

Dream and Blog Content Analysis of a Video Gamers Long Term Diary

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For the most part our research studies into video gamers dreams have been collecting dreams on a one time basis as either morning after recall or longer term recall (Gackenbach, et al, 2009). While we have finished a couple of two week dream diary studies, the dream literature also recommends longer term dream diaries be gathered from accomplished dreamers. This is in order to show patterns across time and to facilitate more depth of analysis. We found one such diary with extensive autobiographical information online.

This combination of dream diary with extensive blogs over an 8 year period serves as an ideal case study to examine both consistency in dreams over time (Domhoff, 1996) and the continuity principle as it pertains to media use effects. The continuity principle is typically demonstrated by comparing dream report analyses with different aspects of waking life, including interpersonal relations, environments (e.g. Punamaki & Joustie, 1998), physical health, mood/emotions, self construal (e.g. King & DeCicco, 2007), as well as specific events (e.g. Bulkely & Kahan, 2008).



If you've played lots of video games, you may have that "want" to make your own games. Origins to this started around 1994 when I was actively playing Zeliard. . . I since had the dream of wanting to make a remake of Zeliard. I even had plans on paper (drawings mainly). One world was an ocean world. I had a "dino land" as well where the enemies took hundreds of hits to get it to be taken out.

A long term dream analysis can provide information and better understanding through dreams of the individual. In this type of analysis there must be enough dreams for consistency to be created among dreams. Domhoff (1996) found that in order for consistency to appear in dreams there needs to be between seventy-five and a hundred dreams analyzed.

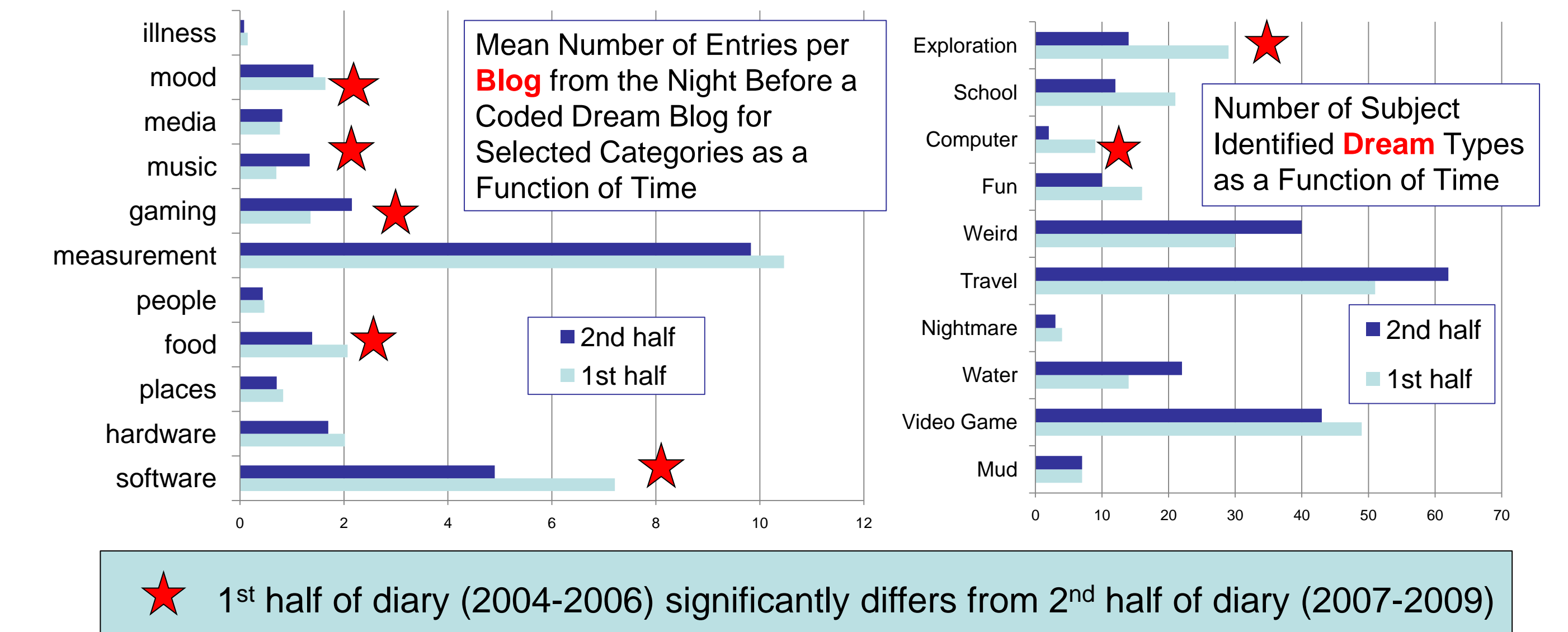
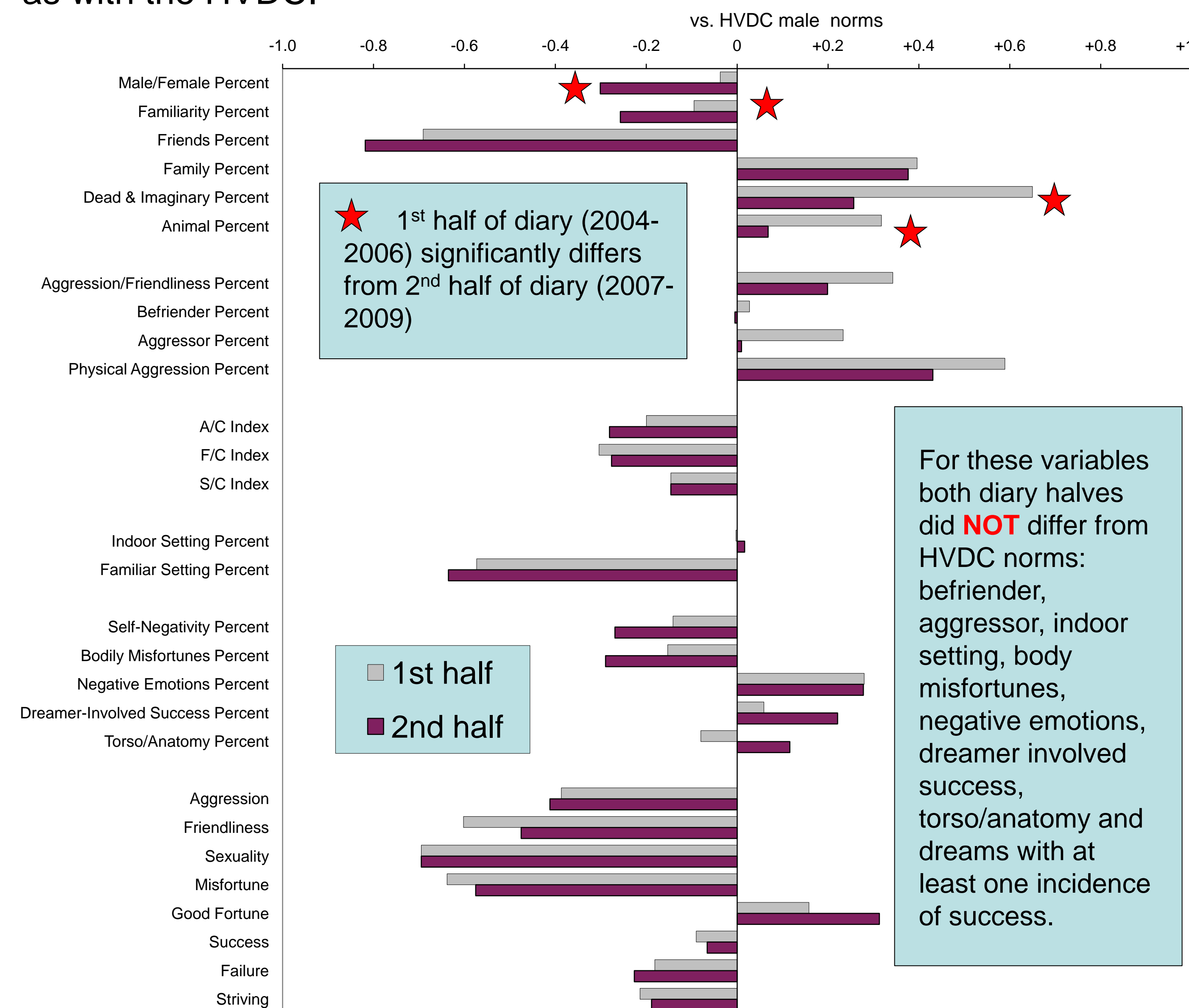
Based upon previous examinations of long term dream diaries, these diary entries were split into two three year periods (Lortie-Lussier, Cote, & Vachon, 2000). Thus time changes were from the first half of the diary for which complete information was available (2004-2006) compared to the second half (2007-2009). Few time changes in dream content are expected. Continuity was assessed by blog/dream correlations. Some correlations are expected to be significant.

Method

This single case study is of a young man's dreams from ages 20 to 25. The dreams in the online diary begin when he was about 12 years old. There have been no inducements nor promises made to this individual but his permission has been garnered and University ethics approval has been received. Dreams (n = 447) were selected from an online archive of 831 dreams at his website as of July 2009. The selection was based upon these criteria:

1. Over 50 words but less than 500 words,
2. With clear date as to when the dream occurred,
3. With blog entry from the night before the dream, and
4. From one of the clearly defined dream categories.

Three student coders from summer 2009 through April 2010 coded roughly every third dream from each dream group. The Hall and VandeCastle (HVDC) system of content analysis was used. Each coder first reached reliability of 80% or more with the same 10 dreams coded by an earlier research assistant on a separate group of dreams. Extraneous comments by the dreamer were highlighted in yellow and not included in the dream coding. All coders were kept blind to anything about the dreamer, other than he was a gamer and had a long term dream diary, until the end of their coding time when each was debriefed. Blog entries were read by the principle researcher and a student assistant. Based on grounded theory, categories for coding each blog were derived from the blogs themselves. These general categories were: computer use, video game play, music listened to, other media mentioned, places went, mood, physical body references, dream recall, measurement and people. Most blog coding was done by act frequency as with the HVDC.



Results

For each dream information was available on judges HVDC content analysis of the dream, blog content analysis of the day before activities, dream type and dream liking. Selected results are portrayed in graphic form. The Hall and Van de Castle h-profile bar chart is in the previous panel. Dream coding is compared to male norms and split in half by time. The next set of bar charts, above, portray the dreamers classification of his dreams as a function of time and the blog coding as a function of time.

Also available on this diary website is the dreamers own evaluations of how much he liked each dream along several dimensions (i.e., weird, scary, fun, scenery, story, nature of, and general). There were no time differences in these evaluations and they showed consistency across categories excepting nightmares and weird dreams which were not liked.

Of all my dreams, this dream was the most fun of them all as well as the most beautiful. . . no other dream comes as close to as good as this one in how good it is. This dream has awesome-looking scenery and yet, it's remarkably in tact! . . . I'm in a machine that can walk through mud. I jump down from a building and let the machine sink in the mud. I then make the machine walk around in it. You also fought others by throwing mud at each other (a mud fight, but under control by the staff). This was quite fun.

Discussion

Two questions were asked of this single case, have the subjects dreams changed over time and is there evidence of the continuity principle in this online dream/blog diary. There are few changes over time with the judges HVDC analyses, only four subscale time changes and all were with characters which could be seen as demonstrating developmental consistency. The dreamers own evaluations of his dreams and his classification of dream types across time changed little. There were some time changes, however, in the judges coding of the blogs. Of the 10 night before waking blog categories, half showed time differences. There was little support for the continuity principle except for dream characters. Finally, as covered in the paper and in another IASD presentation, this young man has OCD which is most evident by the prevalence of measurements in the blogs. One previous study examined OCD dreams (Sauteraud et al, 2001). While they found no control/OCD group differences, some were found here.