

# Fast life history strategy, self-regulation, and Internet gaming disorder: An evolutionary approach to behavioral addiction

Meng Xuan ZHANG<sup>1</sup>, Aniso M. S. WU<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Macau, MACAO, China

<sup>2</sup>Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences, University of Macau, MACAO, China

## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Internet gaming disorder (IGD), as a type of behavioral addictions, posed serious threat to the mental health of Chinese university students;
- ❖ IGD is highly prevalent among Chinese university students;
- ❖ Based on the life history theory, IGD may be a manifestation of fast life history strategy;
- ❖ This study aimed to examine whether life history (LH) theory can be applied to understanding the effects of self-regulation processes (i.e., impulse control and goal setting) on IGD.

## METHODS

### ❖ Participants and Procedure-

- 351 Chinese undergraduate students (Mage = 19.33; SD = 1.06)
- An anonymous paper-and-pencil questionnaire.

### ❖ Measures-

- IGD was measured by DSM-5's diagnostic criteria;
- Life history strategies were assessed by K-SF-42;
- Self-regulation was measured by Self-Regulation Questionnaire with two subscales, impulse control and goal setting;
- Demographic information: gender and age.

### ❖ Data analysis-

- Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations was conducted by SPSS 24;
- Mediation analyses was tested using path analysis by AMOS 24.

- ❖ The ethics approval of this study was obtained from the research ethics committee of the Department of Psychology at the University of Macau.

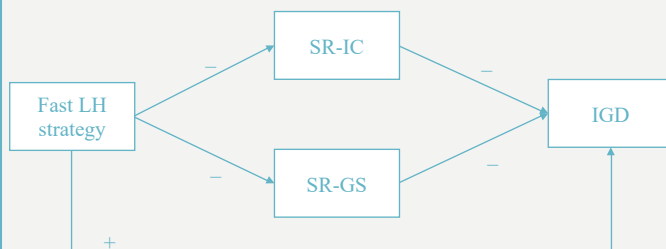


Figure 1 the hypothesized model

## RESULTS

- ❖ The prevalence of IGD was **15.4%**;
- ❖ Males had higher levels of IGD than females;
- ❖ Fast LH strategy were **significantly and positively** related to IGD ( $r = .18, p < .001$ );
- ❖ A **partial mediating effect** of self-regulation processes on the relationship between fast LH strategy and IGD;
- ❖ Only **impulse control** significantly mediated the effect of fast LH strategy and IGD.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Students with fast LH strategy are more vulnerable to IGD;
- ❖ The findings support the application of evolutionary theory to IGD;
- ❖ Future research should examine whether LH theory can be extended to other types of behavioral addictions;
- ❖ Interventions, such as improving impulse control, would be potentially effective strategies for Chinese university students vulnerable to behavioral addictions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONTACTS

### Acknowledgement:

Funding: The research was supported by the University of Macau (Ref #: MYRG2019-00014-FSS and MYRG2020-00106-FSS) and the Specialized Subsidy Scheme for Macao Higher Education Institutions in the Area of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences (21/DSESHSS-UM/2019).

### Poster Presentation:

<https://meeting.tencent.com/dm/vJQrW7yCTgMS>