

デジタルゲームにおける意味づけの枠組みの分類

Categorizing the Frames of Meaning in Digital Games

林 志修^{*1}

Ji Soo Lim

Email: imu_jisoo@dokkyo.ac.jp

デジタルゲームをあそぶとき、プレイヤーはさまざまな枠組みを用いてゲームの中の出来事の解釈を行う。本研究ではそれらのゲームプレイの意味づけに影響を与える枠組みの分類を行った。質問紙調査を通して、プレイヤーがゲームを遊ぶ時に用いる意味づけの枠組みには、「プレイヤー」、「キャラクター」、「無関心」、「パフォーマー」があることが分かった。

This paper aims to define the frames of meaning that players of digital games base their interpretations on during play and to look at different kinds of frames in digital games. By conducting a survey, the four-factor structure of the frames of meaning became clear. The four frames are: player, character, aloofness, and performer.

^{*1}：情報学研究所助手

1. Introduction

With the wide spread of digital games as a pastime, their effects on players have been investigated in various settings. Many studies examine the effect of games on players' behaviors and suggest that playing games brings out antisocial effects (e.g., Anderson et al. 2010) and prosocial effects as well (e.g., Gentile et al. 2009) on players' behavior. However, many studies are limited to explaining the one-way effect on players' internal states from exposure to depictions of violent or prosocial actions. It is overlooked that many in-game behaviors are acted out by players and that intentions of such in-game behaviors may be different from those in the real world. It is important to see why players act in such a way and how those actions are perceived by players. Is social behavior in digital games perceived by players in the same way as the behavior in the real world?

In games, players' behavior is mainly based on rules and goals that are designed or set by players themselves to drive players to behave in a specific way (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004). Not all players fully immerse themselves in a game, but they are aware that they are playing games by consciously following the rules. For example, players may help a villager find his lost ring because they empathize with him or to get an item that they want as the reward.

When playing games, players interpret what is going on according to the different frames they adopt. In Fine (1983), it is explained that analog gamers interpret what is going on in a game from three different frames: as a person who is present in the real world, as a player who is playing the game according to game rules, or as a character who is present in a game's world. A dice roll in a board game may have a different meaning on different levels. How players interpret a game may affect their level of involvement and how they behave as they play. In the case of digital games, Lim (2018) shows that players adopt and oscillate between different frames as similarly as analog gamers.

1.1 Frames of Meaning

The frame of a situation is defined by implicit rules or principles of the situation, and different framing gives different meanings to the situation

(Goffman, 1974). Fine (1983) studied analog role-playing gamers in the late 1970s, using frame analyses to look at the meaning of gameplay among gamers. According to Fine's observations, when gamers talk about games they played or talk during a game, they speak from different frames. Fine's focus is on three main levels of the meaning of gameplay. First, gamers talk during gameplay as people, referring to incidents in the real world. Second, they may interpret what is happening in the game as players under the rules and constraints of the game. Third, gamers are characters in the game world, acting according to its rules. Gamers may think or talk as different selves during gameplay. They may also refer to the knowledge difference between characters, players, and persons. For example, when certain technology that is available in the real world is not accessible in the game world because of the period and setting of the game, gamers may pretend not to know about it or show that they know about it but are aware that they are not supposed to know about it; additionally, they may bring the technology into the game for the benefit of themselves and possibly ruin the game for other people. Here, their interpretation of the technology and the use of it differ according to the identity they adopt.

Different levels of interpretation also apply to digital games. In Lim (2018), it is observed through the think-aloud session that during gameplay, players think on different levels, and they switch between different selves easily, including for short periods. For example, a player is aware of time in the real world, and after a moment, a player thinks about what time of day it is in the game world. In the follow-up interview, a participant mentioned that she felt she identified herself as the main character, but in a situation whereby the character died, she immediately distanced herself from the role.

The frame may influence how other characters are perceived in the game. For example, in the analog role-playing game, a character may be one's friend in the game world but a stranger in the real world. How one feels about the character may depend on how he/she perceives the identity of the other character. That is, how a player plays a game may affect the relationship between the player and other characters in the game.

This study attempts to look different perspec-

tives players can take while playing digital games and to identify the underlying factors that may be the indication of different kinds of frames of meaning players adopt.

2. Method

First, a 24-item questionnaire of frames of meaning in digital games was constructed based on the previous studies and theories (Lim, 2018; Goffman, 1974; Fine, 1983). In addition to items related to “character,” “player,” and “person” in Fine (1983), the author added items related to the performing aspects of games since streaming of gameplay is popular these days. Rather than enjoying the gameplay itself, popular Youtubers could be more aware of their fans watching the video. They may care more about how the gameplay is perceived by the audience rather than the meaning of a certain action for them. Also, items related to players’ fandom of the background story are added as many recent Japanese games are based on the original comics or animation. For example, fans of an animation series could be playing a game only to watch their favorite characters. Whatever happens in the game may not matter to them as long as they feature the character.

With the questionnaire, responses were collected from 108 university students (Male = 70, Female = 37, Other = 1). The participants completed the questionnaire online in a computer room during a class. The online survey was created by the online survey tool Creative Survey (<http://creativesurvey.com>). All respondents were informed of the approximate time it would take, anonymity of the responses, and their right to withdraw whenever they wanted before the survey. All respondents were given chocolate candies as incentives after the class whether they withdrew or not. Among 108 respondents, 4 responded they had never played digital games, so their responses were eliminated in the analysis. Respondents were asked to recall their digital game experience in the past, write the title of the game and to answer how much they agreed on each item (see Appendix). They answered each question on 5-point Likert scale: “disagree,” “somewhat disagree,” “neutral,” “somewhat agree,” and “agree.” The items were presented in a random order. The same questionnaire was asked for two titles for each respondent.

The number of responses per respondent were not explicitly limited because the questionnaire was about the game experience of each game. However, the response time was limited to about 15 minutes, and the respondents were monitored by two instructors, so it was difficult for any respondents to conduct the survey more than once.

3. Results

3.1 Factor Analysis

Although the title of the game was asked in the survey, all the responses were combined to analyze because the objective of the study was to look at the player’s experience of digital game in general. A factor analysis was conducted to see underlying factors. Varimax rotation was used because all the items were expected to be correlated since all are related to prosocial behavior. A four-factor solution was preferred because the eigenvalue dropped below 0 after four factors. Items with factor loading less than .4 and items with similar levels of factor loadings in more than one factor were removed (four items). The result of the factor analysis with 20 items is in Table 1.

4. Discussion

Factor 1 is labelled as “Player,” Factor 2 as “Character,” Factor 3 as “Aloofness,” and Factor 4 as “Performer.” When players adopt “Player” frame, they are not as involved in the game narrative, but they place more value on winning and succeeding in the game. When players adopt “Character” frame, they are immersed in the game world, as if they are the character in the game, and they may feel like the character. They are more focused on the story of the game rather than the rules. When players adopt “Aloofness” frame, they are not focused on the gameplay. They are involved neither with the narrative nor the rules of the game. When players adopt “Performer” frame, they play the game to show off to other people. How people perceive the game matters more than how they perceive the game themselves.

However, it is important to note, as indicated in the previous studies, that the frame is dynamic, and players may switch between frames even within a short period of time. Which frames players adopt may depend on the social context

Table 1 Factor loadings and communalities for 20 items

	F1	F2	F3	F4	Uniqueness	mean	SD
ゲームの世界観やルールよりもそのゲームを遊ぶこと自体が重要だ (The playing of the game itself is more important than the narrative and rules of the game)	0.80				0.33	2.88	1.14
ゲームの世界観や勝ち負けよりは友だちと遊ぶためにゲームを遊ぶ (I play the game to play with my friends rather than to enjoy the narrative or the competition)	0.70				0.44	2.83	1.28
ゲームの世界観よりもゴールにたどり着くことが重要だ (It is more important to achieve the goal of the game than the narrative)	0.63				0.59	2.74	1.16
ゲームが好きというよりは友だちと一緒に遊べるから好きだ (Rather than the game itself, I like the game because I can play with my friends)	0.59				0.59	2.90	1.20
ゲームのルールが面白ければ世界観やストーリーが魅力的じゃなくてもかまわない (I would not mind if the story of the game is not attractive as long as the rules are enjoyable)	0.53				0.61	2.54	1.11
ゲームの様々な要素を楽しむよりも早く終わらせることを重視する (I consider it more important to finish the game than to enjoy different parts of the game)	0.47				0.71	2.38	1.20
ゲームのストーリーや勝ち負けよりゲームをプレイしたという事実の方が大事だ (The fact that I play the game is more important than the narrative and rule of the game)	0.45				0.59	2.60	1.14
ゲームの面白さよりキャラクターやイラストなどの見た目を重視する (I consider the design and illustrations of the game more important than how enjoyable it is)	0.41				0.71	2.88	0.99
ゲームの世界に入ったかのように感じる人が多い (I often feel that I am inside of the game world)		0.71			0.38	2.52	1.30
自分が一番重要視する要素はゲームの世界観だ (The most important thing in games for me is the narrative of the game)		0.65			0.51	3.07	1.06
自分がゲームの世界に入ったような気持ちでプレイする (I play the game as I am inside the game world)		0.62			0.51	2.85	1.35
自分をゲームの世界の一部のように感じる人が多い (I often feel that I am a part of the game world)		0.59			0.37	2.56	1.31
ゲーム画面のUI (スコア表示など) に気づかないほどゲームの世界に没入することが多い (I am often too involved in the game world to overlook the UI of the game)		0.56			0.55	2.48	1.18
勝ち負けよりゲームのストーリーの方が重要だ (The story of the game is more important than the competition)		0.52			0.69	2.91	1.16
ゲームの中でできること / できないこと (キャラクターが行ける / 行けない場所、動かせる / 動かせないアイテムなど) を常に意識している (When I am playing the game, I am always aware of what is possible and what is not)		0.40			0.74	3.23	1.28
ゲームのルールに矛盾があってもかまわない (I don't care if there is a flaw in the rules of the game)			0.83		0.25	2.42	1.30
ゲームの世界観に矛盾があってもかまわない (I don't care if there is a flaw in the narrative of the game)			0.77		0.35	2.66	1.30
キャラクターが可愛ければルールや世界観が悪くてもいい (If the characters are cute, the rules or the narrative do not matter)			0.52		0.47	2.26	1.07
ゲームプレイをいかにかっこよくみせるかを常に意識している (I am always aware of showing the gameplay cool)				0.80	0.35	2.31	1.24
人にみせることを意識しながらゲームを遊ぶ (When I play the game, I am thinking of showing it to people)				0.79	0.27	2.14	1.13
Correlations between factors	F1	F2	F3	F4			
Factor 1	1.00	-0.61	-0.19	-0.37			
Factor 2		1.00	-0.32	-0.14			
Factor 3			1.00	0.02			
Factor 4				1.00			
Variance	0.16	0.13	0.11	0.10			

Chi-square 161.09** df 116 $p = 0.00$

of the gameplay or game genre. For example, in an e-sports match, a player may play the game as “Player” and also as “Performer,” switching between those frames accordingly with the game progress. Which frames to adopt would be also related to personal factors of players like personality and preferences. Also, they could be done voluntarily or unintentionally. For example, a player may choose to adopt “Player” frame because he is losing. On the other hand, a player may become involved with the game narrative and unintentionally become to adopt “Character” frame to make interpretations because she empathized with the characters.

The findings of the current study suggest that there are multiple frames players may adopt while playing digital games, and four of them are shown in the results. Building on the current study, the further research is to be conducted to see the relationship between four frames which may lead to a clearer picture of player’s game experience.

5. Conclusion

The current research looked at what kinds of frames of meaning players may adopt during gameplay. Players who adopt different frames may interpret in-game behaviors differently even when they are playing the same game. For example, attacking a monster may be interpreted as violence or earning points. Based on the current research, future research shall be conducted to see the effect of certain behaviors in games and its relationship with the frames of meaning.

However, there are some limitations. First, the frames of meaning identified in this paper is not exhaustive and it is possible that other kinds are overlooked in the current study. Secondly, all the responses were combined to analyze regardless of the content of the game. However, in the future studies, the findings of current research may be used to look at the difference in the experience of digital games of different genres. Also, the result is based on only about 100 survey responses, the size

of which is considered small for conducting a factor analysis. Further studies with bigger sample sizes and more questionnaire items should be conducted to yield more valid results.

The current study would be the first step that look into the frames of meaning and players’ interpretation empirically to contribute to the different areas of game studies such as game effect studies, and user experience research. Furthermore, looking at player’s behavior and experience in digital games which also serves as virtual social space to interact with other people may contribute to studies of other fields like social media and virtual reality.

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Appendix

「ゲームプレイ中の体験」に関する調査

このアンケートは、デジタルゲームのプレイ体験を調べるために行う匿名のアンケートです。

*所要時間はおよそ 15 分です。

*回答の内容は授業の成績とは全く関係ありません。

*回答の内容は研究以外の目的で使用することはありません。

*回答の集計で個人を特定することはありません。

*回答をやめたいときには、いつでもやめてかまいません。

Part I 以下の質問ではあなた自身についてお答えください。

- (1) 年齢: _____ 歳
- (2) 性別: 男 ・ 女 ・ その他
- (3) デジタルゲームをプレイしたことがありますか
- はい ・ いいえ (このまま回答をやめてかまいません)
- (4) 何歳からプレイしていますか (だいたい年齢でもけっこうです) _____ 歳頃から

Part II 次の質問ではあなたがプレイしたゲームの場面を想像しながらお答えください。

最も記憶が鮮明で思い出しやすいゲームを2つ選び、ゲームのキャラクターとのやりとりを思い出してください

- ・ゲーム1：どんなゲームでも OK です
- ・ゲーム2：可能であればキャラクターが登場するゲームを選んでください

ゲーム 1

(1) そのゲームのタイトルは何ですか _____

(1)-1 そのゲームを今までどのくらい遊びましたか 約 _____ 時間

(2) 以下の質問はあなたが上であげたゲームをプレイしている場面を想像しながら教えてください。

1= 全くそう思わない、2= あまりそう思わない、3= どちらともいえない、4= ややそう思う、5= 非常にそう思う

(Presented in a random order)	1	2	3	4	5
ゲームの様々な要素を楽しむよりも早く終わらせることを重視する					
ゲームの中でできること / できないこと（キャラクターが行ける / 行けない場所、動かせる / 動かせないアイテムなど）を常に意識している					
ゲームのルールが面白ければ世界観やストーリーが魅力的じゃなくてもかまわない					
自分がゲームの世界に入ったような気持ちでプレイする					
ゲームの世界観に矛盾があってもかまわない					
ゲームの世界に入ったかのように感じる人が多い					
自分をゲームの世界の一部のように感じる人が多い					
ゲームのルールを常に意識している					
ゲームプレイをいかにかっこよくみせるかを常に意識している					
ゲームのストーリーや勝ち負けよりゲームをプレイしたという事実の方が大事だ					
ゲームの世界観よりもゴールにたどり着くことが重要だ					
ゲームの中の出来事が自分に起こったかのように感じる					
ゲームの世界観や勝ち負けよりは友達と遊ぶためにゲームを遊ぶ					
勝ち負けよりゲームのストーリーの方が重要だ					
ゲームのルールに矛盾があってもかまわない					
人にみせることを意識しながらゲームを遊ぶ					
ゲームの世界観やルールよりもそのゲームを遊ぶこと自体が重要だ					
ゲームが好きというよりは友達と一緒に遊べるから好きだ					
ゲーム画面の UI（スコア表示など）に気づかないほどゲームの世界に没入することが多い					
キャラクターが可愛ければルールや世界観が悪くてもいい					
ゲームの一番魅力的なところはゲームのルールだ					
ゲームの面白さよりキャラクターやイラストなどの見た目を重視する					
自分が一番重要視する要素はゲームの世界観だ					
ゲーム画面の UI（スコア表示など）の変化に常に敏感だ					

ゲーム 2 (次の質問でも使います)

(1) そのゲームのタイトルは何ですか _____

(1)-1 今まで全部合わせて何時間くらいプレイしましたか 約 _____ 時間

(2) 以下の質問はあなたが上であげたゲームをプレイしている場面を想像しながら教えてください。

1= 全くそう思わない、2= あまりそう思わない、3= どちらともいえない、4= ややそう思う、5= 非常にそう思う

(Presented in a random order)	1	2	3	4	5
ゲームの世界観や勝ち負けよりは友達と遊ぶためにゲームを遊ぶ					
勝ち負けよりゲームのストーリーの方が重要だ					
ゲームのルールに矛盾があってもかまわない					
人にみせることを意識しながらゲームを遊ぶ					
ゲームの世界観やルールよりもそのゲームを遊ぶこと自体が重要だ					
ゲームが好きというよりは友達と一緒に遊べるから好きだ					
ゲーム画面の UI (スコア表示など) に気づかないほどゲームの世界に没入することが多い					
キャラクターが可愛ければルールや世界観が悪くてもいい					
ゲームの一番魅力的なところはゲームのルールだ					
ゲームの面白さよりキャラクターやイラストなどの見た目を重視する					
自分が一番重要視する要素はゲームの世界観だ					
ゲーム画面の UI (スコア表示など) の変化に常に敏感だ					
ゲームの様々な要素を楽しむよりも早く終わらせることを重視する					
ゲームの中でできること / できないこと (キャラクターが行ける / 行けない場所、動かせる / 動かせないアイテムなど) を常に意識している					
ゲームのルールが面白ければ世界観やストーリーが魅力的じゃなくてもかまわない					
自分がゲームの世界に入ったような気持ちでプレイする					
ゲームの世界観に矛盾があってもかまわない					
ゲームの世界に入ったかのように感じる人が多い					
自分をゲームの世界の一部のように感じる人が多い					
ゲームのルールを常に意識している					
ゲームプレイをいかにかっこよくみせるかを常に意識している					
ゲームのストーリーや勝ち負けよりゲームをプレイしたという事実の方が大事だ					
ゲームの世界観よりもゴールにたどり着くことが重要だ					
ゲームの中の出来事が自分に起こったかのように感じる					

PART Ⅲ以下の質問はゲーム 2 での次の場面を想像しながらお答えください。

(Presented in a random order)

場面 1 「あなたはある NPC ※が敵の NPC に剣で攻撃されそうところを目撃します。」

※ NPC : Non-player character の略称。コンピュータがコントロールするキャラクター

(1) あなたはその NPC に対してどう思いますか？

1= 全くそう思わない、2 =あまりそう思わない、3 =どちらともいえない、4 =ややそう思う、5 =非常にそう思う

(Presented in a random order)	1	2	3	4	5
応援してあげたいと思う					
困っているのをみて私まで悲しくなる					
次に何が起こるか気になるので放っておきたい					
罪悪感を感じる					
かわいそうだと思う					
その中立の NPC を助けてあげたい					

場面 2 「あなたは友だちのキャラクターが敵の NPC に剣で攻撃されそうところを目撃します。」

(2) あなたはそのキャラクターに対してどう思いますか？

1= 全くそう思わない、2 =あまりそう思わない、3 =どちらともいえない、4 =ややそう思う、5 =非常にそう思う

(Presented in a random order)	1	2	3	4	5
罪悪感を感じる					
次に何が起こるか気になるので放っておきたい					
応援してあげたいと思う					
かわいそうだと思う					
困っているのをみて私まで悲しくなる					
そのキャラクターを助けてあげたい					

ご協力ありがとうございます。※以上で本調査は終わりです。