

## GG (Good Game): How Do Video Gamer Perceptions of Hardware Performance and Isomorphism Influence Consumer Engagement?

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### Abstract

For decades, the video gaming community has passionately debated whether the best gaming experience can be found using a personal computer (PC) or a gaming console (Xbox, PlayStation, etc.). While PCs had superior performance (e.g., speed, graphics, etc.) for many years, console gaming has traditionally been more affordable and user-friendly (i.e., you can move around with the console). Yet today, some experts now believe that the gaming hardware industry is becoming isomorphic. That is, with advances in technology, “the playing field has been levelled,” and gamers should get the same experience whether they are using a PC or a console. If this truly is the case, have gamers noticed? Has it affected their perceptions of the different platforms? Using a cross-sectional survey of 573 gamers, we examined if a gamer’s platform (i.e., hardware) performance expectations directly influenced their engagement, and if this relationship was mediated by perceived hardware isomorphism. Our results indicated that both hardware performance expectations and perceived hardware isomorphism directly influenced gamer engagement. However, isomorphism did not mediate the relationship between hardware performance expectations and engagement. Altogether, we believe that this research will enable gaming platform manufacturers to better position their products, and that our findings will extend the very limited consumer behavior gaming research.

**Keywords:** customer engagement, gaming platforms, hardcore gamers, PC vs. console, platform performance