

Gender Representations in Videogames: Gamers Perceptions about Female Characters

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Societal narratives derive from shared social constructions that validate social discourse about a given subject or object. Social representations confirm the image that society has of something or someone. The new societal configurations have substantially altered the role of women and the way in which women are represented socially. There are still negative social representations and the standardization of women's role depends essentially on cultural and geographical issues. However, there are also new narratives that seek to overcome the stereotypes developed over the years, combated by the waves of feminism and different organizations.

In the context of videogames, female representation is anchored in cultural and social values, but it also refers to its hypersexualization and negative stereotypes (such as fragility and submission). Gender representations in videogames and the social narratives they adopt refer us beyond the business side, with a clear impact in the cultural, social and even educational domains. If for a long-time videogames were only seen as mere entertainment tools and very attached to the male audience, it turns out that many of these associations have been fading over the years and progressively the industry has changed the constant concept that video games are only for men and only produced for the male audience. To what extent do the female public see this change? How does a woman feel represented in video games? The female image is adapted in order to meet the standards required by society? What representations and standards assume the current society as elements that define the female figure? Several studies have tried to understand all these issues around the female universe, trying to promote the idea that women can be placed on the same level as men and that even required the same needs of the opposite sex. In this paper we propose an approach about why the objectification of women that is exposed by the video games industry and thus create an accurate representation of how the female audience is denoted. In this sense, we opted for a methodological approach to content analysis that crosses the qualitative and quantitative aspects. The methodological strategy was operationalized through individual interviews and online questionnaires. The sample consists of male and female gamer audience. It follows that the central objective of this study is to correlate the representation of female characters with the perception that the gaming public has of that representation.

Keywords: Videogames; Gender Representations; Female Representations; Social Representations.