

# Response: Bridging Gaming and Engaging with Storytelling with Mental Health Science

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## Abstract

We thank Meng and Sun for their thoughtful comments and insightful points in their letter to the Editor regarding our previously published article and share our response here.

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## **Response: Bridging Gaming and Engaging with Storytelling with Mental Health Science**

To the Editor,

We greatly welcome and thank Meng and Sun for their thoughtful comments in their letter to the editor [1] in response to our research [2]. We are grateful for the insightful points shared on how work on creative media, such as video games and films, may help challenge stereotypes about gaming and engaging with storytelling to potentially open doors accessible and innovative tools for well-being. As prior has shown, open-world games may have the potential to enhance young people's mental well-being [3], whilst social media and other forms of internet usage may lead to stress and anxiety [4-5]. In the following sections, we respond to the kind and insightful points shared [2] to further help bridge creative media and mental health science.

First, we concur regarding the stated importance to examine the observed effects in our study [1], using participants who may not already be predisposed to enjoy the stimuli such as graduate students. As we note in our article, we recruited participants by telling them that they had a chance to take part in a university study on daily activities and well-being. Thus, the danger of people who already like watching Studio Ghibli films and enjoy playing *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* to self-select to take part in the study is low. We also controlled for study participants' familiarity with and enjoyment of the creative art content. That said, we fully agree that that future research studying the impact of creative media on well-being using a larger, broader and more varied sample in terms of different study participant demographics (age, cultural background, etc.) is richly deserving.

Second, we concur that due to the intervention's brevity (i.e., 30 minutes of video gameplay and roughly seven minutes of film viewing) only a snapshot of the possible psychological effect may be captured and hence may constitute a conservative test. This is an excellent point and we encourage future research to explore the impact of long-term intervention as well as varied intervention format (e.g., multi-session, spaced over several days and weeks and possibly even years) on long-term well-being gains. Additional work to help examine the long-term effects of playing open-world games such as *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* and watching Studio Ghibli classics such as *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Kiki's Delivery Service* on mental well-being is richly deserving. In addition, we invite future research to explore the potential effects of games and films other than the ones invested in our study [1] to help inform to what extent various art forms may lead to benefits in calmness, exploration, enhanced meaning and sense of purpose in life as well as overall life happiness.

Third, study participants were randomly assigned to the study's experimental conditions. That said, we fully concur that the study of how mood, recent stressors, sleep quality (or lack thereof), social interactions, the consumption of one's favorite beverage (e.g., coffee, Red Bull, etc.) may interact with the intervention's effects is richly deserving.

In summary, we thank Meng and Sun for their thoughtful and excellent comments on how future research may help bridge gaming and storytelling with mental health science.

#### Acknowledgments:

The authors thank Meng and Sun for their thoughtful and helpful points shared.

#### Conflict of interest:

No conflict of interest to be reported.

#### Author contributions:

All authors contributed equally.

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