**Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form**

**Part 1 of the study**

**Study Title:** The psychology of massively multiplayer online role-playing games and self-esteem

**Researcher(s):** Michael Kavanagh, Charlotte Brett and Dr Catherine Brignell

**University email:** [mk7n19@soton.ac.uk](mailto:mk7n19@soton.ac.uk) (Michael Kavanagh’s) and [c.brignell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:c.brignell@soton.ac.uk) (Dr Catherine Brignell’s)

**Consent Form:** Written 06/06/2021, Version 4.

**ERGO ID:** 64224

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and e-mail the researchers if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will need to select/click that you consent to take part in the study at the end of this document.

**What is the research about?**

My name is Michael Kavanagh and I am a Clinical Psychology Doctorate student at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom.

I am inviting you to participate in a psychology study regarding self-esteem and internet gaming. The study aims to understand how self-esteem can influence how people play internet-based games, specifically massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs (e.g. World of Warcraft, Guild Wars and Elder Scrolls Online etc.)).

This study was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) at the University of Southampton (Ethics/ERGO Number: 64224).

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been asked to take part because you are a person over 18 years of age that plays massively multiplayer (many players playing at the same time) online role-playing games (MMORPGs). To be eligible to take part in this study, MMORPGs must be the main type of game that you play and you must play it for 1 or more hours per week. You must be over 18 years of age and be fluent in the English language.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

This study involves completing a number of questionnaires which should take approximately 25 minutes of your time. You should complete the study in one go/sitting. This survey is not fully anonymous as we will ask for your e-mail address. This is so we can enter you into a prize draw for 10 X £20 Amazon e-vouchers. We would also like to invite you to a maximum of two follow-up studies if you meet the eligibility criteria (meaning, you might not be selected to take part in either of the two follow-up studies). If you wish to withdraw your data for any reason, you must e-mail me (Michael Kavanagh at [mk7n19@soton.ac.uk](mailto:mk7n19@soton.ac.uk)) within three weeks of today’s date. When the data is analysed, your e-mail address will be removed from our data holdings and we will not have access to it. We will draw the raffle for the vouchers before December 2021. You can complete this study without entering an e-mail address, however, this would mean that we would be unable to contact you should you win one of the Amazon vouchers and we would not be able to contact you about two possible follow-up studies (so a maximum of two follow-up e-mails).

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

If you decide to take part in this study and complete it, you will be entered into a draw for 10 X £20 Amazon vouchers. Importantly, your participation will contribute to our understanding of potential problems for people who play MMORPG.

**Are there any risks involved?**

It is expected that taking part in this study will not cause you any psychological discomfort and/or distress, however, should you feel uncomfortable you can leave the survey at any time. You can also contact the following resources for support:

United Kingdom based: Contact your GP or call NHS 111 (or 999 if you feel unable to keep yourself safe).

There are also suicide prevention, awareness and support telephone lines you can call internationally. Please see this website for the resource in your country: <http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html>

**What data will be collected?**

The questions in this survey ask for information in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, employment, level of education, nationality, most played online game genre. It will also collect information related to self-esteem, depression, anxiety, how your beliefs about yourself are clearly defined, how compassionate you are to yourself, internet gaming tendencies and motivations for internet gaming. As mentioned above, we will ask for your e-mail address to enter you into a prize draw and to send you a maximum of two follow-up e-mails if you meet the eligibility for two other parts of the study we would like to conduct.

All information collected for this study will be stored securely on a password protected computer and backed up on a secure server. In addition, all data will be pooled and only compiled into data summaries or summary reports. When the data is pooled, all e-mail addresses will be deleted (we anticipate that this will be in December 2021). Only the researchers and their supervisor will have access to this information.

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In accordance with our Research Data Management Policy, data will be held for 10 years after the study has finished when it will be securely destroyed.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

As reiterated above, this survey is not fully anonymous as we will ask for your e-mail address.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to select/click that you consent to take part in the study at the end of this document.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you wish to withdraw your data for any reason, you must e-mail me (Michael Kavanagh at [mk7n19@soton.ac.uk](mailto:mk7n19@soton.ac.uk)) within three weeks of today’s date. When the data is analysed, your e-mail address will be removed from our data holdings and we will not have access to it. This additionally means that all the data collected for the study will be pooled together (this also strengthens anonymity for participants) and we will be unable to identify which data belongs to you.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you. The information collected will be analysed and written up as part of the researcher’s dissertation. It will also potentially be published in a research journal or presented at a research conference.

**Where can I get more information?**

If you require further information please e-mail me (Michael Kavanagh’s at [mk7n19@soton.ac.uk](mailto:mk7n19@soton.ac.uk)).

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research**

Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you have read and understood information on this form,

are aged 18 or over and agree to take part in this survey.

Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you understand that you will not be able to withdraw your data from the study unless you contact us within three weeks from today’s date. It may not be possible to remove your data after this date as your personal information will no longer be linked to your data as it will be pooled with other participant’s data for analysis.

Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you agree to be contacted by e-mail should you meet the eligibility criteria for two follow-up studies (maximum two follow-up studies, therefore maximum two follow-up e-mails).