helps them build social relations quickly. This finding supports Yee’s (2006) conclusion that gamers are more social than the typical stereotype suggests. Third, improving their personal skills such as language skills, reaction time, and intelligence quotient. This finding supports Thapphet's (2020) that games can foster English learning. Fourth is the ability to start a career or make an income. Finally, having an activity to occupy free time helps in reducing depression.

Regarding the negative aspects of being a Saudi gamer, the participants reported three features. First, more than half of the participants indicated that gaming is time-consuming, which affects many aspects of the gamers’ life, such as study and family time. Second, two participants indicated that gaming made them become short-tempered.

Finally, one female gamer indicated the lack of female Saudi gamers as one of the negative features of being a Saudi gamer. This lack of female players put her in a situation where she felt alone or had to make decisions that resulted in “awkward situations.”

Positive and Negative Evaluation of the Saudi Gamers as a Group

The second research question was also split into two parts, as it was designed to explore participants' evaluation of the Saudi gamer as a group. The questions asked participants about positive or good things and the negative or bad things about the Saudi gamer as a group. In accordance with Tajfel's (1981) speculation, Saudi gamers assigned more positive traits to their social group. There were nine traits; five were positives, and four were negatives.

On the positive side, starting friendships in the Saudi gaming community is easy. One participant indicated that it might only take one game with someone from this community to make them lifelong friends. Another positive evaluation of the group is that they are united, especially when it comes to their rights as gamers, for example, the representation of their religion in games. Knowledge sharing was another positive trait assigned to the group by its members. Some participants also reported that the Saudi gaming community is large and diverse, and it is easy to find someone who shares similar interests. The last positive feature of the Saudi gaming community is that its members are polite.

Although the community is polite, some participants indicated that the community could be toxic. Almost half of the participants indicated that toxicity in the community revolves around being angry and insulting others behind monitors. Another negative

aspect of the community ascribed by the participant is that the Saudi gamers are lazy and introverted. These features are somewhat similar to what Williams (2006) and Amby et al. (2020) mentioned about the stereotypes of gamers; however, all the participants in this study were Saudi gamers. Thus, the in-group defines these aspects and is not held by the out-group as a stereotype, like in Williams (2006) or Amby et al. (2020). The negative stigma of the group was also considered in the participants' evaluation of the group. Lastly, some female participants reported that the Saudi gamers group was sexist, as they do not recognize female Saudi gamers. The literature supports this finding as well.

After reviewing the participant's responses on the individual and group levels, the researcher found that Saudi gamers indicated more positive aspects about the Saudi gamers group and its membership. This finding speaks to Tajfel's (1981) idea that group members tend to ascribe more positive traits to their social group to distinguish it within society and provide a positive self-image on an individual level. Although some of the emotional evaluations occurred while participants of this study explored their evaluative component, SIT suggests that the emotional evaluation should be examined separately (Tajfel, 1981). Therefore, exploring and operationalizing the theoretical framework components also entails examining feelings associated with participants' membership within the group. The third research question aimed to serve this purpose as it investigates the feelings of belonging or not belonging to the Saudi gamer group.

Research Question Three: Do self-identified Saudi gamer adults feel like they belong to the Saudi gamer group?

Tajfel's SIT (1981) contains an emotional component associated with the emotional investment of the in-group members in their group membership. It represents a

description, such as feelings of belonging or not belonging, directed towards one's in-group.

Belonging

According to Tajfel (1981), one's feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group may be imbued with positive or negative emotions. In other words, if the feeling of belonging is associated with the experience of discrimination shared by members of the group, then this feeling of belonging is imbued with negative emotions, such as anger, and vice versa. This study found that the majority of participants felt they belonged to the Saudi gamer group. Furthermore, participants linked their feelings of belonging to the shared similarities with other group members, emotional attachments, and acceptance from the group members. Examining participant responses to other interview questions revealed that feelings of belonging to the Saudi gamer group are also connected to positive emotions, such as happiness and a sense of pride. However, some participants indicated that they hide their gamer identity because of the negative stigma. Linking these findings to the literature, they resemble what happened in Shaw's (2012) study, as some participants did not identify as gamers because of the group's stigma. One female participant indicated that she hides her identity to avoid sexual harassment.

Not belonging

SIT suggested that people can leave their social group if it does not provide them with a positive social identity. However, leaving the group depends on individual social mobility. This might be the case for one of the participants of the study. Engineer indicated that, although he fits the description of a Saudi gamer and self-identifies as one, he does not feel a sense of belonging to a group. He explained, "I do not feel the sense of

belonging because I can leave them anytime... I have no attachment to it.” This finding shows that the Saudi gamers group allows for high social mobility, whereby individuals can leave it when they desire.

Limitations and Recommendations

This is an exploratory study with a medium-sized number of participants. Hence the conceptual framework I developed in this study was preliminary. I could not recruit more female participants, which is a limitation in the study’s findings, as female participants offer unique perspectives that researchers should consider. I believe that the responses from female participants would have been different if I was not a member of the gamer community and a father of a four-year-old daughter. The first female participant who agreed to participate in this study mentioned these two aspects as what encouraged her to join the study. When she joined the study, she encouraged two other female participants to do the same. The conversations I had with them offered a glimpse into a world I could not have known or understood due to my identity as a male. However, being a father helped me understand the severity of some practices happening within the gamer community regarding the sexual and mental molestation female gamers suffer from because of their gender.

Unfortunately, due to the scope of this study and in response to the requests of some female participants during the member checking stage, I could not provide enough information on this issue in this study. Therefore, I highly recommend further studies to be conducted with female gamers to investigate issues such as the conflict between their gamer, religious, social, and gender identities. I also suggest that these studies should be

conducted by people familiar with these identities or can provide a comfortable, non-judging environment for the participants.

The previous point also shows that the generalization of the study's findings to the larger Saudi gamer community may not be suitable. Although I tried to recruit participants from different regions of Saudi Arabia, the sample size was still small, and I could not recruit other participants from the northern and southern regions. However, the information provided may be useful in providing a starting point for understanding the social identity of gamers. It is important to mention that the information in this study is bonded to the context and time it was conducted. Thus, any changes in these aspects may offer different and valuable results to be compared in building a better understanding of the gamers' social identity. Therefore, I recommend that researchers from the Arab world – such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Morocco – start exploring gamers as a social group, since although they share the same language, their culture and way of life are significantly different.

The findings of this study showed that language is an important aspect to be considered when exploring social identities, thus highlighting a limitation of Tajfel's (1981) theory. The presence of the influence of language was overwhelming in this study regarding both the Arabic language and the English language. Therefore, I recommend that languages be integrated into the cognitive component of the theory for further research. Although it may be better to implement it in the cognitive aspect of the theory, language influence should also be considered throughout the evaluative and emotional components.

Finally, I relied on semi-structured interviews to collect the data for this study. This limitation was due to the time restrictions I was having and the circumstances that the world was going through with Covid-19. In addition, there are important aspects to consider in a society where gender mixing is socially and religiously discouraged. Due to these issues, I, unfortunately, could not use more data collection methods. However, I believe that using various sources of data collection, such as focus groups and observations, would have enriched this study, so long as it was done in culturally appropriate ways.

Implications and Further Recommendations

Understanding social identity explains social groups' norms, standards, behaviors, and expectations. It clarifies a wide range of complex choices and behaviors, such as intergroup conflict, support of causes, motivation, and psychological well-being. The findings show the importance of exploring students' social identity, as it reveals the groups' behaviors, attitudes, and expectations. Therefore, it can be utilized to engage students who are gamers in the learning process.

Curriculum Design and EFL Learning

Findings show that being a Saudi gamer group motivates its members to learn. This is because Saudi gamers try to challenge the negative stereotypes of self-identifying as gamers. Findings also show that their social identity helped participants' personalities and personal skills. Additionally, it provided them with something interesting to spend their time with and build a career from. Lastly, their social identity motivated them to learn English, and games offered them language exposure, communication, and exciting

goals to achieve. Combining these Findings with our knowledge that 63% of the Saudi population are gamers, few ideas regarding curriculum designing and EFL learning that may be further researched or implemented arose.

In general, it may be suitable for policymakers and curriculum designers to adopt elements from games to the curriculum (gamification of the learning process) or implement game-based learning (GBL). Gamification is an approach to learning that utilizes game design to provide experiences similar to the ones in games (Huotari & Hamari, 2017; Deterding et al., 2014). It implies using video games' technological advancements and possibilities to create immersive and engaging learning experiences, similar to participants reported in this study. Implementing game elements in education is not a recent trend, and there is a logic behind it. When gamers play a game, they face many obstacles they must overcome to achieve a goal, such as winning the game. Similarly, students must achieve learning objectives through learning activities or interactions with educational content. Games and education are also similar in monitoring individuals' performance as it is an indicator of achieving goals. (Glover, 2013).

Gamification affects students' behavior, commitment, and motivation, improving knowledge and skills (W. Hsin-Yuan Huang, D. Soman, 2013). It provides extrinsic rewards that are tied to grades. In this approach, games-like aspects are adjusted to fit the lesson content, and assessment is not within games; it is measured by the ability to show mastering of skills or knowledge.

Another approach that policymakers and curriculum designers may consider is GBL. As opposed to gamification, GBL uses actual games such as Fortnite or The Sims to teach content. In this approach, the motivation mainly comes intrinsically from playing

the game, and assessment is in-game. Therefore, lesson content is adjusted to fit the game instead of the traditional gamification.

Both approaches can be implemented during classroom time or using a self-directed approach outside classrooms. The benefit of using the self-directed approach in this situation is that it provides a similar experience as games. Gamers usually utilize tools inside games to discover and explore the in-game world. According to Gee (2013), the consequences of failing in games are not dire; therefore, it intrinsically motivates players to spend more time discovering and learning. However, when implementing GBL, I recommend choosing games that contain suitable elements for the culture of the students. As shown in the findings, Saudi gamers strongly feel against games that discredit their religion and tradition, which could also affect their motivation to participate in such a curriculum. In addition, the findings show that Saudi gamers' social group is a large and diverse community, so we need to consider different types of games to accommodate their diversity. Such issues could be avoided if there were more investment in creating educational games. The Saudi government is already investing in building a college that prepares its students to develop games (vision 2030, 2018) which may facilitate the implementation of such a curriculum. Therefore, it is a suitable time to consider these approaches as there is governmental support and because 63% of the population are gamers.

Arabic Language Context

For researchers in the field of the Arabic language, the study reflected an influence between the social identity of Saudi gamers and their Arabic language. This influence took the shape of using a hybrid writing system that uses Arabic sounds and

English letters, an increase in code-switching between English and Arabic, and the use of game-based English words in speech. As explained in this paper, Saudis are keen to protect and spread their Arabic language. This finding shows that Arabic is not yet suited to serve gamers' communication needs effectively. Perhaps the lack of Arabic language presence in games contributes to this issue. Therefore, building an Arabic language resource to use in-game may be an essential step to be implemented. In addition, establishing institutions that help game designers provide their games in Arabic content may help protect the language. Finally, these three aspects are worth investigating as they may play a role in changing the Arabic language and its people's discourse. It is essential to look into this issue because 63% of the Saudi population are gamers who are constantly exposed to or use these three elements. Additionally, a significant cultural change in Saudi Arabia emphasizes the importance of studying cultural phenomena affecting the Arabic language.

Health Context

The study's findings showed the many health-related issues related to being a member of the Saudi gamers' social group, such as being introverted, short-tempered, and having aggressive behaviors. Workers in the health sector may utilize these findings to explore the link between this social identity and these issues, thus implementing social awareness programs that may help gamers overcome these issues. They should also pay attention to gamers' mental health status during tournaments, especially as they become more popular. Phy explained his struggle and bad mental experience after participating in these tournaments and how it affected many aspects of his life, such as his relationship

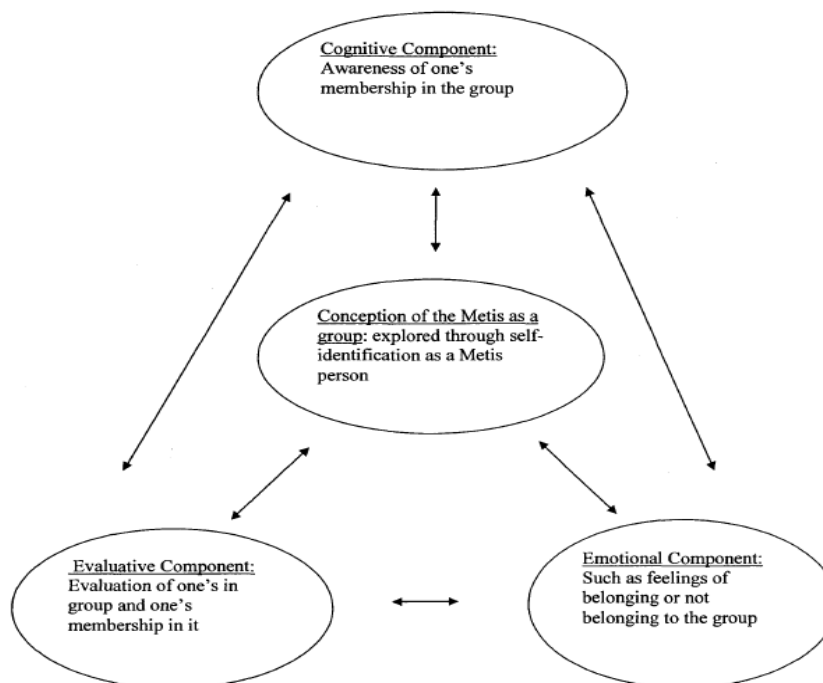
with his family. His experience shows the dangers associated with neglect of this aspect, as it may result in dire consequences.

Thoughts on the Conceptual Framework Used in This Study

Tajfel (1972) defined social identity as "... the individual's knowledge that he [they] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [them] of this group membership". In his definition, he did not explicitly explain the relationship between the three elements of the theory. Reading how the theory works, I got the sense that the relationship between the three elements is a cause-and-effect relationship. In other words, a social identity is established when a person cognitively realizes that they belong to the group, then an evaluation of the group and its members happen, leading to an emotional consequence in the form of belonging or not belonging to the social group, which led me to adopt the following conceptual framework.

Figure 5

Conceptual Framework of a Group-Based of Tajfel's (1981) SIT



The only explanation Tajfel (1981) mentioned was regarding the emotional component. He said that feelings of belonging to one's group could develop long before an individual group member can psychologically construct a cohesive and organized group for themselves or develop unique modes of characteristic informal behavior for their own use. According to him, it is frequently an interactive process that occurs between identifying criteria for in- and out-group membership, the conditions that lead to feeling like a member of the group, and acting according to group beliefs and attitudes. This means only the emotional component can overlap or come before the other component.

In this study, I found something similar to what Tajfel (1981) indicated. When the participants answered the question regarding the length of time they had known of their identity, some of them realized their identity because they had gotten close to games either emotionally or when they bought the gaming gears. Their answers mean that the

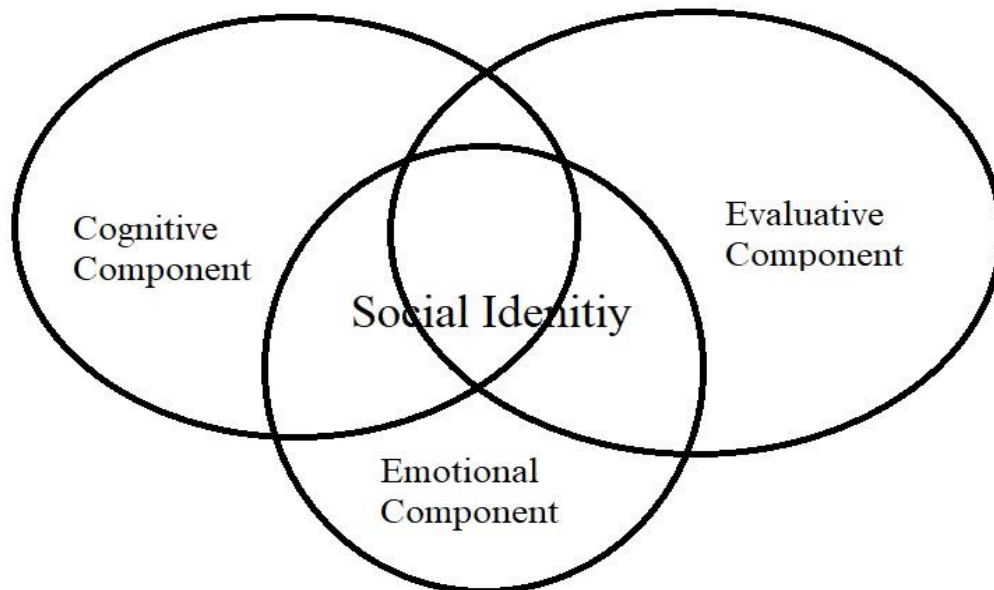
emotional element and the cognitive element represented by the gaming gears are intertwined.

Listening to other answers from the participants made me question if these elements are the only ones overlapping. Revisiting their answers made me realize that all the elements can overlap, not just the emotional component. Tajfel (1981) indicated that the evaluative component of a group contains positive or negative evaluative characteristics ascribed to the group and the individual's membership. This step requires that a person should first be aware of the characteristics; otherwise, the evaluation will not happen. In this study, however, many participants enjoyed being gamers. They had a positive evaluation of their activity as a gamer before even understanding the concept of the social identity of gamers. This finding shows that the theory's evaluation and emotional aspects came before the cognitive component. Therefore, all three elements are interconnected, and there is no specific order for the process to occur.

Such answers made me think that the conceptual framework should have been done in a way that better shows the interconnectedness of these elements. Below is an example of what I imagine as the new conceptual framework. Nevertheless, deciding whether the new conceptual framework is more representative of the theory means revisiting more studies that have used the current framework and analyzing it again, which is out of this study's scope and a topic for further research.

Figure 6

New Conceptual Framework of a Group-Based of Participants' Answers



Chapter Summary

I discussed the results of this study in this chapter. The process of conclusion drawing suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was followed in this regard. The findings were verified by using member checking and peer review methods. I divided this chapter into three sections. The first offered an overview of the study's purpose. The second section discussed the results of the three main research questions guiding the study and was subdivided according to the questions. It also incorporated the link between the research questions and the conceptual framework's cognitive, evaluative, and emotional components through the theoretical interpretation of the findings. The third section talked about the implementations and limitations as well as recommendations of this study. The last section included the chapter summary. A summary of the findings is presented below in Table 10. This table represents the conceptual framework specific to

Saudi gamers, graphically displaying the conceptual framework operationalized with participant responses. This revised framework expands Tajfel's theoretical conception of a group, incorporating the influence of language as part of the cognitive components of the framework.

Table 10

Participant Defined Conceptual Framework: Saudi Gamers' Social Identity

Cognitive component	
Knowledge of one's gamer identity	All participants identified as gamers
Evaluative Component	
Participant evaluation of their membership with the group and in group attributes	<p><u>Positive Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting New People • Personality improvement • Improving personal skills • Career Opportunities • Occupies Time • Easy to start a friendship • United • Large and Diverse Community • Polite <p><u>Negative Factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming • Short Tempers • Lack Of Saudi Female Gamers • Toxicity • Introverted / Lazy • Negative Stigma • Sexiest community
Emotional Component	
Feelings of Belonging are connected to:	Similarities, emotional attachment, acceptance
Feelings of Not Belonging are connected to:	Can leave the group anytime
Other positive emotions connected to:	Happiness, Proud

Other negative emotions connected to

Sexual harassment, negative stigma

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Appendices

Appendix A

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Which Saudi university you are enrolled in?
4. Which major you are enrolled in?
5. At which level are you right now?
6. Do you identify as a Saudi gamer?

Appendix B

Interview Questions in English

A- Cognitive component of social self-identification:

- 1). How do you define a Saudi gamer?
- 2a). How long have you known that you were a Saudi gamer? Tell me about the circumstances.
- 2b). How long have you chosen to identify as a Saudi gamer?
- 2c). What encouraged you to be identified as a Saudi gamer?
- 3). Are there activities, characteristics or behaviors that are typical to the Saudi gamers as a group? Examples?

B- Evaluative component of social self-identification

- 1 a). What are the positive/good things about being a Saudi gamer?
- 1b). What are the negative/bad things about being a Saudi gamer?
- 2a). What are the positive/good things about Saudi gamers as a group?
- 2b). What are the negative/bad things about Saudi gamers as a group?
- 3). Do you see yourself as similar to other Saudi gamers? Why or why not. Example?

C- Emotional component of social self-Identification

- 1). What does being a Saudi gamer means to you?
- 2). Do you feel like you belong or fit into the Saudi gamer community as a group? Why or Why not? Can you give me an example?

- 3). Are there different contexts/situations in which you identify/don't identify as being a Saudi gamer? Can you give me an example?
- 4). Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of being a Saudi gamer?

Appendix C

Interview Questions in Arabic

أ- المكون المعرفي للتعريف الذاتي الاجتماعي:

- 1) ما تعريفك لمصطلح القيمير السعودي؟
- 2 أ) من متى وانت تعرف انك قيمير سعودي، حدثني عن الظروف الي خلقتك تعرف انك قيمير سعودي؟
- 2 ب) من متى قررت أنك تعرف عن نفسك للناس أنك قيمير سعودي؟
- 2 ج) ايش الي دفعت أنك تعرف عن نفسك بأنك قيمير سعودي؟
- 3 هل في أي أفعال او خصائص او تصرفات تشوفها مرتبطة بمجتمع القيمير السعودي؟
- 4 ايش تأثير اللغة في مجتمع القيمير السعودي؟

ب- المكون التقييمي للتعريف الذاتي الاجتماعي:

- 1أ) ايش الأشياء الجيدة او الإيجابية في كونك قيمير سعودي؟
- 1ب) ايش الأشياء السيئة او السلبية في كونك قيمير سعودي؟
- 2أ) ايش الأشياء الجيدة او الإيجابية في مجتمع القيمير السعودي؟
- 2ب) ايش الأشياء السيئة او السلبية في مجتمع القيمير السعودي؟
- 3 تشوف نفسك مشابه لبقية القيمير السعوديون؟ ليه او ليه لا وممكن تعطيني امثلة؟

ج- المكون العاطفي للتعريف الذاتي الاجتماعي:

- 1) ايش يعنيلك شخصياً أنك تكون قيمير سعودي؟
- 2) هل تشعر بالانتماء او للمجتمع السعودي للقمير او تحس أنك جزء منه؟ ليش او ليش لا؟ ممكن تعطيني امثلة؟
- 3) هل في مواقف انت قررت أنك تظهر شخصيتك كقيمير سعودي وفي مواقف اخفيت فيها هذه الشخصية؟
- 4) في أي شيء تحب تضيفه يتعلق بتجربتك كسعودي قيمير؟

Appendix D

List of Codes

Concept, Abbreviated Code, and Corresponding Research Questions Format

Cognitive Component	CC	1
CC - Defining	CC	1.1
CC - Reasons	SICR	1.2C
CC - Know/Time	SICKT	1.2A
CC- Choice	SICC	1.2B
CC-Group Content	SICGC	1.3
Evaluative Impact	EVI	2
EVI- Positive Personal	EIPP	2.1A
EVI-Negative Personal	EINP	2.1B
EVI- Positive Group	EVIPG	2.2A
EVI-Negative Group	EVING	2.2B
EVI-Similar	EIVS	2.3
EVI-Participation	EIVP	2.4
Emotional Impact	EMI	3
EMI- Meaning	EMIM	3.1
EMI -Belonging	EMIB	3.2
EMI- Not Belonging	EMINB	3.2
EMI- Context Identify	EMICI	3.3
EMI- Context Don't Identify	EMICDI	3.3
EMI-Other	EMIO	3.4

Appendix E

Definition of Codes

Cognitive Component - CC	
Cognitive Component - Defining Saudi gamer: SICD	Participant's definition of their identity.
Cognitive Component - Reasons: CCR	Participants explanation as to why he or she identifies as Saudi gamers.
Cognitive Component - Know/Time: CCKT	How long participants have known that they are gamers. When participants became aware of their identity.
Cognitive Component -Choice: CCC	How long participants have chosen to identify as a gamer. What prompted their choice to identify as Metis?
Cognitive Component - Group Content: CCGC	Participant's identification description of activities/behaviors he or she views as typical to the Saudi gamers as a group.
Evaluative Impact - EVI	The tendency to evaluate in-group attributes positively or negatively and may include emotions such as love/hate, like/dislike, directed towards one's own group and his or her membership in it.
Evaluative Impact- Positive: EVIP	Participants' description of the positive/good things about being a Saudi gamers group member.
Evaluative Impact- Positive Group: EVIPG	Participants' description of the positive/good things about the Saudi gamers as a group.
Evaluative Impact - Negative: EVIN	Participants' description of the negative/bad things about being a Saudi gamers group member.
Evaluative Impact- Negative Group: EVING	Participants' description of the negative/bad things about the Saudi gamers as a group.
Evaluative Impact-Similar: EVIS	Participants' perception as to his or her similarity to other group members.
Evaluative Impact- Participation: EVIP	Participants' acknowledgement of and or identification of activities/behaviors he or she engages in that he or she views as typical to the as a group.

Emotional Impact - Meaning: EMIM	Participant's description of what it means to be a gamer to him/her.
Emotional Impact - Belonging: EMIB	Participant's description and or explanation of whether they feel like they belong to a group.
Emotional Impact - Not Belonging: EMINB	Participant's description and or explanation of whether they feel like they don't belong to a group.
Emotional Impact - Context Identify:	Participant's identification of contexts or situations he or she chooses to identify as a gamer.
Emotional Impact - Context Don't Identify:	Participant's identification of contexts or situations he or she chooses not to identify as a gamer
Emotional Impact - Other: EMIO	Identification, description or explanation of anything else participants would like to add about their experience of being Saudi gamers.

Appendix F**Conceptually Clustered Matrix - Demographic Information**

Participant	Age	Gender	University Name	Major	Level

Appendix G**Conceptually Clustered Matrix - Participant by Research Question Format****Research Question 1- Cognitive Component**

Participants	Question 1	Question 2A	Question 2B	Question 2C	Question 3
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					

Appendix H**Conceptually Clustered Matrix - Participant by Research Question Format****Research Question 2 – Evaluative Impact**

Participants	Question 1A	Question 1B	Question 2A	Question 2B	Question 3
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					

Appendix I**Conceptually Clustered Matrix - Participant by Research Question Format****Research Question 3 – Emotional Impact**

Participants	Question 1A	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4				

Appendix J**Conceptually Clustered Matrix - Participant by Concept Format**

Participants	Demographic Information	Cognitive Component	Evaluative Impact	Emotional Impact
P1				
P2				
P3				
P4				

Appendix K

Consent to Participate in Research

An Application of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory to Understand Gamer as a Social Identity Among Saudi College-Level Students
12/1/2021

Purpose of the research: You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done by Mohammad Assiri, from the department of language literacy, and sociocultural studies. The purpose of this research is to explore the construction of the gamers' social identity of Saudi college-level students. You are being asked to join because you are Saudi college-level who self-identify as a Saudi gamer.

This consent form contains important information about this project and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

What you will do in the project:

Each participant will do 3 rounds of semi-structured interviews.

Each round will target an element of the social identity theory.

Each interview is expected to last for an hour over a period of 3 days.

All the interviews will be conducted through Zoom at your convenient time.

All the interviews are recorded.

You have the right can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can stop the interview at any time. If you decided to stop the interview, all the recoding and notes for your interview will destroyed and will not be used in the study.

Risks: There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research project. However, the research will do his best to reduce such risks.

Benefits: There will be no benefit to you from participating in this research. However, it is hoped that information gained will help curriculum designers, teachers, and policymakers to build a student-centered curriculum that suit Saudi gamers students.

Confidentiality of your information: this study may include people whom you may know, so in this case the author does not grantee complete confidentiality. However, we will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all research data. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this project

You should understand that the researcher is not prevented from taking steps, including reporting to authorities, to prevent serious harm of yourself or others.

Use of your information for future research:

All identifiable information (e.g., your name, date of birth) will be removed from the information or samples collected in this project. After we remove all identifiers, the information or samples may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

Payment: You will not be paid for participating in this project.

Right to withdraw from the research: Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Whenever you decide to withdraw from the research, email the research at: massiri@unm.edu. All the information and records will directly be destroyed once you decide to leave the study.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact:

Mohammad Assiri, **Language, Literacy, & Sociocultural Studies (LLSS)**,
5055405787. massiri@unm.edu

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or about what you should do in case of any research-related harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website:
<http://irb.unm.edu/>

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this research. Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

I agree to participate in this research.

Name of Adult Participant

Date

Signature of Adult Participant

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of their questions. I believe that they understand the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Research Team Member

Signature of Research Team Member Date

Appendix L

Invitation to participate in a study

My name is Mohammad Assiri. I am a Saudi gamer since 1996 and now I am working on my doctorate degree in Language, Literacy and Socio-cultural Studies at the University of New Mexico. In order to complete my degree, I need Saudi gamers who are willing to discuss their social identity as Saudi gamers and answer questions regarding the topic: An Application of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory to Understand Gamer as a Social Identity Among Saudi College-Level Students.

Know that all participants' names and identity will be anonymous. However, this study may include people whom you may know, so in this case the author does not grant complete confidentiality. Also, you do not have to discuss any topics which you are not comfortable.

I am looking for self-identifies Saudi gamers who are college level and between the age range of 19-24 and still practice gaming till now. I cannot promise much in return except for my eternal gratitude in your contribution to the completion of my degree. If you think that you meet these requirements, please used this link to participate in the study:

<https://forms.zohopublic.com/maseeriy/form/Participationinthestudy/formperma/aiEScYxxIwiIOuXwiAZttYKWMohgSPzZu4OJXvt5Hj4>

Please contact Mohammad at:

(US) Cell: 5054505787

(Saudi) Cell: 966 54 333 1360

Discord DM: Mohammad Assiri#2057

-or-

E-mail: massiri@unm.edu

اسمي محمد عسيري وانا قدير سعودي منذ عام 1996. حالياً أقوم بتحضير رسالة الدكتوراة في تخصص اللغة، محو الأمية، والدراسات الاجتماعية والثقافية في جامعة نيومكسيكو بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. لإكمال متطلبات حصولي على الدرجة، فأنا محتاج اشخاص مستعدين للتحدث عن هويتهم الاجتماعية كقيرمز سعودي.

جميع بياناتكم راح تكون خصوصية ولن يتم الإفصاح عنها وسيتم استعمال أسماء مستعارة. هذه الدارسة قد تتضمن اشخاص تعرفهم او يعرفونك، في هذه الحالة لا يستطيع الباحث ضمان الخصوصية بشكل كامل. كما بإمكانكم الانسحاب وقتما تشاؤون ولا يتطلب منكم مناقشة أي موضوع قد يسبب حساسية لكم.

حالياً ابحت عن طلاب جامعة في العمر ما بين 19-24 يحبوا يعرفوا عن نفسهم انهم قيرمز سعودي ومازالوا يلعبوا العاب الكترونية الى هذه اللحظة. لا يمكنني ان او عدكم بمقابل مادي في حالة الموافقة على الاشتراك في الدارسة، ولكني سأكون ممتن لكم لمساعدتي في الحصول على الدرجة.

للمشاركة الرجاء التواصل مع للمشاركة الرجاء استخدام الرابط التالي:

<https://forms.zohopublic.com/maseeriy/form/Participationinthestudy/formperma/aieScYxxIwiIOuXwiAZttYKWMohgSPzZu4OJXvt5Hj4>

محمد عسيري

هاتف امريكي: 5054505787

هاتف سعودي: 966 54 333 1360

الرسائل الخاصة على برنامج دسكورد: Mohammad Assiri#2057

البريد الإلكتروني: massiri@unm.edu