

We would like to thank the Recommender and the Reviewers for their time evaluating this report. We would especially like to thank the second reviewer for the thoughtful feedback that helped improve the study. Please find our point-by-point response below.

1. The introduction mentions pivotal theories such as the "Coping model," "Value fulfillment theory," and "Theory of cultural dissonance," but detailed explanations of these frameworks are deferred until much later in the document (lines 269–278). This delayed exposition disrupts the narrative flow and may confuse readers unfamiliar with these concepts. It would be beneficial to integrate a concise overview of these theories early in the introduction to anchor the subsequent analysis and discussion.

We fully agree and have now integrated a more detailed explanation of the theories for the introduction.

2. The protocol acknowledges the role of culture in GD; however, the discussion on cultural impacts seems to be limited to cultural dissonance. For instance, Olson et al. (2022) highlights that cultural tightness and other cultural dimensions significantly influence GD prevalence and societal perceptions. Expanding the discussion to include these aspects could provide a more comprehensive view of how cultural factors shape gaming behavior and disorder manifestations globally. Additionally, explicating how these cultural factors will be assessed or coded in the study could offer a clearer roadmap for analysis.

This is a highly important comment. We have added 'culture' as an explicit contextual domain for the definition of RQ2 and additionally planned a comparison between cultural theoretic findings and RQ thematic findings. Moreover, we stress that that location/region is one of the descriptive elements to be analysed, to an extent that the information provided by the case studies allow.

3. The diversity in game types and their potential differential impact on GD could be considered. There are currently a large variety of games, including but not restrict to: RPG games, MOBA games, strategy games, gambling games, etc. Acknowledging this variety and discussing how the study might consider these differences could enrich the understanding of GD's complexity. This consideration is crucial, as the addictive potential and player engagement mechanisms can vary significantly across game types, influencing the reasons for dependency and the manifestation of disorder symptoms.

This is likewise a relevant a comment and something we discussed with other reivewers in the previous round as well. We recap that our decision, for pragmatic reasons, was to register merely the online/offline and platform analysis to the formal plan; however, we also code all titles and provide a descriptive distribution of genres. Of note, the thematic findings at RQ2 may also involve game-specific elements, but we cannot know the results yet. We have further highlighted these details.

4. While the study employs multiple theoretical frameworks, the operational definitions and criteria for applying these theories to the analysis are vague. A more detailed description of how each theory will be used to interpret data would enhance the protocol's rigor. For instance, specifying indicators or manifestations within the data that would signify alignment with each theoretical model would clarify the analytical process. This precision will help ensure consistency in data interpretation and enhance the study's replicability and validity.

We have added a further note about the coders forming a consensus view before starting theoretical coding. It should be noted that the coding sheet has also been designed so that a column is now reserved for copy-pasting the source of theoretical codes: anyone can thus double check where each coder's coding decision is based on. We believe this transparency is the best available solution, as it would likely be impossible to sufficiently prepare for the variety of content that potentially fit the theoretical frames in infinite different ways.