

Not All Passions are Helpful: Contrasting Healthy vs Unhealthy Passions in Moderating the Link Between Craving and Addiction

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Today's Presentation

A Social Psychological Conceptualization of Passion

1. What is a Passion and the Dualistic Model of Passion?
2. Why does passion matter?
3. Can passions help with cravings?
4. Can passions help with suicidal ideation?
5. How are passions related to *behavioral addictions*?

Along the way, I will share research applying passion to...

- Gambling; Video gaming; Sports; Romantic Relationships; Sex

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Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP)

A Guiding Framework

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What is a Passion (or an important activity)?

General Definition

An activity that strongly overlaps with our sense of self and that one highly values and dedicates a great deal of time and resources toward.

Within non-representative samples, 70-90% of participants report having a passion suggesting that it is common.

But what counts as a passion?

Vallerand (2010, 2015); Vallerand et al. (2003)

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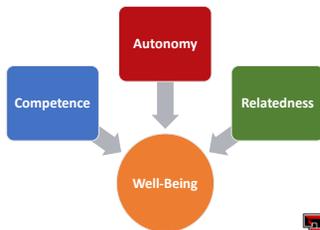


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Why THIS activity?

The DMP draws from Self-Determination Theory on the importance of satisfying three basic psychological needs:

- **Competence**
- **Autonomy**
- **Relatedness**



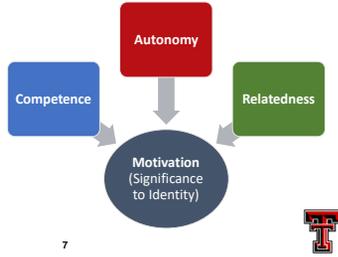
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Why THIS activity?

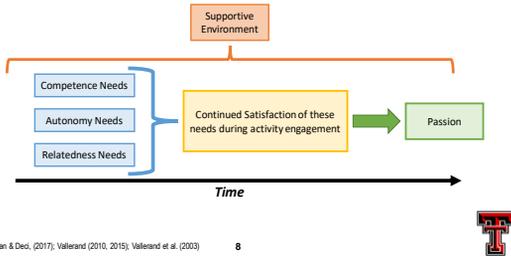
When these needs are met during engagement in the activity, individuals experience a stronger motivation to engage in this activity.



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How does a passion develop?



Ryan & Deci, (2017); Vallerand (2010, 2015); Vallerand et al. (2003) 8

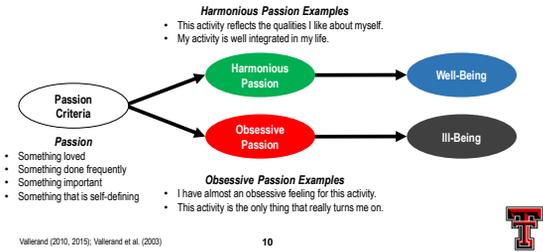
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Passions are not all the same *Distinguishing from Harmonious and Obsessive Passion*

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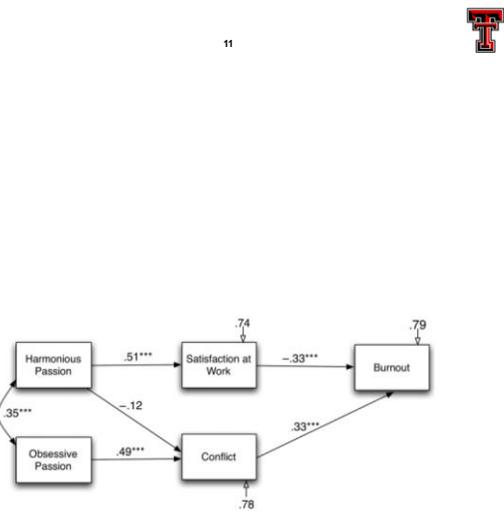
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The Duality within the DMP



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A brief look into 20 years of Passion Research



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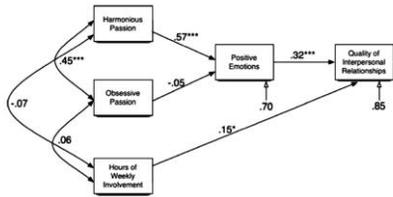


Figure 1. Study 1 path analytic model of the relations among passion, positive emotions, and quality of interpersonal relationships, controlling for hours of weekly involvement. Standardized path coefficients are presented. Nonsignificant direct effect paths are not shown for the sake of clarity. However, the values of the path coefficients are those of the full mediating model, including the direct effects of the independent variables to the outcome variables. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Philippe et al. (2010)

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Motiv Emot (2015) 39:631–655
DOI 10.1007/s11031-015-9803-0



ORIGINAL PAPER

The psychology of passion: A meta-analytical review of a decade of research on intrapersonal outcomes

Thomas Curran¹ · Andrew P. Hill² · Paul R. Appleton³ · Robert J. Vallerand^{1,2} · Martyn Standage¹

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The Quick Summary

HP = Adaptive Outcomes

OP = Maladaptive Outcomes

There could be one “positive” area in which OP does outperform HP.

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Can Passions Help with Cravings?

Unclear.

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Craving to Gamble and Problematic Gambling

Craving to Gamble / Drink

- Generally defined as strong urges or desires to gamble/drink *at the moment*.
- Unlike alcohol use disorder, craving is not a criterion of Problematic Gambling

Problematic Gambling

- Likely affects approximately 2-6% of US adults with a further 20-25% at-risk for problem gambling.
- Unsurprisingly, gambling cravings are stronger and more frequent among problematic players.

Problem Drinking

- Likely affects approximately 11.3% of US adults with a further ~20% engaging in at-risk or hazardous drinking.
- Drinking urges are stronger and more frequent among those drinking problematically and are once again a criterion of alcohol use disorder.

Hodgins et al. (2011); Murphy et al. (2014); Nower et al. (2015); Raylu & Oei (2004); Young & Volk (2009); Smith et al. (2022)

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Exploratory Questions

Do those with an important activity in their lives experience weaker cravings to gamble or drink than those who do not?

- Having an alternative activity may offers a second outlet for experiencing excitement and entertainment.
- Some positive play (i.e., gambling) recommendations encourage individuals to take a break from gambling and engage in another activity. (Similar recommendations for alcohol use exist).

Is the link between cravings to gamble or drink and problematic gambling or drinking is weakened for those with an important activity in their lives?

- While cravings to gamble or drink are still experienced, it is possible that having an important activity lessens the likelihood that such cravings contribute to internalizing a more severe problematic gambling or problematic drinking.

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The Present Study

Assess differences in gambling/drinking frequency, gambling/drinking cravings, and problem gambling/drinking between those who are not passionate (NP), harmoniously passionate (HP), and obsessive passion (OP).

Exploratory Hypothesis 1: *NP individuals will report greater gambling/drinking frequency, stronger gambling/drinking cravings, and more severe problem gambling/drinking relative to HP or OP individuals.*

Assess the differences in the relation between gambling/drinking cravings and problematic gambling/drinking across individuals who are NP, HP, and OP.

Exploratory Hypothesis 2: *The relation between gambling/drinking cravings and problematic gambling/drinking will be weaker for those who are HP relative to those who either NP or OP.*

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Methods

Gambling Sample

Participants

627 Workers MTurk; 365 Males (M = 40.4 years, SD = 12.8)

Participants were screened prior to primary survey

- More than 40% gamble weekly or more
- 16.1% were problematic players (scores of 8+ on Problem Gambling Severity Index)

Online Survey (All measures with High Omegas)

Passion Scale (Valleand, 2010)

Problem Gambling Severity Index (Ferris & Wynne, 2001)

Craving Experience Questionnaire – Gambling (Comil et al., 2019)

Gambling Frequency across Various Activities

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Alcohol Sample

Participants

574 Workers MTurk; 348 Males (M = 39.3 years, SD = 12.5)

Participants were screened prior to primary survey

- More than 55% drink weekly
- 23.1% met threshold for moderate-severe alcohol use disorder (AUDIT score 15+)

Online Survey (All measures with High Omegas)

Passion Scale (Valleand, 2010)

Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (Ferris & Wynne, 2001)

Two Drinking Urge Items



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There is some overlap in participants between samples

296 participants were included in both samples.

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Results: Hypothesis 1 (Gambling Sample)

	HP (n = 245)		OP (n = 215)		NP (n = 167)		Total (n = 627)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Age (in years)	41.77	13.52	40.04	12.55	39.02	12.03	40.44	12.83
Passion Criteria	6.13 ^a	0.78	5.53 ^b	1.01	n/a	n/a	5.85	0.95
Harmonious Passion	6.08 ^a	0.71	5.03 ^b	1.10	n/a	n/a	5.59	1.05
Obsessive Passion	2.23 ^a	0.94	3.81 ^b	1.48	n/a	n/a	2.97	1.45
General Gambling Frequency	2.07 ^a	0.98	2.24 ^a	1.02	2.26 ^a	1.05	2.21	1.02
Online Gambling Frequency	0.92 ^a	1.20	1.35 ^b	1.22	1.08 ^b	1.26	1.11	1.23
Craving for Gambling (Past Week)	1.69 ^a	0.96	2.48 ^b	1.29	2.09 ^b	1.15	2.07	1.18
Craving for Gambling (Right Now)	1.87 ^a	0.94	2.52 ^b	1.17	2.23 ^b	1.11	2.19	1.10
Problem Gambling Severity	1.55 ^a	3.20	4.50 ^b	5.61	3.33 ^b	5.15	3.04	4.84

Different superscripts indicate significant differences ($p < 0.01$).

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Results: Hypothesis 1 (Alcohol Sample)

	HP (n = 204)		OP (n = 203)		NP (n = 167)		Total (n = 574)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Age (in years)	42.57 ^a	14.01	36.65 ^b	10.82	38.34 ^b	11.60	39.25	12.50
Passion Criteria	6.15 ^a	0.76	5.52 ^b	0.95	n/a	n/a	5.83	0.91
Harmonious Passion	6.05 ^a	0.71	4.98 ^b	0.97	n/a	n/a	5.52	1.01
Obsessive Passion	2.30 ^a	1.04	4.02 ^b	1.46	n/a	n/a	3.16	1.53
Drinking Urges	3.10 ^a	1.39	4.21 ^b	1.89	3.87 ^b	2.01	3.72	1.83
Alcohol Consumption (AUDIT-C)	5.00	2.40	5.21	2.30	5.36	2.77	5.21	2.64
Alcohol Dependence (AUDIT-D)	2.57 ^a	3.49	6.84 ^b	6.38	5.32 ^b	5.86	4.88	5.65
Problem Drinking	7.57 ^a	5.06	12.14 ^b	7.59	10.66 ^b	7.54	10.09	7.05

Different superscripts indicate significant differences ($p < 0.01$).

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Results: Hypothesis 2 (Gambling Sample)

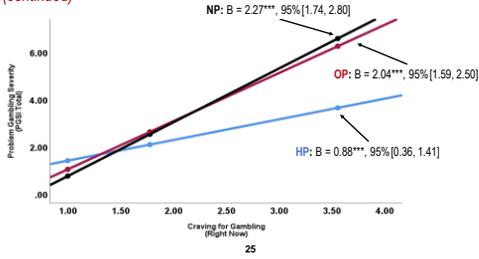
DV: Problematic Gambling Severity				
	B	95% LL	95% UL	p
Constant	-3.29***	-4.78	-1.79	0.00
Craving for Gambling (Right Now)	0.88***	0.36	1.41	0.00
Obsessive Passionate (OP)	-1.53*	-2.77	-0.28	0.02
Non-Passionate Player (NP)	-2.05***	-3.35	-0.74	0.00
OP x Craving for Gambling (Right Now)	1.16***	0.62	1.70	0.00
NP x Craving for Gambling (Right Now)	1.39***	0.79	1.99	0.00
Covariates				
Age (in years)	-0.02	-0.04	0.00	0.11
Biological Sex (0 = M, 1 = F)	0.64*	0.11	1.16	0.02
Craving for Gambling (Past Week)	1.18***	0.80	1.55	0.00
General Gambling Frequency	0.19	-0.14	0.52	0.27
Online Gambling Frequency	0.24	-0.04	0.53	0.10
Only in Gambling Sample	0.60*	0.09	1.11	0.02

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Results: Hypothesis 2 (Gambling Sample)

(continued)



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Results: Hypothesis 2 (Alcohol Sample)

DV: Alcohol Dependence (AUDIT-D)				
	B	95% LL	95% UL	p
Constant	-0.85	-3.08	1.38	0.45
Craving for Drinking	0.77***	0.36	1.17	0.00
Obsessive Passionate (OP)	-2.94***	-4.85	-1.03	0.00
Non-Passionate Player (NP)	-1.05	-2.94	0.84	0.27
OP x Craving for Drinking	1.39***	0.90	1.88	0.00
NP x Craving for Drinking	0.71**	0.22	1.21	0.01
Covariates				
Age (in years)	-0.03**	-0.06	-0.01	0.01
Biological Sex (0 = M, 1 = F)	-0.06	-0.74	0.63	0.87
Alcohol Consumption (AUDIT-C)	0.45***	0.30	0.59	0.00
Only in Alcohol Sample	0.91**	0.25	1.58	0.01

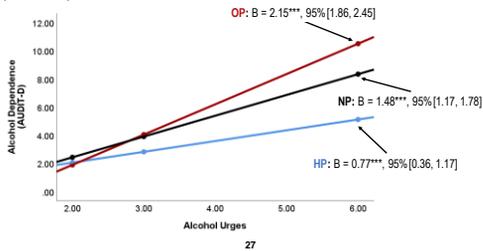
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Results: Hypothesis 2 (Alcohol Sample)

(continued)



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Discussion and Directions for Further Research

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Summary of Findings

Group Differences

- HP individuals report less gambling/drinking cravings and lower problematic gambling/drinking than both OP and NP individuals, even though they gamble/drink similar frequencies/quantities
 - *Online gambling was lower for HP, which needs to be further explored.*
- OP individuals reported more frequent gambling cravings (i.e., past week) than NP individuals, which is not consistent expectations.
 - *Alcohol data did not allow for a similar comparison.*

Association between Cravings and Problem Gambling/Drinking

- The association is lower for HP individuals.
 - Does this suggest that HP individuals may experience strong cravings but that these are not internalized into a more problematic gambling because they have an alternative activity?

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Implications

- General support for the role of HP being associated with weaker cravings as well as less severe problem gambling/drinking.
 - Seems to support the idea of having an important alternative activity (i.e., passion) that one identifies with as supportive of positive play and safer drinking.
 - **But, the quality of the of that passion (i.e., OP vs HP) matters.**
- Future research must explore this over time as well as in the moment using more rigorous methods.

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Can passion reduce risk for suicide?

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Integrating the interpersonal theory of suicide and the dualistic model of passion among adults at risk for suicide

Julia Petrovic¹ · Devin J. Mills² · Sean M. Mitchell³

484 MTurk Workers at-risk for Suicide (55% Female; *M* = 38.7 years, *SD* = 12.6)

Online survey included the following measures:

Passion Scale: Assessing both Harmonious and Obsessive Passion

Note that only those who could identify a passion completed the Passion Scale

Interpersonal Need Questionnaire: Assessing Thwarted Belonging and Perceived Burden

Future Dispositions Inventory: Assessing Positive and Negative Outlook and Suicidal Ideation

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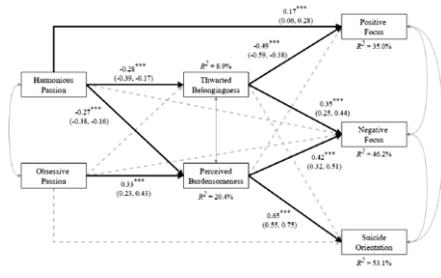
Mean Differences

	Non-passionate (NP) (<i>n</i> = 178)	Passionate	
		Harmoniously (HP) (<i>n</i> = 156)	Obsessively (OP) (<i>n</i> = 150)
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Thwarted belongingness	4.64 (1.32)	3.48 (1.58)	4.14 (1.28)
Perceived burdensomeness	2.98 (1.85)	1.89 (1.34)	2.97 (1.66)
Positive focus	2.55 (0.88)	3.33 (0.91)	2.93 (0.89)
Negative focus	3.13 (1.06)	2.44 (1.07)	3.08 (1.03)
Suicidal orientation	2.40 (1.20)	1.86 (1.01)	2.48 (1.17)
Harmonious passion	–	6.04 (0.76)	4.82 (1.04)
Obsessive passion	–	2.31 (0.93)	3.79 (1.44)

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Takeaway from this study

- Initial proof of concept??
- Possessing a harmonious passion for individuals at-risk for suicide appears to be a protective factor, whereas an obsessive passion may further amplify their risk for suicide and mental health problems
- Harmonious passion is associated with elevated protective factors including greater connection to others

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Why do passions diverge?

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Why do some players gamble recreationally, albeit enthusiastically, but others gamble problematically?

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Why do some individuals drink socially or moderately, but others drink problematically?

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Passion Divergence

Passions are supposed to be self-defining - - But, not in absoluton

- When too much of one's identity is derived from their passion (e.g., contingent self-esteem), they are more likely to endorse an obsessive passion

When involvement and support becomes overly involved and unsupportive

- Consider while parental involvement in child sports: if it is perceived that one's parents value results over the child's love for the activity, passion may turn obsessive

When support is truly supportive

- Consider the coach that genuinely cares for their athletes beyond their abilities on the field/court - - Players will express a stronger harmonious passion toward the sport

When the three basic needs (i.e., competence, autonomy, relatedness) are not met elsewhere in life

Lalonde et al. (2017); Mageau et al. (2009); Vallerand (2010, 2015) 39



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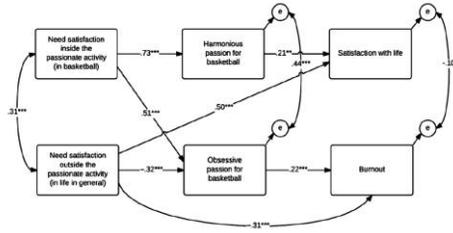


Figure 3 Study 3: Structural equation model results. Path coefficients are presented as standardized coefficients. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Lalonde et al. (2017)

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Is there a clinical utility to items from the passion scale?

- HP item:** Does this activity reflect the qualities that you like about yourself?
 - If yes, what specifically do you believe your passion helps you express?
 - If not, what specifically do you not like about yourself when you engage in your passion?
- OP item:** Do you have the impression that this activity controls you?
 - If yes, what about the activity controls you? Are you simply not able to resist engaging in the activity?
 - If not, does this mean that your engagement in the activity never or rarely conflicts with responsibilities?
- HP item:** Is this activity in balance with other areas of your life?
 - If yes, do you feel that it adds value to other areas of your life? For instance, do you have specific relationships that surround your engagement in this activity?
 - If not, do you feel that your engagement in the activity is distracting you from other responsibilities?
- OP item:** Do you have difficulties controlling your urge to engage in your activity?
 - If yes, how often do you give in to these urges?
 - If not, is this because you do not experience urges often or have you found ways of managing these urges?

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Is obsessive passion another term for behavioral addiction?

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A Second Guiding Definition



Behavioral Addiction

A persistent pattern of engagement in an activity that directly undermines an individual's ability to function optimally.



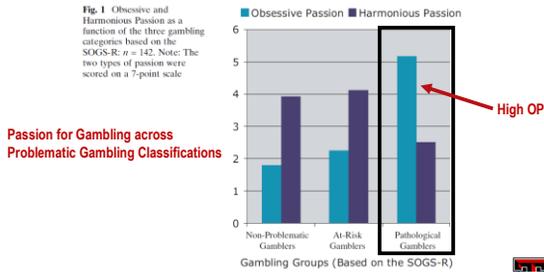
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Behavioral Addictions Include...

- Gambling Disorder
- Video Gaming Disorder
- Sex Addiction
- Food Addiction (or is that a Substance Use Disorder)
- Exercise Dependence
- Internet Addiction (or is that too broad)
- Problematic Porn Use
- Shopping Addiction
- Smartphone Addiction (or is that too broad)



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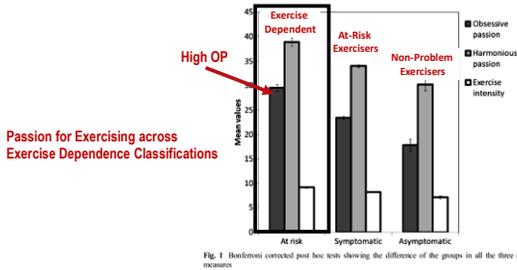


Fig. 4 Bonferroni corrected post hoc tests showing the difference of the groups in all the three dependent measures

Kovacik et al. (2019)

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Behavioral Addictions Often Obsessive Passions

This does not suggest it is not problematic or is not something to be reduced or extinguished

But, as a passion...

- It is something that is important to the individual
- It is something that they identify with
- It is likely something that their life revolves around
- It is also something that satisfies their basic psychological needs

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What happens when behaviors are extinguish prior to establishing adaptive behaviors or social support?

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A possible example...

Adolescent Problematic Video Gamer

- Largely *physically* isolated but socially engaged online
- Experience of hostile homelife and bullying at school
- Escapes the maladaptive reality into virtual reality, where supportive friends are and an environment that they have control over
- Feels more like themselves online versus offline

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Another way to think of this...

This individual is experiencing a continued **frustration** of their basic needs through a hostile homelife and bullying at school.

Frustration of basic needs implies that individuals experience various environmental impediments to satisfying their basic psychological needs.

- They are **made** to feel inferior by others (competence frustration)
- They are **forced** to behave in a way that is **uncomfortable and not desired** (autonomy frustration)
- They feel **rejected** by others (relatedness frustration)

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How does this look empirically?

When players experience high need satisfaction through gaming but high need frustration in their daily life, they play more often and more problematically.

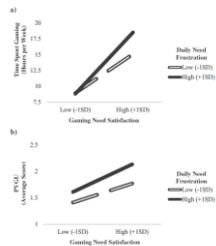


Fig. 3. Moderation effect of daily need frustration (DNF) on the association between gaming need satisfaction (GNS) with time spent gaming (upper graph, a) and gaming session length with Problematic Video Game Use (PVGU; lower graph, b).

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Mills et al. (2018)

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What happens when “cord-cutting” or other forced “cold turkey” approaches are applied?

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One Idea (It's not original)

Focus less on the activity that is a problem and more on the availability of alternative activities.

- Create incentives for engaging in alternative activities with the goal of identifying another passion.
 - This will likely require an exploration into individuals' strengths and interests outside of their behavioral addiction.
 - Motivating individuals to try something new or something they have not done in a while will be hard and possibly not enjoyable at first.

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Summary

We are just starting to really understand the role of passions in people's lives.

- Past 20 years has provided proof of concept that the quality of passions, either harmonious or obsessive, is predictive of the benefits and costs of passion engagement

The DMP appears to be a useful framework for responsible gambling and safer drinking.

The DMP may also have implications for investigating potential buffers of suicide ideation.

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Thank you!

Questions?

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