September 14th 2020

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Aalborg University (AAU)
Culture, Communication, and Globalization (CCG)
Master of Arts (M.A.)

The barrier of entry for casual players

-

An in-depth analysis on video game elements' effect on casual players

Supervisor

Karina Madsen Smed, Assoc. Prof.

Master's Thesis

10th Semester in Autumn 2020

Handed in by:

Jørgensen, Michael Kaul

Student no. 20143902

Larsen, Michelle

Student no. 20180712

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the struggles, which casual players face when consuming video games. Casual players are the largest group of consumers of the video game industry, while the hardcore players are the largest consumers of video games. The distinction between the two is that casual players play games occasionally, while hardcore players play several hours a week, or even a day. The casual players can face challenges when playing games, due to not being game literate. This project aims to identify the issues that casual players face, by analysing each element of the video game design. This is achieved by our research design, which entails observing and interviewing casual players, while they are playing three chosen video games. These were chosen based on their respective genres, tutorial approach, and different control schemes. This allows the research to determine what effect each element has on the casual players' overall experience with video games, and their consumption of them. The utilisation of Deci & Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination theory, and Zillmann's (2000) Mood Management theory serves to identify how the video game elements affect casual players' motivation and mood state. This is achieved by analysing whether the casual players are driven by intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, or amotivation. The types of extrinsic motivation found to be motivating for the casual players are 'identified regulation', and 'external regulation'. In other words, when the casual players are extrinsically motivated, they play to achieve goals or to achieve different types of rewards. The findings show that casual players feel competent and more self-determined, when consuming games, whenever these incorporate simple and intuitive video game elements. Contrarily, the casual players are less motivated to consume games, when faced with complex and unintuitive video game elements. Furthermore, it is discovered that casual players are mainly more self-determined than hardcore players. This means that their main motivation to play games have been defined to be their desire to consume games for the enjoyment factor alone. Therefore, video game developers must incorporate intuitive game elements, while encouraging the casual players to utilise the options at hand. This makes it difficult to capture the attention of the casual players in the first place.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The video game industry has been around since the late 1960s, and has become one of the largest entertainment industries, with up to 2.5 billion gamers around the world. The video game industry is, according to statistics by the company WePC, worth 90 billion U.S Dollars as of 2020 (Conroy, 2020). Due to its massive reach across many types of consumers, and the amount of revenue the industry brings in, the video game industry cannot be ignored. However, despite the vast amount of players around the world, there still seems to be a high barrier of entry into this industry and community. According to Matthew Kato, and his forum post on the website Gameinformer, there are several types of barriers to overcome before one can successfully enter the gaming cultures. He describes the high cost it takes to acquire a gaming system, and the games themselves, and how time consuming it is to become proficient enough at playing games to get any satisfaction out of them. The time-consuming part is what is of interest here, since he goes into details on how much effort and dedication it takes to acquire any satisfaction with games, whether it being completing them or just having casual fun (Kato, 2013). Additionally, several forums also describe these types of issues that prevent inexperienced gamers to fully immerse themselves in the virtual world of games. For instance, one forum post describes the high reliance on good motor control, and the ability to multitask with a high reflex time. The argument encompasses the idea that the video game media is the most difficult entertainment medium for newcomers, which is in contrast with entertainment mediums like movies or music. All that is required for these mediums are ears and/or eyes to enjoy the experience at hand, whereas video games can require more complex abilities, like reflexes, precise eye-hand coordination, multitasking, and a high skill level to enjoy them. These abilities are not inherent in every individual, since it comes with practice, and a continued consumption of the video game medium to master ("*The high barrier of entry to video games*", 2014). However, as Kato (2013) pointed out earlier, the ability to master these skills, which are occasionally needed for the enjoyment of video games, takes a vast amount of time and commitment that not every individual possesses.

These barriers are being perceived as an international issue, due to the several forum posts discussing it, and well-established video game genres being developed to generate an easier entry into the games. An example of this can be the fighting game genre, which is notoriously known

for being difficult for new players. This genre has been known in the video game community to be unforgivingly hard towards new players, but the developers behind them have made an effort to make them friendly for newcomers (Zissou, 2019). As Matt James (2018), who is literate in the gaming culture, describes, fighting games are becoming friendly for new players, as seen with recent fighting game releases (James, 2018). The same can be said about other genres in the video game industry, which in turn can be argued to be a sign that the barriers of entry have been too high in the past, and are being changed to fit inexperienced players.

The introduced barriers can be argued to prevent casual players from fully enjoying the medium, and potentially decrease their consumption of video games. As this project will dive further into later, there are different types of players, who each have their own culture. A casual player, as being defined by Sundbo and Darmer's (2008) Audience model, is a type of gamer that plays video games occasionally for the sheer entertainment value, while a hardcore player consume video games for several hours a day to prove themselves, and to achieve something aside from just having fun (Sundbo og Darmer, 2008, pp. 38-39). Therefore, there is a distinct difference between how a casual player behaves, in terms of consumption practises and the way they interact with video games, to how a hardcore player behaves. The intercultural dimension, therefore, reflects on the disconnect between the casual and the hardcore player. This will be explored by analysing casual players' experiences with video games of different genres and elements. Moreover, the casual players will also be analysed to identify what they potentially struggle with, and whether they would be willing to consume more video games, therein eventually enter the hardcore gamer culture. With this in mind, the goal of this study is to analyse casual players' experiences with different genres of video games. Furthermore, we want to examine which elements within the game that motivates them to keep playing and consume more video games, and what elements interrupt their enjoyment of the games, and subsequently the medium it belongs to. These interruptions can be in the form of too difficult challenges, or information not being conveyed properly for the player, which can lead to a negative experience. As Andrew Przybylski, Scott Rigby and Richard Ryan (2010) discuss in their study on motivational factors within video games, and the negative repercussions that can occur when experiencing failure, is that video games can cause frustration if the players do not live up to the challenges presented in them. They further state that failure will spark a feeling of frustration and anger, no matter what activity is at hand (Pryzbylski et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that newcomers to video games can easily

become frustrated and angry at the video games at hand, when experiencing failure. Consequently, if the newcomers experience too much failure in video games, then these experiences will affect their consumer behaviour negatively. This study intends to conduct research upon consumers' motivation to play games, and subsequently continue to consume them, based on the motivational patterns that games can provide. Video games provide their consumers with tasks and rewards for completing said tasks, which sparks motivation for the player to keep completing tasks and gaining rewards in the process (Banyte & Gadeikiene, 2015, p. 506). However, games can be complex in the tasks they set before the player, hence making the experience frustrating and thereby making the player stop before finding the motivation to keep playing (Pryzbylski et al., 2010).

The motivation aspects of video games is not the only major part that will be analysed. The other aspect is the initial tutorial that is being presented to the player at the beginning of any game, to prepare the players for the experience ahead. The tutorial section of any game is the developers' chance to introduce the game's core controls and design elements, hence making an intuitive, interactive and informative tutorial for new players. According to the School of Game Design (n.d.), a tutorial needs to be engaging and informative to catch the player's attention at the start of their gaming experience. If a tutorial fails in this endeavour, then the player will either be lost or might skip the tutorial in its entirety, and hence be confused on what to do next ("*How to make a good video game tutorial"*, n.d). Therefore, this study will also examine the tutorials in the games that will be chosen for the analysis, since much of a new player's frustrations stem from the lack of information and understanding of a game's core mechanics. As the School of Game Design (n.d.) states: *"If a player skips your tutorial, you've failed as a designer because you've wasted resources making your game less engaging for the player."* ("*How to make a good video game tutorial"*, n.d, no page).

Despite the high popularity of video games, there are still some barriers that interfere in the enjoyment of these. As mentioned before, these barriers can be the time consuming nature of video games, the lack of motivation to continue based on the lack of competence, and the tutorial section itself not providing enough information for the player to enjoy the game. These barriers and aspects within the video game industry leads to the core issues that will be analysed during this study. The following problem statement will summarise the previously mentioned elements into a concise research question.

Problem formulation

This study focuses on how people themselves experience playing different video games. By examining this, it is possible to gain an understanding of how the design of the video games influence the players. This will allow us to determine factors that work as motivation, as well as possible problem areas, which might decrease the motivation to keep playing (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2013, p. 9).

Our aim with this project is to examine what effect the different elements of video games have on casual players, and how these either motivate or demotivate the players in connection to consuming video games. Furthermore, we want to outline possible initiatives that could be taken to improve the experience, hence motivating the players to keep consuming.

Based on the above-mentioned, our problem formulation is as follows:

> *How do the different elements of video game design affect casual players' game experience, and their consumption behaviour?*

As already mentioned, the word 'affect' covers how the elements either motivate, or demotivate casual players. Furthermore, it also emcompasses the effect on casual players' mood state, either positively or negatively.

The next paragraph will entail a definition of different terms that are used throughout this project, herein clarify what is meant by the terms used in the problem formulation.

Definition of terms

Video game design and video game elements

In this project, the term, 'Video Game Design', will be utilised to explain the overall design of a video game, i.e what elements constitute the particular design of a video game. When referring to 'Video Game Elements', these entail; gameplay being action oriented or relaxing, storytelling approaches, graphics, rewards, tutorial approach, and control schemes. These elements combined, dictate what video game design is in this project. Therefore, we utilise these terms when describing the various factors, and elements within video games, which can have an effect on the interviewees, hence constituting what video game design works and what does not. The video game elements will be analysed and examined in terms of their effect on the interviewees.

Consumption behaviour

In this project, the term 'Consumption Behaviour' refers to the interviewees' particular consumption behaviour in regards to what and why they buy video games. It does not refer to their general consumption behaviour when purchasing commercial goods, but rather when they purchase video games in particular. Therefore, when using this term, it is utilised to describe, analyse, and examine the participants' motivations and reasoning behind their consumption of video games.

Players

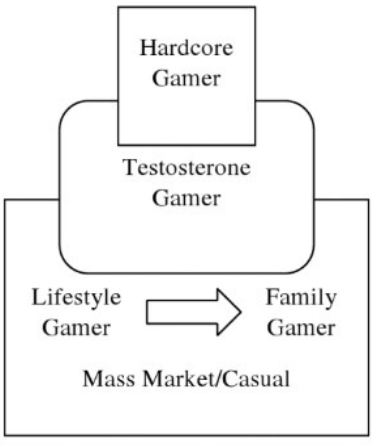
Throughout this project, the term 'Players' will be used to describe the consumers of video games. In other words, it is individuals who buy and play video games, and, therefore, is a consumer within this specific industry. To narrow down the group of consumers, we have chosen to call them 'players', as we are only interested in the group of individuals, who are video game consumers. The sub-group of players, who are the focus of this project, is referred to as casual players. Throughout this project, we will define a distinction between hardcore players and casual players, as they are found to be the main groups of video game players. Exactly what constitutes these types of players will be explained by using the 'Audience model' in the next section: 'Type of Players' (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). This 'Audience model' utilises the term 'gamer'. However,

we have chosen to utilise the term ‘player’ instead throughout this project. These two terms are synonymous, and even though we utilise the ‘Audience model’ to explain the difference between casual and hardcore players, we prefer the term ‘player’ instead of ‘gamer’.
The next paragraph will explain, in great detail, the difference between a casual player and a hardcore player by using the ‘Audience model’. This will provide an understanding of the different kinds of consumers, who belong to these two types of players.

Type of players

In this project, we distinguish between the well-established terms ‘casual players’ and ‘hardcore players’. To explain this distinction, the ‘Audience Model’ is utilised. As we can see from the model, players are divided into two main categories, namely the casual players and the hardcore players, which have some subcategories. While hardcore players are more loyal towards the gaming industry, the casual players are the biggest group of consumers (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). This project, therefore, wants to examine how video games can engage more casual players, hence incentivising them to increase their consumption of video games.

Audience Model



(Sundbo & Darmer, 2008, p. 38)

The Audience model has been created by Bateman and Boon (2006). This model divides individuals, who play video games, into different categories of players. Therefore, the model can be used to determine what type of player people are, and how they consume video games. The model is divided into two main categories: hardcore players, and casual gamers (where testosterone gamers are found) (Bateman & Boon, 2006, p. 21). Hardcore gamers are characterised as *"(...) they buy and play a lot of games, they are gameliterate, they play games as a lifestyle preference or priority they are turned on by challenge, they can be polarized."* (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008, p. 38). On the other hand, casual gamers are characterised as:

> (...) they play few games, they have little knowledge about game conventions, they play to relax, or to kill time, they look for fun or an experience, they are inherently disparate (they can not easily be polarized). (Sundbo og Darmer, 2008, p. 38).

In other words, hardcore gamers know the language of the different games, they have played a lot of different games and genres and, therefore, have a familiarity with them. Hardcore gamers are also able to convey their knowledge to other gamers and they play to achieve an experience. Casual gamers, on the other hand, are seen as game-illiterate. This means that they view games as a fun activity and a way of relaxing, while not paying close attention to the different design elements within the game. The casual players represent the biggest consumer group, and are considered to be the majority of this market. The difference between the two, when looking at consumption, is that the hardcore gamers are more easily convinced to buy the same type of games. Furthermore, hardcore gamers search for games that are challenging, and consider the gaming activity to be a part of their lifestyle and/or identity, where casual gamers are searching for games that are purely entertaining and fun to play (Sundbo og Darmer, 2008, pp. 38-39).

Furthermore, the casual gamers can be divided into 'Lifestyle gamer', 'Family gamer', and 'Testosterone gamer'. Lifestyle gamers want simple controls and to have a fun experience. This means that they do not want the games to be so challenging that it prevents them *"(...) from progressing through the games they play."* (Bateman & Boon, 2006, p. 22). Additionally, the lifestyle gamer would be more prone to choose games that are less likely to be embarrassing to play. What this means is that the lifestyle gamer would not play a game that was targeted towards kids or would contain elements that would prove embarrassing to his or her peers. Therefore, in

contrast to the hardcore gamer, lifestyle gamers are more aware of the specific games they decide to purchase, whereas the hardcore gamer would buy any game that seems interesting to them, regardless of potential embarrassing elements in the games. The lifestyle gamer enjoys good and thoughtful story elements in games, similarly to the family gamer, but less intensive. Family gamers are parents, who purchase the games for their children, or play the games themselves in their spare time. The requirement for this group of gamers is that the control schemes are extremely simple, and that the games provide entertainment (Bateman & Boon, 2006, pp. 21-22). These games will typically be games developed by the game company Nintendo, due to their specialty being developing games made for the enjoyment of families. Games like *Wii Sports*, which was the best selling game of its system, the Nintendo Wii console, is designed with families in mind. As of 2020, *Wii Sports* is the fourth best selling videogame of all time, according to global sales numbers. This shows that games that appeal to families, rather than the conventional gamer like the Lifestyle or hardcore gamer, can be very successful (Sirani, 2020). As the Audience model suggests, the hardcore gamers are buying games despite the control system and difficulty, where the casual gamers' consumption patterns are more based on entertainment games that provide a simple control system and is not too complex (Bateman & Boon, 2006, pp. 21-22). As displayed in the model above, the testosterone gamer resides in the middle between casual and hardcore, and rightly so, since the testosterone gamer shares the same characteristics. The testosterone gamer is fixated on specific game elements, such as player versus player functions, and prefers games with guns, cars and explosions. This type of gamer would find great enjoyment in the fighting game genre, due to its fixation with player versus player action. Games with a fixation on narrative and puzzle solving elements would not be preferred by this type of gamer. The characteristics, which the testosterone gamers has in common with the hardcore gamers, are that they welcome the different challenges that games can present to its players, but not to the same degree as the hardcore gamers. Complex game elements and control systems are not barriers for the testosterone gamers' enjoyment. Their taste in games can occasionally correspond with casual gamers' taste, since those games can contain guns and cars, while also having good story elements and an easy to grasp control system (Bateman & Boon, 2016, p. 22). This project will focus on the main categories: casual players and hardcore players. The reason for this choice is that the subcategories mentioned are too intertwined, i.e. they overlap easily due to their similarity in characteristics. On the other hand, casual and hardcore gamers are very distinct in their characteristics, since they share little to

no characteristics based on their behavioural patterns. Therefore, hardcore players are used to provide a contrast to casual players, which is the group this project is focussing on.

The following section will provide an overview of the history of video games. It is crucial to dive into the history, as it provides us with some background information of this industry, and how games have evolved throughout time. It further allows us to examine the elements within video games, and how they impact the players today. Moreover, a brief introduction of video game trends, and the developers of different video games are presented.

The history of video games

> Video games let us experiment with chance and probability, and partake in complex strategic interaction, and allow us to simulate things that cannot (or that we do not wish to see) happen in real life. They do so by tapping into our desire for spectacle and our thought-provoking willingness to submit ourselves to strange and arbitrary rules for the sake of entertainment. (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 57).

Early stages of "*games*"

People have played games for several thousands of years, starting with what is believed to be the first game called *Senet*, which is very similar to backgammon. Games have taken on many forms like dice, board games, war games, fantasy literature, role-playing, and so on. Perhaps the most prominent example of the culmination of game creation in the early ages was the Olympic Games, where rules and scores were a primary factor in creating games for the olympics. Here, activites, such as swimming and running, were assigned with rules and scores, hence making them games, which leads to the argument that we, as human beings, want to make games. Henceforth, several different types of board games were created, most notably the tabletop game: *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974). The game *Dungeons & Dragons* is a role-playing game (RPG) that features medieval objects and locations, such as wizards and swordplay, to create an immersing experience

for players to implement their imagination into. Since the introduction of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and its huge success, the RPG genre has continued to be positively received, which has sparked the creation of more board games in the same genre with different twists. However, electric games, also known today as video games, were on the rise after the release of *Dungeons & Dragons*, which sparked the early creation of computer role-playing games, such as *Zork* (1980), and *Adventure* (1976). These two games were text-based, meaning that the games would set up scenarios to the player in the form of texts, and the player must respond to the scenarios to continue with the game. These games were heavily inspired by the design elements of their board game counterparts, by implementing complex storytelling, and the sense of progression through experience points. Therefore, the early developments of board games and RPGs resulted in the creation of video games, since many elements of the board games were carried over to said video games (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, pp. 53-57).

The beginning of "video games"

The reason for describing the early stages of games themselves, was to provide a sense of how games have evolved and developed throughout time, culminating in the digital space. However, the creation, other than the popularisation of video games, did not start with the aforementioned *Zork* and *Adventure* titles, but more so with the famous video game: *Pong* (1972). Video game historians would argue that the success of *Pong*, a game that simulates table tennis, was the start of video games becoming popular, instead of being projects to display technological fidelity. The official displays of technological fidelity started with *Spacewar* (1962), which demonstrated the advanced possibilities in video game development. This can be argued to culminate with the success of *Pong*. Henceforth, video games were being mass produced to arcade machines, and home consoles throughout the early 1980s. While sales and production numbers looked stellar for the industry, games were not being made in great quality. Therefore, they were rushed to the market, which led to the infamous "crash" of the video game industry with the release of *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) for the Atari 2600 home console (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 67). The game was to be released for the holiday seasons, in an environment of games already being rushed through production and contained poor quality optimisation. Therefore, when the anticipated "*E.T"* game was released in the same, if not worse, state as its fellow video game

counterparts on the Atari 2600 game system, the game became an industry failure, which caused the crash of the video game industry. Additionally, video game consoles were less valuable than the rising popularity of the home computer, which had more games to offer, with higher quality. The video game console side of the industry ceased to exist until the Japanese company, Nintendo, released their revolutionary title, *"Super Mario Bros"* (1985). This brought the popularity of the game console back to the forefront of the industry, and assisted in making the video game industry as big as it is today. From this point on, video games continually gained major profit, hence incentivising the implementation of major budget plans for upcoming games, to ensure great quality and excellent experiences, as to not experience the same "crash" of 1983-1985. It is also important to mention, before moving on to the next section, that the difficulty of early video game products have been perceived to be high. Players, who started their video game learning experience early, are more likely to be adept at undertaking new challenges in the modern games, than new players. As Justin Pot and Jason Fitzpatrick (2018) explains in their summary of old Nintendo games: *"If you're old enough to have played games in the 80s or early 90s, you'll remember that they were hard: really damn hard."* (Pot & Fitzpatrick, 2018, no page). Players, who adapted to these old and difficult games, could be argued to be more well-versed in the linguistics of video games than new players. The linguistics of video games can be the different button inputs in specific games, and what they typically translate to in the games themselves (Pot & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Therefore, the next section about the history of video games will describe the current trends in the video game industry, and decipher the implications of these trends with experienced and inexperienced players.

Modern trends in the video game industry

As mentioned in the previous section, modern video games could be argued to be easier to play for players, who began their gaming hobby early, due to their vast knowledge of the language within video games. Additionally, video games in the early 90's were notoriously difficult for many players, which made them able to adapt to their difficulty, hence recognising the same design elements in other games and being prepared for them. The same cannot be said about players, who decide to get into the video game community in present times, since they arguably would not be familiar with the linguistics of video games and their repeating design choices. The design choices can be a button on a video game controller, which typically represents the ability to jump or

confirm an option in video games. These trends and tendencies are not familiar to inexperienced players. However, modern games have made great efforts in making video games as accessible to any type of player as possible. The increased accessibility in the fighting game genre was described in the beginning of this project, as an example of the increased effort in making commonly perceived difficult games more accessible. However, there is a change that is more apparent. As Pot and Fitzpatrick (2018) described with the early era of Nintendo games, and their reputation for being difficult, these games were difficult in their design and offered little to no help in figuring out how to play the games in an efficient manner. They were difficult based on their design choices, for example dying in one hit, or with the 'clunky controls', meaning the controls were not fluent and difficult to control (Pot & Fitzpatrick, 2018). This trend from Nintendo games is certainly not the case anymore. As Gene Park (2020) states in their post on The Washington Post:

> Games made in house by Nintendo (called "first-party" games, as opposed to other "third-party" studios) are very deliberately and laboriously designed to appease players of all levels. (Park, 2020).

Here, Park (2020) argues that games made in house at Nintendo are very accessible to newcomers, hence they should pick Nintendo's gaming console and their respective games. Considering the statement made by Pot and Fitzpatrick (2018), this is a significant change since the early 90's, since Nintendo has put in a great effort in making their game catalogue accessible to newcomers and families. However, Park (2020) also points out the difficulty that can occur when starting one's gaming hobby, saying: *"(...) becoming a gamer can seem like a difficult challenge."* (Park, 2020, no page), while pointing out the massive catalogue of games and the various buttons on the controllers. While Nintendo can be considered to be doing the best at making their games as accessible as possible, other gaming companies, like Sony and Microsoft, have also made an effort to expand their audience with easily accessible games. Their standard game franchises, like *Halo* (Microsoft) or *Final Fantasy* (Sony) have been made more forgiving for newcomers to the community and the franchise (O'Rourke, 2012). Several other games in the modern era have received this treatment, but some still strive to retain the difficulty that was present in the old ages of video games. Notoriously, video games from the company *From Software* are designed to provide a difficult challenge for their players, and are not meant for newcomers. These types of

games stand out from the recurring trend of making games easily accessible. However, *From Software's* latest game, *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* (2019) was deemed too difficult for casual players to enjoy, who requested an option to make the game easier. This was met with controversy from the gaming community, more precisely the hardcore players, since the game was designed to be difficult to complete, which then becomes a challenge to overcome (Webb, 2019). This scenario is an example of the recent trend of video games becoming more accessible for newcomers, and games meant for hardcore players are deemed non-accessible for newcomers by their design. These can be argued to be ends of a spectrum, where Nintendo games are for newcomers and games, like *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* (2019), are for experienced hardcore players. Thus the question becomes, what about the middle area of the spectrum? Park (2020) argues that the PlayStation 4 console, produced by the company Sony, contains a varied catalogue with games for different types of experiences. Sony offers major game franchises like *God of War* and *Uncharted,* which Park describes as: *"Those games aren't the most friendly for beginners, but they set the bar for quality."* (Park, 2020, n no page). These types of games can be perceived as being too difficult for newcomers, but they offer unique experiences in terms of storytelling and characters, if newcomers are willing to dive into these types of games (Park, 2020).

The next paragraph will explore the literature that was found on the subject of video games, motivation, and consumption, herein how other scholars have conducted research on this topic.

Literature Review

During this section, written literature surrounding the subject of the video game industry, and the consumption of said subject, will be examined and reviewed to distinguish the differences in their approaches from ours. As previously mentioned, this project will focus on the motivation to keep playing and consuming video games, and which elements within the video games are prone to inspire motivation and improvements to consumers' mood levels. Therefore, the literature that is reviewed will be studying the same subject, albeit from different perspectives and utilising different methods.

User experience in video games

When surveying existing literature regarding the subject area of video games and casual players' motivation to keep playing and consuming this type of product, several relevant articles came to our attention. These articles provide insight into current knowledge about the subject, but also provides an idea as to what kind of knowledge is missing from the subject of video games. Therefore, our project aims to fill this knowledge gap by combining motivational studies, mood management theory, and the experience of casual players who consume popular video games. The first article that will be reviewed, discusses the video game medium, and its ability to educate its players through its unique game elements. The article is titled *'An approach to evaluating the user experience of serious games',* and is written by Jonathan Moizer & Jonathan Lean et al. (2019a). The immediate difference to our project is their usage of 'Serious Games' as their main subject for analysis. Serious games are different from 'Entertainment Games', which will be the subject for analysis in our project, since serious games' main objective is to educate its players through training and skill development (Moizer, et al., 2019a). Serious games aid players in learning how to obtain a certain skill, which can be an individual skill or a social skill, through different goal-oriented activities. The objective of the study is to analyse the players' experiences with serious games, while describing how to best approach such a task. The player's experience becomes separated into different categories, which tangles with different elements of the games in question. These categories can be how challenging the games are or how competent the players are at fulfilling the tasks at hand. They concluded the study by assessing the effectiveness of their

approach to analysing the player's experience with serious games, and how to improve upon said approach (Moizer et al., 2019a).

This study, in regards to method and aim, is like our study, since both attempt to tackle the method of analysing user experience in the context of games, serious and entertainment. However, the angle of approach and desired conclusions are different, since their study aims to construct an effective method to analysing user experience, while our study aims to understand what game elements incentivises players to continually play, and further consume more products from this medium. By analysing video games as potential education tools, a gap develops in knowledge, since our project aims to analyse the entertainment value in video games, and what obstacles might appear to interrupt our casual players' enjoyment and motivation to further consume. As mentioned previously, casual players are the biggest group of the market, and incentivising them to consume more video games is profitable for the video game industry. Therefore, we aim to identify the obstacles that prevent casual players from consuming more video games.

Motivation to play games

Analysing video games as a tool for educating players, and developing skill sets through serious games, have been studied by several researchers and scholars, but what about the entertainment side of video games? What kind of game and design motivates players to consume them, and what captivates the players to continue playing? These questions are what we and these scholars are trying to answer, although they are trying to answer that question from an industry perspective. The book, called *'Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses and Consequences'* (2006) edited by Peter Vorderer and Jennings Bryant, contains a chapter that discusses the motivations behind why players choose to play certain games, and what types of players play for what purpose. The chapter is called: *'Why People Play Games: An Industry Perspective',* and is written by G. Christopher Klung and Jesse Schell, and discusses the motivations behind playing games. Their first goal is to identify specific player attributes that culminates into a kind of player identity. These can be identities, such as 'The Competitor' or the 'The Storyteller', which aids developers in identifying what motivates these types of players to play which types of games. However, these identities have been defined through analysing the gaming market by paying attention to which types of games

are massive successes, and what game elements are most popular. The element that seems to be missing here, is the interview and personal questioning of the players in question, to gain a better understanding of their motivations for playing said video games. As an example, our players did not respond accordingly to these identities, when asked why they play video games. The majority thought that the video game medium was an excellent way to kill time, while having a good experience. Only a few of them fit into one or more of these identities. The gaming market is arguably useful when painting a picture of players' consumption habits and choice of games, but does not provide the psychological aspects behind these habits. Therefore, this gap in knowledge is being filled through our project due to our focus on interviewing our players, and analysing their responses in accordance to our psychological theories. Additionally, Klung and Schell's (2006) chapter can be argued to focus mostly on players, who possess the habit to play more often than casual players. Therefore, it mostly provides insight into the habits and motivations of hardcore players, while ours provide insights into the casual player group, which is a necessary type of knowledge considering the amount of casual players that are on the market. They further discuss the different elements of video games that players can dive into. Some players share the desire to escape into the virtual world, or to experience something that they are familiar with (Klung & Schell, 2006). These motivations for playing games can be argued to be associated with hardcore players, as casual players, as far as our analysis goes, mostly desires to have a good time, while not trying to immerse themselves in familiar environments or escape into a digital world. Therefore, our study aims to understand the culture of casual players and their motivation to play games, and how different elements can affect their motivation and consumer practises.

Motivation and Addiction

The previous two articles dealt with methods of gathering data through user experience within the subject of education and skill development, and the motivation behind playing games in the first place, albeit from an industry perspective. This article resides in the medical field, since it discusses the heavy subject of addiction, and the harms that comes with it. Aviv Weinstein (2010) wrote the research article, named *'Computer and Video Game Addiction - A Comparison between Game Users and Non-Game Users'.* He argues that video game addiction could have similar symptoms as drug addiction. Therefore, his aim is to examine whether individuals, who are addicted to

narcotics, share the same behavioural traits as individuals, who are addicted to video games and computers (Weinstein, 2010). His method was to study ex ecstasy users, and healthy control subjects, while they are playing a motorbike game, and analyse their dopamine levels during their gameplay experience and after. The gameplay aspect was utilised to observe their responses to reward systems in the video game. This is conducted to determine if there were any changes to their dopamine levels. He concluded that there was no difference in the ex ecstasy users, while there was a 10% reduction in the healthy control groups' dopamine levels. This signifies that the previously addicted users have a low sensitivity to rewards, due to being stimulated psychologically during the addiction. Therefore, he concluded that users, who have an addiction, show a reduced response to rewards of any kind compared to healthy users (Weinstein, 2010). The significance of this study, compared to ours, is that the motivation to play video games can be taken to the extreme, hence possibly turning into an addiction. Weinstein's (2010) study mentions that video game addiction can affect a users' mood, behaviour and sense of natural rewards, in a negative way (Weinstein, 2010). Our study also aims to analyse our casual players' responses to rewards in video games to determine their effects on our participants' mood and behaviour. Additionally, their consumer behaviour and mood state will also be discussed and analysed in this project, which is similar to Weinstein's (2010) study in the medical field of addiction. There are a plethora of studies and articles discussing the effect of video game addiction, and how to prevent it. However, the gap in knowledge can be argued to be the elements within video games, and how these can have a negative or positive effect on consumers' behaviour and mood, which is what this project aims to determine. In other words, there are other elements than rewards in video games than can potentially have an addictive effect. We seek to examine how these other elements influence the behaviour and mood of our casual players.

The utilisation of websites as credible sources

Throughout this project, there will be references to several sources that originate from websites, blogs, and news outlets. The reason for utilising these types of sources was due to the lack of relevant knowledge from academic sources. As mentioned previously, the majority of academic literature, regarding video games, was based in certain subject areas, such as education and addiction, which would not prove much use for this particular project. Therefore, website sources

served as a way to gain relevant insight into the gaming culture. The validity of these unacademic sources is based on the authors' experience and dedication to the gaming culture, its trends, and current news within the gaming culture. Additionally, this project is studying consumers of the video game culture, which means it makes sense to utilise sources made by consumers of said culture. Therefore, we have deemed these sources valid and reliable. Furthermore, the authors of said sources have a relevant education within the field of gaming, such as marketing or computer design, and/or they have many years experience with video games.
Academic scholars can be argued to not be as familiar with the interior of the gaming culture, as these authors are, since the authors are players themselves, hence finding great interest in the overall gaming culture. It can be further argued that this project's existence becomes more relevant, as there is a research gap within this field of knowledge. The knowledge of casual players' motivation to play games, and how each element affects their mood states, motivation, and consumption behaviour is relevant in the current environment of academic literature. Therefore, this project utilises these website sources to gain a greater understanding of the current trends and events that are happening in the gaming culture.

The next section will describe the chosen theories for this project. These are the Self-Determination Theory, which deals with the motivation, competence and autonomy of our casual players, and the Mood Management Theory, which discusses how one's mood can be affected by the chosen media product, and how it can affect one's consumer behaviour.

Self-determination theory

Definition and explanation

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination theory, also known as SDT, is a motivation theory that we will utilise to examine the factors influencing gaming motivation (Lafrenière, Verner-Filion, & Vallerand, 2012, p. 827). SDT fundamentally believes that people's innate psychological needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence can be used to understand human motivation. These needs are viewed to promote well-being, psychological growth and internalisation (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 227). Relatedness refers *"(...) to the need to experience community and be connected to other individuals and collectives in some form or another."* (Neys, Jansz & Tan, 2014, p. 197). This means that individuals desire to interact with other individuals, while performing any activity. Autonomy refers *"(...) to the desire to self-organize experiences and behavior and act in accordance with one's own sense of self."* (Neys et al., 2014, p. 197). Being autonomous means that an individual is in control of their actions and goals. Competence refers to *"(...) the need for challenge and to experience one's own effectiveness."* (Neys et al., 2014, p. 197). This means that any individual has a desire to challenge oneself, and thereby overcoming this challenge or obstacle by being competent.

In SDT, there is a distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. For example, intrinsic motivation is categorised as autonomous motivation in that individuals *"(...) engage an activity because they find it interesting (...)"* (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334), i.e. they are doing it voluntarily. Contraily, extrinsic motivation is categorised as controlled motivation, i.e. when an individual is engaging in an activity, because they are being pressured or feel they have to. This contrast can be used to identify to which degree an individual's action is controlled or completely voluntary (Gagné & Deci, 2005, pp. 333-335). When an individual is intrinsically motivated it means that an activity is performed, simply because they find it interesting. Furthermore, the individual finds satisfaction from the activity. On the other hand, when an individual is extrinsically motivated, it

> (...) requires an instrumentality between the activity and some separable consequences such as tangible or verbal rewards, so satisfaction comes not from the activity itself but rather from the extrinsic consequences to which the activity leads. (Gagné & Deci, 2005:, p. 331).

Intrinsic motivation is considered to be the most self-determined form. This type of motivation is associated with activities that people choose intentionally, because they find these activities interesting, hence they find satisfaction and pleasure in performing them. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), behaviours that are controlled by intrinsic motivation, are *"(...) based in people's needs to feel competent and self-determined."* (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233). SDT further believes that to maintain the intrinsic motivation, an individual has to have the needs for autonomy and competence to be fulfilled. Furthermore, Deci & Ryan (2000) suggest that whenever an extrinsic reward is presented, then people have a tendency to feel as if they are being controlled by the presented rewards. Therefore, people will feel like they are controlled by their surroundings, instead of being in control, therein shifting the behaviour from an internal to an external behaviour. In other words, extrinsic rewards are perceived to undermine an individual's autonomy. In regards to competence, the belief is that positive feedback will enhance the individual's intrinsic motivation, as opposed to no feedback, while negative feedback in turn will decrease the intrinsic motivation. The reason for this is that when an individual receives positive feedback, then it is implied that they are competent. Relatedness plays a minor role in maintaining intrinsic motivation, because individuals also enjoy doing things alone (Deci & Ryan, 2000, pp. 233-235).

This theory offers a multidimensional perspective, by letting one explore both the level and the type of motivation. This is useful in the subject of video games, since individuals can also be motivated to consume a plethora of different video games for an extensive period of time. Therefore, the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be utilised to examine players' motivation to play and consume games. For instance, intrinsically motivated players consume games for the pure enjoyment of it. This means that the players are intrinsically motivated when they play a video game just to enjoy themselves and explore the universe. In other words, they play for the pleasure and thrill of the game. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to *"(...) engaging in an activity as a means to an end and not for its own sake."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 827). This means that the players are extrinsically motivated when they play not merely for the pleasure, but rather to achieve something positive, like rewards and items in the game, recognition

from other players and friends, and so on (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 827). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), there is a third type of SDT motivation, namely amotivation. This type refers to *"(...) the relative absence of motivation either intrinsic or extrinsic."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828). This means that the players do not care about whether they get rewards or even why they are playing. In other words, they have no motivation or intention to participate in certain activities. Individuals who are amotivated, may have begun playing for a particular reason that is of no interest to them. An example of this could be that they play with a friend, and keep playing despite not having any aspirations or reasons to keep going, other than to appease the friend (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828).

In terms of the level of self-determination, we can position these concepts on a continuum ranging from a high level of self-determination to a low level. Intrinsic motivation is viewed as having higher levels of self-determination, followed by extrinsic motivations, and then amotivation as being the motivation with the lowest level of self-determination. The extrinsic regulations can also be ranked from highest level of self-determination to lowest. The types existing here are integrated regulation, identification regulation, introjection regulation, and external regulation. This means that if an individual moves further to the left on the continuum, then the behaviour of the individual is controlled by external forces. Figure 1 hereunder illustrates the SDT theory with all its aspects of extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and amotivation (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828 + Vallerand, 2000, p. 312).

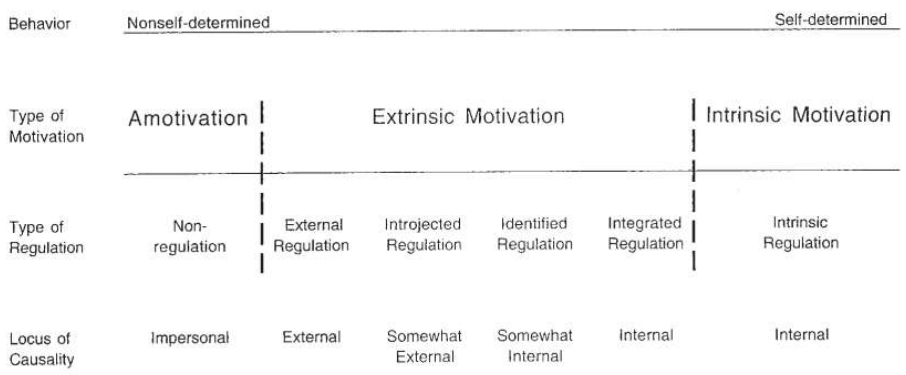


Figure 1. *The self-determination continuum, showing the motivational, self-regulatory, and perceived locus of causality bases of behaviors that vary in the degree to which they are self-determined.*

(Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237).

As mentioned earlier, within extrinsic motivation, SDT proposes four different types: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. External regulation refers to *"(...) behaviour regulated through external means such as rewards."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828). This means that the player's main motivation is to obtain rewards and other external benefits. Introjected regulation refers to *"(...) the regulation of behaviour through internal pressures such as anxiety and guilt (...)"*. (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828). This means that the players will be restless and easily irritable when they do not play. Identified regulation refers to how *"(...) people engage in a behaviour based on its perceived meaning or its relation to personal goals even if the activity is not pleasant in itself."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828). With this type of extrinsic motivation, the players will play purely by their own choice to achieve some personal goals, or as a way of creating friendships through online gaming. Integrated regulation *"(...) entails engaging in an activity out of choice."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828), and *"(...) the regulation becomes part of a person's habitual functioning and part of the person's sense of self."* (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828). This means that playing the game is more than just an activity, as it is ingrained in the person's life and personality, and connected to specific life goals. For example, game designers belong to this type of regulation, and are thus viewing playing video games as a way of life (Lafrenière et al., 2012, p. 828).

Behaviour that is intrinsically motivated is autonomous. However, certain types of extrinsically motivated behaviour is deemed autonomous as well. This means that extrinsic motivation *"(...) can vary in the degree to which it is autonomous versus controlled."* (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334). As the continuum suggests, external regulation and introjected regulation is classified as controlled motivation. The next type, identified regulation, is also classified as controlled motivation, but can in some instances give a feeling of autonomy to the individual. The reason for this is that the behaviour is controlled by personal goals, which means they feel somewhat more self-determined. The last type, integrated regulation, is the one extrinsic motivation, which is classified as autonomous motivation, in that the individual is well aware that their behaviour is such an integral part of who that individual is, i.e. making them self-determined (Gagné & Deci, 2005, pp. 334-335).

SDT used in this project

SDT is a broad theory, meaning it can be applied to many different domains. For example, this theory has been used in the domains of health (Sheldon, Williams, & Joiner, 2003), education (Standage, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2006), work environment (Gagné & Deci, 2005), and sports (Mallett, Kawabata & Newcombe, 2007). As we can see, this theory is widely used in various domains, as it can easily be applied to different aspects due to its general motivation framework.

The self-determination theory is overall used in this project to determine what motivates the interviewees in question to play video games. In other words, it is used to measure an individual's type of motivation. This means that we can identify what kind of motivation on the self-determination continuum that drives the casual players. In other words, if they are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. These findings can then be compared to the type of motivations, which the participants themselves told us they were driven by, to see whether or not they coincide. By analysing whether the interviewees, who are all deemed casual players, are mainly driven by intrinsic, extrinsic, or amotivation, we can examine what kind of barriers these interviewees face when playing video games. Therein providing an insight into how to capture this group of consumers.

Furthermore, we can then analyse how autonomous and controlled the participants are, by the different elements of video game design. With this data, we gain a better understanding of how to capture the casual player consumer group. For example, if they are mainly extrinsically motivated, then developers have to focus on implementing elements, which consumers will feel motivated to do. This could be through implementing rewards, if the consumers feel pressure to collect these (Gagné & Deci, 2005, pp. 333-335).

As mentioned earlier, SDT believes that the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence need to be fulfilled for an individual to be self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The theory will be applied to the analysis in two ways. The first way is used to analyse how autonomous the casual players are, i.e. if they are mainly driven by controlled or autonomous motivation. This is accomplished by measuring different elements that have an effect on the player's motivation, such as rewards. The second way is used to analyse how competent the casual players feel during the gameplay. The issues of relatedness is only used as a small part, in that we have not implemented the element of social gameplay. However, the issues of relatedness is explored in connection to competence, as this may have an influence on whether the players would prefer to play the games

with others, due to a lack of competence. With this information, we can gain insight into how to capture the casual players' attention and increase their consumption within the field of video games. Moreover, we can measure what kind of barriers casual players experience when playing video games. These barriers can prevent them from having a good experience, which in turn will provide insight into the reason why casual players choose to consume or not consume video games. The goal with using SDT in this project is not to say being self-determined is better than not being self-determined. It is simply a way to examine what and how the different elements of video game design motivate the casual players to consume.

SDT theory is used in connection with the mood management theory, which is a consumption theory, and will be elaborated in the following section. These two theories have been chosen, as they compliment each other due to one's mood being closely tied to one's motivation, as we hypothesise.

Mood Management Theory

Definition and explanation

As consumers, the amount of different media products that are available for consumption can become overwhelming. Therefore, consumers tend to choose the media product that will ensure an increase in their overall mood and pleasure levels. This is where the mood management theory becomes relevant, since it focuses on the concept of hedonism and the pursuit of pleasure. According to Dolf Zillmann (2000), the mood management theory revolves around *"(...) people, in their seemingly continual efforts at improving affective and emotional experience, follow a hedonistic impulsion toward pleasure maximization."* (Zillmann, 2000, p. 103). Consumers, in relation to this theory, are in search of specific media products that will in turn increase their mood and overall pleasure. They will usually gain this result by consuming entertainment products, such as movies and video games, but some may also gain pleasure from consuming media that tries to educate its consumers. These choices, made by the consumer, are motivated by the desire to minimise negative emotional states, such as anger and sadness, by consuming media products that stimulate emotions, such as happiness and comfort (Zillmann, 2000). Zillmann (2000) defines the motivation for consuming specific media products to be that consumers will constantly stimulate

their current hedonistic needs. They are constantly in pursuit of maximising pleasure (Zillmann, 2000, p. 104). Zillmann (2000) applied this theory to the selective-exposure methodology, which describes the process of choosing specific media products to stimulate or satisfy hedonistic needs. A study was conducted by Zillmann to discover the effects that entertainment oriented media products had on the respondents. The initial result showed that respondents, who were currently bored, seeked out programs that would eliminate their state of boredom by choosing exciting programs over non-exciting programs.

The mood management theory is useful when discussing the consumption of media, but it has also been effective in other areas of potential stimulus of one's mood. As Leonard Reinecke (2016) describes, individuals have tried to spark stimulation in other activities than media exposure. This can be achieved by exerting themselves physically to the point of satisfaction, or a change of scenery. However, these options take time and physical exertion, which makes media consumption more preferable for many individuals to achieve their hedonistic needs. Media has the ability to create a symbolic type of stimulus by simulating exciting scenarios and story elements in movies, tv-shows and video games to its consumers. This means that they do not have to search for that type of stimulus in the real world. As stated earlier, this theory assumes that individuals consume media products based on their current mood, and not a carefully thought out process. The opposite side of this assumption is the Uses and Gratification approach, which describes the consumers as being thorough and precise when choosing their media product to consume. They are aware of what they desire to consume, and therefore search for it to become gratified in their choice, whereas the mood management approach assumes that individuals are not necessarily aware of their motivation behind the media they consume. That decision is driven by their current mood state. If they are feeling bored or sad, they will, sometimes while being unaware of it, search for any media product that will minimise that noxious mood state (Reinecke, 2016).

Now that the consumer's side of this process has been defined and explained, it is now appropriate to explore the media product's side. The consumer's mood state is not a singular factor in this process. As Reinecke (2016) argues, consumers' patterns of media selection, according to their mood, has to be established in the first place, and that is the media's role in this. Media products are designed to spark some type of stimulus in it's consumers, whether it being a comedy movie, designed to make one laugh, or a horror game, designed to make you scared and anxious. If the

media products were not designed in this manner, consumers would not be capable of creating preferences in their choices, depending on the mood they want to be in. Therefore, Reinecke (2016) has broken the media products down into four separate dimensions, which describes the factors that make them successful in stimulating consumers (Reinecke, 2016).

These dimensions describe the media products' own innate potential to stimulate the consumers in question. The first dimension deals with 'Excitatory Potential', which is the element of media products, which are designed to deliver visual messages that can spark a sense of arousal. As Reinecke (2016) describes in his example:

> Whereas calm and relaxing media stimuli (e.g., nature films or slow music) reduce the level of arousal, exposure to other forms of media content (e.g., action movies, or erotic content) leads to increases in arousal. (Reinecke, 2016 , p. 2).

Media content that contains a high amount of action stimulates consumers more than its low action counterparts.

The second dimension revolves around the potential of 'Absorption'. When done correctly, this dimension becomes vital in altering media consumers' current state of mood, since the media content is able to absorb their consumers into their virtual world, making the consumers forget the origin of their noxious mood state. Therefore, the absorption potential of media content is highly effective at altering mood states (Reinecke, 2000).

The third dimension can be argued to be less effective than the previous one. 'Semantic Affinity' is the concept of media contents sharing similarities between said content and the current mood of the consumer. An example could be that a potential consumer experiences sadness, and chooses to consume media that is designed to stimulate a similar emotion, hence making it difficult to alter the concurrent emotion of sadness. However, the same argument can be made in the positive end of the spectrum, where sadness is being replaced with happiness and excitement. In this case, the sense of happiness will end up being optimised by consuming happy messages within media content. The results regarding this potential devolves into the fact that media content, which shares similarities in its messaging with it's consumer's current emotion, will not have an altering effect (Reinecke, 2016). The fourth and final dimension of media content is the 'Hedonic valence'

potential. Here, the media content is capable of maintaining positive moods by utilising positive hedonic association in its messaging. Examples of this would be comedic intended content, which is designed to make their consumers happy, hence terminating negative moods in the process. The opposite is also the case when watching tragic portrayals in movies or video games, which are meant to have a negative hedonic effect on their consumers. Here, it depends on the hedonic needs of the consumer, when choosing media content, whether to satisfy the need for negative or positive media content (Reinecke, 2016).

Mood management used in this project

As per definition, this theory is relevant when discussing the motivations behind consumers' media consumption patterns, and the media products they choose to consume. In the case of the current study, video games are a popular media product to consume. Therefore, it is relevant to identify the motivations behind the choice of consumption in regards to this particular media product. The different potentials, described by Reinecke (2016), serves to narrow down the specific factors of the video game in question that appear to have an effect on our respondents. By combining the concept of motivational factors and the mood altering effects of video game media, it is possible to identify the variables that make our respondents feel a certain mood, and what potentially motivates them to play more.

Methodological framework

Ontological and epistemological considerations

This section will explore the philosophical position of this project. In other words, it will examine and discuss the ontological and epistemological considerations throughout this research and explain why this project employs the research philosophy of interpretivism.

When starting a project, one must think about *"(...) how social reality should be studied."* (Bryman, 2016, p. 17). According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), a research study is all about *"(...) developing knowledge in a particular field."* (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2009, p. 107). The ontological and epistemological stance, i.e. the philosophical position of the research, is how we develop that knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). This means that when conducting a project, every researcher has to be aware of the research philosophy used when designing the project. In other words, the ontological and epistemological stance influence how the research question is designed, and how the research is carried out. (Bryman, 2016, pp. 28-30).

Ontology refers to what we study, i.e. the object one investigates. In other words, it is how the nature of reality fits together, and how we as researchers make any sense of it (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 21). Epistemology refers to how we know things, i.e. how we obtain knowledge of the social reality (Blaikie, 2019, pp. 101-102). In other words, it is concerned with what constitutes as acceptable knowledge. Ontology and epistemology is used as a way of studying the world that we live in. This can be obtained through many different views, for instance positivism, interpretivism, and the humanistic approach (Della Porta & Keating, 2008 + Saunders et al., 2009, p. 119).

These philosophical stances can be arranged on a continuum, where positivism and interpretivism are seen as opposites. For instance, positivism is regarded as the approach of natural science, as it believes that the world can be observed objectively, in that the values and viewpoints of the researcher does not influence the studied phenomena. Moreover, positivism focuses on law and causality, and believes that the findings can be generalised (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, pp. 23-24 + Saunders et al., 2009, p. 119). The problem formulation of this project is: How do the different elements of video game design affect casual players' game experience, and their consumption behaviour? To answer this, we need to understand the interviewees' own perceptions of video games. In other words, how the interviewees are motivated to keep consuming the product of video

games. Therefore, this project employs the view of interpretivism. This means that the focus is on interpreting the actions of human beings, and how they view their social world. In other words, the aim of this project is to understand why people behave the way they do. Furthermore, there are two kinds of interpretation at play when employing this type of stance: *"(...) the researcher provides an interpretation of others interpretations."* (Bryman, 2016, p. 28). Interpretivism believes that to understand an action, one must first understand the meaning behind that action. This means that the researcher needs to interpret what the actor/actors are doing, and why they are doing it. Interpretivism also recognises that one has to account for the researcher's point of view. In other words, the interpretation taking place is dependent on the researcher's values and concerns, and can therefore not be completely objective. Furthermore, interpretivism recognises that objective, as well as subjective, meanings are connected. However, it is not possible to understand a social phenomena without exploring how the individuals view the social world (Della Porta & Keating, 2008 + Schwandt, 2003, pp. 295-297).

An important part of interpretivism is that for us as researchers to understand the research subjects' different point of views and their world, we need to venture into the social reality of our subjects (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). Interpretivism further believes that every human being is a social actor, who each play different roles in the social reality. These roles are interpreted both by the social actor themselves and by others. What is important to note is that these interpretations are influenced by one's *"(...) own set of meanings."* (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). This means that the world is socially constructed, and that one cannot investigate a phenomena without the interpretation being influenced by one's own values and perceptions of the world (Saunders et al., 2009, pp. 115-119).

In the next section, the choice of research design will be presented and discussed.

Qualitative research design

This project is structured around a qualitative research design. The aim of this research is to examine how the elements of video game design motivate casual players and their consumption practices. To do this, we need to understand the point of view and perspectives of the casual players. In other words, we need to interpret how the casual players view the social world in regards to playing video games. Qualitative research is about seeing *"(...) events and the social world through the eyes of the people they study."* (Bryman, 2016, p. 393). Additionally, it is a way

for us to study the needs, meaning, desires, behaviour, and choices of consumers and the reason behind these. On the other hand, quantitative research embodies the natural sciences, in which quantification is preferred, and where the social reality is viewed as something that can be studied and measured objectively, i.e. without allowing the beliefs and perspectives of the researchers to interfere. For instance, if we consider the epistemological and ontological considerations of positivism and interpretivism, then quantitative studies tend to turn to positivism, where qualitative studies tend to turn to the other side of the spectrum, like interpretivism and social constructionism. When choosing a research design, it is possible to either employ one of these approaches or a combination of them, referred to as a mixed methods research. However, in this project, we are only concerned with interpreting the participants' actions and how they interpret their social world. Therefore, we have chosen to employ a qualitative research design (Kozinets, 2002, p. 62 + Bryman, 2016, pp. 31-34).

In the following section, the methods, which have been used to collect the required knowledge, will be described.

Method

When performing qualitative research, there are a lot of different methods to choose from, which can be used to study consumers. These various methods all provide the research with different perspectives, and is selected based on their ability to answer the research question. According to Kozinets (2002), the most popular methods within qualitative research are focus groups, interviews, netnography, and ethnography (Kozinets, 2002, p. 61-62).

The data-collection methods used in this project is a combination of participant observation and interviews. Together they can provide the necessary data to answer the research question, which will be explored in greater detail later in this section. These two methods allow us to observe the obstacles, which the participants experience, while playing video games. Thereby, letting us gain a better understanding of the elements that either contribute positively or negatively on the interviewees' motivations towards consuming video games. How these methods are used in this project, and why they are used, will be described in more detail in the following section.

Data collection method - Interview

When performing an interview in qualitative research, there are two main types, namely the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview. With the unstructured interview, it is primarily the interviewee, who is steering the conversation. In this case, the interviewer usually has one or two questions, and then allows the interviewee to control which topics are covered. The interviewer still has the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, if needed during the interview. With a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a certain list of topics that needs to be covered, but the interviewee still has a *"(...) great deal of leeway in how to reply."* (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). This means that the interviewer often has prepared a script with questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation. This is accomplished by designing an interview guide, which is a list of questions. The interviewer still has the freedom to ask follow-up questions in response to the answers from the interviewee. Therefore, the conversation can still take an unexpected turn, providing the interviewer with new insights and topics. With an interview guide, the interviewer can make sure that the interviewees are asked the same kinds of questions in a similar wording, which ensures that the same kind of data is collected, while still leaving room for new topics and ideas to be discovered. This project employs a semi-structured interview method. This is chosen to ensure the required topics are covered, while gaining the interviewees' perspectives on the experience of playing video games. Furthermore, it allows us to ask questions based on the observation. This means that we can clarify how the participants behaved during the observation. The data collected with this method is the participants' perspectives on a specific topic (Bryman, 2016, pp. 466-469). In this project, this means we will be able to collect casual players' thoughts and opinions on how different elements of video games motivate them, as well as explore their consumer behaviour.

Another possible method we could have employed here is a focus group. A focus group involves a couple of participants, who are all being questioned at the same time. By using this technique, the researcher can provide the group with a specific theme or topic, and have them discuss this amongst themselves. With this approach, the researcher is both interested in what is being said, as well as how the individuals discuss the specific subject *"(...) as members of a group, rather than simply as individuals."* (Bryman, 2016, p. 501). The primary usage of a focus group is to explore how individuals respond to the other's points of contention. Additionally, the research also includes studying their interactions. Furthermore, this method provides multiple views to a certain

issue or topic, and it is interesting to explore how one individual might change his/her opinion based on the discussion of the group. In this project, a focus group could have been employed to discuss the participants' viewpoints on which elements motivate or demotivate them to play video games. By employing this method, the data collected is the participants' potential to begin discussing new themes and venture into the area of other elements, which have an effect on why casual players stop playing video games. A potential problem with employing this method could be the participants not being able to recollect their previous experiences with video games. For instance, if it has been a while since the participants themselves have played a video game, then they might not remember why they stopped playing. Furthermore, they might not realise which elements propose a problem, or which elements motivate them to keep playing. By requesting that the participants play different video games right before they are interviewed, then the experience is fresh in their minds, and it allows us as researchers to observe things that the participants themselves might not notice or realise (Bryman, 2016, pp. 501-503).

The interviews were divided into four sections. Before the observation of the participants playing selected video games, the initial interview was conducted. This interview was used to gain insight into who the participants are, and what their experiences with video games are. Afterwards, the interviewees were asked to play three different video games, which will be explained in further detail in a later section. The interviewees were asked to play one game, which then was followed by an interview regarding their experience with this video game. Thereafter, the interviewees were asked to play the second game, followed by another interview about their experience with that particular game. Lastly, the interviewees were asked to play the third game, and was thereafter interviewed about their experience with this game. However, in the last interview, the interviewees were also asked to compare all the played video games. This setup allows us to follow up on our observations from each played game. The questions asked consisted of the premade interview guide, and specific questions based on the observations. This is where the interview becomes flexible, in that the interviewees were not necessarily asked all the same questions throughout the interview (Bryman, 2016, pp. 466-469).

The first interview guide:

- How old are you?
- What is your nationality?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your experience with video games?
- Why do you play video games?
- How many hours do you play video games on a weekly or monthly basis?

The second Interview guide, whose questions are asked after each played game:

1. What was your experience with this video game? What was frustrating/what was not frustrating?
2. Is this a video game you would play yourself in your spare time? Why/why not?
3. What did you find most appealing about this game?
4. What did you find least appealing?
5. Was the tutorial sufficient in explaining how the video game works/was to be played?
6. Could the tutorial have been made better? If yes then how so?
7. Did you find the control scheme easy to use?
8. Did you care about obtaining the rewards in the game?
9. What did you think about the story being told here?
10. You think the story disrupted the game play flow?
11. (After all the games have been played) Which type of video game did you like the best and why?

These questions are designed based on themes, which we defined before conducting the interviews. These themes are as follows:

The themes, which the questions are based on, are:

- The motivation to keep playing
- The role of the tutorials regarding competence
- User experience with the video games/ Voice of opinion for future consumption practices
- The effects of story on one's mood

These themes will be utilised as a framework to analyse the motivations and consumption behaviours of the interviewees. This research employs a deductive theory approach. This means that theories and a hypothesis were chosen before collecting the data (Bryman, 2016, p. 21). In other words, these are based on initial inspiration from other conducted research within this field. Furthermore, the theories were firstly found, where the hypothesis was defined and constructed with the chosen theories in mind. This means that the collected data serves to test the hypothesis (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 26). When searching for theories, we found theories on motivation, mood and consumption, which defined our hypothesis to revolve around these aspects. We hypothesised that most video games are made for what we call hardcore players, i.e. the game developers expect the players to know the different control schemes, and various game elements beforehand. Additionally, we believe that this makes it harder for the casual players to enter the gaming culture. Therefore, the themes were found before collecting the data, and were used to construct the questions. The themes were found by locating different elements within the three video games, which we deemed to have an impact on a player's motivations, mood and consumption behaviour, based on our own personal experiences with video games.
In the next section, the use of participant observation as a method will be explored.

Data collection method - Participant observation

The second method this project employs is participant observation, and to some extent ethnography as well. These are two terminologies that are difficult to distinguish between, because both entail the researcher *"(...) immerses him- or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour (...)"*. (Bryman, 2016, p. 423). In ethnography, the researcher can also emphasise on the culture of the people he/she is observing. In this project, the aim is to examine the behaviour, as well as the culture, to determine what factors influence the motivation level of the casual players. When employing the research methods ethnography and participant

observation, we can discuss there being "*(...) both a research process and the written outcome of the research"*. (Bryman, 2016, p. 423). In other words, the researcher takes field notes about what he/she observes. In this project, the preferred terminology is participant observation, because often participant observation is viewed as a method of data collecting under ethnography, according to Bryman (Bryman, 2016, pp. 423-424).

This research method has been modified for this project. In this case, the 'extended period of time' will entail observing people one on one for a couple of hours. Therefore, our knowledge of them will be collected through four interviews. Participant observation does though let us observe the behaviour of the participants, while they are playing the different video games. This is conducted with as little interference from the researchers as possible. However, the researchers do interact to the extent that it is necessary, for instance changing the game, telling the players how long to play, helping if they are showing a lack of progression. In other words, the researchers are minimally participating observers, where observation is not the only source of data collecting. In this case, it is followed by an interview (Bryman, 2016, pp. 434-437).

Furthermore, we gain an insight into the game playing aspect of the culture of a casual player, which is further examined with an interview. It should be mentioned that the social setting is not a natural one. This means that we, as researchers, are constructing a specific setting, and asking the participants to play selected video games, while we observe how they react to different challenges to determine the motivational outcome. Within the method of participant observation, one technique is widely used for data collection, namely field notes. Field notes are a way for the researcher to remember and record *"(...) key words, phrases and actions uttered and undertaken by the people you are investigating."* (Gibbs, 2018, p. 40). These field notes are crafted either during the observation or shortly after. Therefore, field notes are messy and unstructured. Furthermore, field notes are the researcher's interpretations of the world. This means that, while field notes record what the participants have said and done, they also represent how the researcher has interpreted the action, the words uttered, and the body language. Later on, these field notes are transcribed into full field notes. These will provide insight into how different factors have a negative or positive effect towards one's motivation level. Field notes in this project will document facial expressions, words expressed, frustration levels, gratifications, and so on (Bryman, 2016, pp. 440-444 + Gibbs, 2018, pp. 40-41).

Another possible method to use in qualitative research is netnography, which is ethnography conducted over the internet, and is developed by Kozinets (2002). In other words, it utilises the research techniques of ethnography, and adapts them to studying online communities and their cultures. The main benefits of employing netnography is less time is being consumed, and the researcher can study the communities without them knowing he/she is there. Furthermore, online communities are available to everyone, and the researcher can, therefore, easily enter the community. Similarly to ethnography, the aim is to identify the needs and the reasons for certain behaviours of the community members. Netnography was highly considered in this project. The possible data collected with this method would be a large variety of different opinions, given there are a lot of online gaming communities. Furthermore, the members of the online communities would not know they were being observed, and therefore they would not hold back on providing their true beliefs and opinions. The reason why this method has been deselected is that the data collected would have been from both casual and hardcore players. The online gaming forums are not divided into casual player forums and hardcore player forums, and we can not control what group the information is from. Therefore, it is not suitable to employ netnography, as a way of measuring which elements casual players face when playing video games, and how that influences their motivation to either stop playing or keep playing. Moreover, this project focuses especially on how well the tutorial of a game is teaching the players how to play the game, in that the participants are only playing the tutorial part of the games. When utilising participant observation and instructing the participants to play particular games, we can experience how the different elements of the video games influence the motivations. The benefits with this method is that we can observe how the participants react, i.e. their body language, how they talk, their mood, and what they say. Henceforth, the process can be followed up by an interview that allows us to explore the reason behind these behaviours. Therefore, participant observation is deemed the best method to use in this project (Kozinets, 2002, pp. 61-66).

Because we are asking the participants to play selected video games, as well as interviewing them, we, as researchers, take on an overt role. This means that the participants are aware that they are being observed, and what the purpose of the study is. The advantages are that we do not have to consider ethical problems, such as the participants not consenting to being observed. On the other hand, it can possess problems in that the participants are more likely to adjust their behaviour, when they know they are being observed (Bryman, 2016, pp. 425-427).

Sampling

This section covers the criterias for the sampling of the participants for this project. The type of sampling used is purposive sampling, where the unit of analysis is people, who are interested in playing video games. This means that the participants have been selected based on certain criteria to ensure that the individuals are relevant in answering the research question. The participants all have different key characteristics, such as cultural background; sex; age; national background; and different experiences with video games, which will provide different perspectives to the project (Bryman, 2016, pp. 407-408). The interviewees have been sampled based on the requirement of them being casual players, meaning they play for fun and to kill time, as well as have little knowledge about game conventions (Sundbo og Darmer, 2008, pp. 38-39). Another requirement is that the participants have an interest in playing video games, but that they are not experts in the field, i.e. are hardcore players. Furthermore, we wanted to interview both women and men of different nationalities to include various cultural backgrounds. The interviewees consist of individuals between the ages of 20-35 years old. The reason for this age restriction is that we wanted to examine the consumption patterns of young adults. This is based on our assumption that this group has more consumption freedom. Meaning that they have their own income and can spend it as they choose. In this project, we have interviewed seven individuals. Two of them are male, while five of them are female. Six of these interviewees are Danish, while one of them is German.

From the collected data, we can establish that data saturation has been achieved. This means that no new findings or themes were discovered, and interviewing more participants was not deemed necessary. Saturation was already achieved after the first five interviewees, but a couple more interviews were conducted to ensure that saturation was in fact achieved. As these last two interviews did not provide any new findings and different point of views, we did not include more participants. Furthermore, we have found casual players of various degrees to represent the whole spectrum of casual players. This means that we have players, who only play a couple hours a month, players who play every other week, players who play weekly, and players who play a lot per week, (Bryman, 2016, pp. 412-417).

In the next section, the choice of transcription and type of coding will be explored.

Transcription and coding

Transcription

Transcription is the process of turning interview recordings, observations and field notes into a typed copy. The purpose of this is that many researchers find it *"(...) much easier to work with textual transcriptions of their recordings."* (Gibbs, 2018, p. 18). Furthermore, a transcription is an advantage when coding the data collected, which makes it easy to locate the themes. A transcription is also useful due to the researcher not having to rely on his/her memory of the different interviews. Moreover, a video recording will usually take longer to analyse when searching for a specific sequence in the interview (Gibbs, 2018, p. 18).

For the data in this project to be easier and quicker to analyse, the interviews will be transcribed. Furthermore, the keywords scribbled down during the observations are also transcribed into full field notes. All the interviews are recorded with the permission from the participants. The advantage of this is that one does not have to recall the interview by memory, and therefore are able to collect direct quotes and reflect on what is being said. Each recording is then transcribed, creating an easily readable version. A transcription in a project with multiple group members ensures that all members interpret the data the same way. Transcriptions are, after all, about how the researcher interprets what is being said, both spoken words and the tone of voice (Gibbs, 2018, pp. 18-20).

There are different strategies one can employ when conducting transcriptions. The researcher can choose to transcribe the entire interview, or just parts of the interview, leaving out unnecessary information that has no relevance in answering the problem formulation. For example, if the interviewee strays away from the subject and ventures into a story with no relevance to the topic of the project. During this project, the interviews and field notes have been transcribed with the strategy of leaving out unnecessary information that has no relevance to the analysis (Gibbs, 2018, pp. 20-21).

In the following paragraph, the strategies employed when conducting coding are discussed.

Coding

Coding is a way for the researcher to extract meaning from the collected data. Furthermore, it makes it possible to explore how the participants differ from each other on similar issues, and how they might discuss topics in different ways. Concept driven coding was employed in this research. This means that a codebook with a collection of codes (thematic ideas) is conducted before the

coding of the collected data. The opposite of concept driven coding is data driven coding, where the codes are discovered within the collected data and not beforehand. In this project, a collection of certain themes were defined, and utilised to construct the questions that were asked during the interviews. If the interviewees were to present new themes that are relevant in this project, then data driven coding would be employed. However, this was not the case with our interviewees, who did not present any new themes (Gibbs, 2018, pp. 61-62 + Bryman, 2016, pp. 584-586).

After collecting the data, thematic analysis was somewhat employed, as the data was searched for new themes. Coding brackets were used at each paragraph to identify the different concepts, which makes it easier to scan for new emerging themes. Furthermore, these were used to compare how each interviewee responded to the same question. The outline of the analysis is based on the established codes, which assist in answering the research question. (Bryman, 2016, pp. 584-586 + Gibbs, 2018, pp. 54-60).

The following part of our methodology section will describe the three chosen video games, which the interviewees played.

The selected video games

This section will provide an introduction to the three selected video games, and the reason why they were selected. In other words, the following will explain what type of video game the three selected games are, what they are all about, how they can be useful in this research, and what they are each used for.

Final Fantasy VII: Remake

Final Fantasy VII: Remake (Square-Enix, 2020) is a role playing game, which was remade from the original outing of Final Fantasy VII, back in 1997. It was originally released for the first PlayStation, and the remake was eventually released for the PlayStation 4. Final Fantasy VII: Remake tasks the player to assume the role of Cloud Strife, an Ex-SOLDIER equipped with a giant sword to dispose of the enemies at hand. The game takes place in a highly technological wonder of a city called Midgar. Here, reactors are sucking resources out from the world's core, to provide electricity for the citizens of Midgar. However, by using all of the world's resources, the planet will become weaker to the point of dying. Cloud Strife’s objective is to arm a time bomb on these reactors at the end of the level. This task was given to him by an Eco-terrorist group named

AVALANCHE, who wants to destroy the reactor to preserve the world's resources. The gameplay has been developed from the third-person perspective, meaning the camera is positioned behind the character, which allows the player see the action unfold from a wider viewpoint. Additionally, it allows the player to observe their character in action, and gain a closer connection to the character they are role-playing as. This design choice combines well with the hectic action during the combat sections, where Cloud is fighting multiple enemies at once. Therefore, the third-person perspective is helpful in granting the player a wide perspective, to gain an idea as to what is unfolding in front of their character (Square-Enix, 2020).

Due to our interviewees primarily playing the tutorial sections of the chosen games for this research, a description of the types of tutorial within these games is necessary. For Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the tutorial can be coined as 'Tutorial by Exposition', which pauses the game to explain to the player how the game works (Suddaby, 2012). As Paul Suddaby (2012) describes this type of tutorial to be: *"This is the easiest type of tutorial to implement (not counting the tutorial that doesn't exist) and one of the least effective."* (Suddaby, 2012, no page). What is being argued here is that this type of tutorial can be hard to execute correctly, due to the nature of pausing the flow of the game to provide long passages of text to the player about its mechanics. The consequences of utilising this type of tutorial design can be argued to be the player losing their sense of immersion, and that the player does not fully understand what the game is attempting to explain. By pausing the flow and action of the game to provide exposition on the game's mechanics, it will cause a split between gameplay and the explanation about the gameplay, since they do not flow organically together. In the case of Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the game pauses whenever a new element of gameplay is being introduced, to explain to the player how to execute them properly. However, as soon as the game resumes, the player might have forgotten what the game just explained to them, which can be a frustrating experience for the player (Suddaby, 2012).

This is the story setup for the tutorial section of the game, and our interviewees will be playing this section while being timed. The reason for this is due to the excessive uses of cutscenes, which are scenes that pauses the game flow to provide story exposition. By timing the players, they will, hopefully, not become too tired or fatigued by playing for a prolonged amount of time. Due to the game belonging to the RPG genre, the game rewards the player with experience points, to level up Cloud Strife and his allies, to get strong enough to overcome the challenges the game presents. This element of the RPG genre is a necessary element in most games within this particular genre.

However, the RPG genre is a difficult genre to describe and define, due to the seemingly endless types of RPG games that are available today. The main definition, which a majority of individuals, who enjoy the experiences granted by the RPG genre, agrees upon, is the possibility to role-play as a fictional character in a fictional world. By assuming the role of a fictional character, the player is free to explore the world within the game, and hence make choices that structure the game into the player's liking. These choices make the game unique for each player consuming it, since they are essentially experiencing their own story (Hitchens & Drachen, 2008). This is a common definition of what the RPG genre has to offer its players, but there is still a different way of interpreting this definition in the language of video game design. In most RPG games, like the popular *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974) tabletop game, players design their own custom character, as they see fit, and hence playing out the story they want. However, this is different in Final Fantasy VII: Remake, since the player has already been provided with an established fictional character within the fictional city of Midgar. Cloud Strife has already been designed with his own backstory, personality and fighting style, which forces the player to role-play as Cloud Strife, hence playing his story out. This might not describe the freedom a player would have if they created their own character. However, throughout the game of Final Fantasy VII: Remake, players are capable of making choices for the character Cloud, which changes his attitude and relationship with his teammates and individuals around the city of Midgar. This provides the freedom that players usually have when experiencing games in the RPG genre. Additionally, the player also has the freedom to equip Cloud with items that can change how he fights, whether he should focus on physical or magic combat, which also speaks to the freedom of choice that is a staple of the RPG genre. These choices are not included in games that do not belong to the RPG genre, which will be noted in the description of another game chosen for this research study: *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order* (Hitchens & Drachen, 2008).

The main genre of this game is the RPG genre, but it also shares similar elements to the Action genre. The action genre can be defined by the player's criteria for success, being *"(...) motor skill and hand-eye coordination."* (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 48). Despite the RPG genre primarily focusing on strategy and item management, this game in particular focuses on action elements during its combat sections. To succeed during these sections, the player is required to perform quick actions at certain times to overcome challenges, which is a typical success criteria in action games. This combines well with its third-person camera perspective, since it provides a

wide viewpoint on the battlefield, so the player can perform accordingly to what the game requires (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 48).

This game was primarily picked for this research, due to the type of tutorial it has implemented into the beginning section of the game, and due to the genre it belongs to, being the RPG genre. According to statistics describing the most popular video games genres in the United States, in 2018, the Role-playing genre is the third most popular genre (Gough, 2020). Another reason is due to the relevance of the game, since it was recently released in 2020. Therefore, it can be argued that this game may provide insights into the design choices developers are making currently.

Portal 2

Portal 2 (Valve Corporation, 2011) is a puzzle game designed by Valve, and was released on several different gaming platforms, including the PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and the Personal Computer. The game section will be the initial portion of the game, which teaches the player how to move in the digital space, also known as the tutorial. However, the tutorial section does not teach every mechanic to the player, as the game evolves throughout its playtime, and these mechanics will not be available for the player initially. Therefore, the tutorial section is only tasked at teaching the basics of movement and how portals work. The setting of the game is in an abandoned test facility, where robots were testing humans in various ways. This facility has been abandoned for several years, and has left the testing facility in ruins. The player wakes up from a deep sleep, which lasted for several years, and finds him/herself seemingly stuck in a room until a robot, named Wheatley, frees the player from their room, and sends them into the ruined landscape of the testing facility. Henceforth, the player is guided through the facility by Wheatley, while being tested on their intelligence by using the portal gun. The portal gun allows the player to shoot two portals, blue and orange, at walls, in which the player can pass through. If the player enters through the blue portal, they will exit from the orange portal. By using this mechanic, the player is being tested to see whether they can overcome the challenges and puzzles ahead by using this portal mechanic (Valve Corporation, 2011).

In contrast to the previous game, Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the story is not one of the main elements of the game, which is evident from the lack of cutscenes. Any story exposition emanates from the characters around the player, while the player interacts with the puzzles at hand. Additionally, some story elements have also been relegated to wall paintings around the ruined

facility. These paintings illustrate what had occurred in the facility, and how it became its current state. Therefore, the gameplay is the major focus. The interviewees will mostly be analysed on their ability to learn the controls of the game, and whether the game is adept at explaining the mechanics to the player, so they can solve the puzzles at hand (Valve Corporation, 2011).

The tutorial type in question, can be argued to be the 'Contextual Lesson' tutorial. This type of tutorial explains the mechanics, and control scheme to the player when they are required. For instance, this occurs in the very first section of Portal 2, where the player wakes from their sleep, and is instructed to look around the room and jump when told. The game informs the player to look around, through audio and through text prompts, when the game requires the player to perform said actions (Suddaby, 2012). This is essentially the 'Contextual Lesson' in action, and it works to great effect. As Suddaby (2012) explains:

> The tutorial is unbelievably short, because it only presents what you need to know at the specific moment it pops up, and has essentially no impact on the flow of the game as it is a part of the gameplay itself. (Suddaby, 2012, no page).

Therefore, it can be argued that this tutorial is more efficient in teaching the player how the game works. The lesson and the gameplay works organically together, as if the game was designed with the tutorial in mind (Suddaby, 2012).

The genre, in which this game belongs to, is the puzzle genre, which does not focus on action elements as the previous game did. The puzzle genre is defined as being: *"(...) those where puzzle-solving is the main activity and where solving them is the main purpose and source of pleasure for the player."* (Mora-Cantallops, 2018, p. 1). In other genres, such as the action genre, satisfaction is driven from the thrill of beating enemies with flashy combat techniques and excellent reflexes, while the puzzle genre provides satisfaction in the form of conquering intelligently difficult challenges in moderate time. In the case of Portal 2, the puzzle elements are derived from the ability to shoot portals at walls to traverse the digital space, and find the answer to the puzzle at hand. The puzzle genre was added to this research study, due to its focus on mental gymnastics and puzzle-solving skills, rather than quick reflexes and dexterity. Thus, the participants of this study would not feel exhausted by playing three action focused games consecutively, and the puzzle genre is an excellent way of breaking that pattern of heavy action. Additionally, by choosing

the puzzle genre, it is possible to gain an insightful opinion on different types of games, since the most popular game genres to date are action focused games (Gough, 2020). Finally, Portal 2 shares its control scheme with First-Person Shooter (FPS) games, since the portal gun serves as a typical gun, and by controlling the character in the same manner as a FPS game, the game could be perceived to be in that sub-genre as well. However, the lack of action prevents it from being a typical FPS game, hence making it a great addition to this study, since our participants can try the FPS control scheme, but in a puzzle game setting. Therefore, the control scheme of FPS games, combined with the elements of the puzzle genre, will provide the participants with an unique experience of both genres (Valve Corporation, 2011).

Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order

The third game that will be used for this study, is Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order (Respawn Entertainment, 2019). The game revolves around the main character, Cal Kestis, whose motivation is to find his destiny in the universe. The section of the game that our participants will be playing, is again the initial tutorial section. Here, Cal Kestis, who works as a scrapper, is tasked to secure clamps that hold up a crashed ship, so that it does not collapse and potentially damage workers in the process. Later on in the tutorial, the player discovers that Cal is a lost Jedi, and is confronted with the antagonistic force, known as the Empire. From here on, Cal is trying to escape the planet by fighting his way through Stormtroopers until he is rescued by two characters, who will be acting as his companions throughout the game. The gameplay section concludes after the player finishes a boss fight. During the tutorial, the game tasks the player with learning how to move around in the first half of the tutorial, and in the second half, the game tasks the player with learning how the combat functions, and what types of enemies the player can encounter. In the first half, the tutorial provides prompts on the screen, which inform the players about what button they need to press to perform the right moves to progress (Respawn Entertainment, 2019). As described in the previous section, this type of tutorial is the ‘Contextual Lesson’ type at play again, which informs the player of what buttons to push at the right moments during the game. However, in the second half, the combat section, the tutorial occasionally pauses the game to provide tips, as to how to beat the boss. The game will only resume once the player has pressed the required button, which can be argued to be a disrupting distraction from the intense boss fight, since the player might be pressing the required button in quick repetition and accidently skipping the tutorial all together.

Additionally, this tutorial type can also be used in a more abrupt way, where the game will not continue until the player presses the right button, or the player has understood what to do in this instance. This can be a cause of frustration, since it pauses the flow of the game until the player has understood what to do. These scenarios can be the less ideal implementations of the 'Contextual Lesson' tutorial (Suddaby, 2012).

This game belongs to the popular action-adventure genre, which functions as a sub-genre of the adventure genre and the action genre, or perhaps more of an organic combination of the two. Therefore, it is important to establish the core elements of the two main genres that the action-adventure genre derives its elements from. As previously described, the action genre expects the player to perform actions that relies on fast reflexes, dexterity and skill to succeed at the games within that genre. The adventure genre features games that test the player's sense of wonder and puzzle-solving skills. Typical elements of an adventure game are puzzles, an overarching story that drives the game forward, exploration and discovery, and a main quest for the player to complete, which usually revolves around saving the world from antagonistic forces (Karhulahti, 2011). These are the elements in their singular form. However, these elements can be distributed to other genres as well, but it is only by combining them all that the results become an Adventure game. As Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. (2013) describe: *"Typically, the player is represented by an individual character involved in a plot of mystery or exploration, and faces puzzles of various kinds."* (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2013, p. 49). These elements are also included in the action-adventure sub-genre, as well as the intense nature of action games. By combining those genres, the result becomes a game that includes action set pieces, such as combat scenarios and explosions, and adventure elements, such as puzzles, to provide an experience that paces its intense combat settings with the calm nature of puzzle solving. Even in the tutorial section, the different elements from the two genres are at play, and the action elements are mostly introduced during the second half, where the combat system is introduced. The first half focuses on exploration, movement, and establishing the setting of the game and its playable character (Respawn Entertainment, 2019).

The reason for choosing this game, and its subsequent genre, was to display a tutorial utilising the 'contextual lesson' tutorial in a different manner than Portal 2, while also providing an insight into one of the most popular video game genres to date (Gough, 2020). Additionally, the game combines the tutorial from Portal 2 with similar gameplay elements from Final Fantasy VII: Remake in its third-person setting. The game does not pause to provide story exposition through

cutscenes as frequently as Final Fantasy VII: Remake, which allows the player to play the game for an extended period of time before being paused by the story. This can be argued to affect the player in a more positive manner, since the game is paced well between gameplay and story exposition, whereas Portal 2 only pauses the game through loading screens between each puzzle rooms. This will be examined more during the analysis to discover whether this approach to video game pacing has a positive effect on the players' mood and motivation (Respawn Entertainment, 2019).

Ethical issues

This section will cover any, or potential, ethical problems in this project. As Gibbs (2018) describes: *"The key to ethics in research is to minimize the harm or cost and maximize the benefit."* (Gibbs, 2018, p. 139). One ethical issue that arises in many research projects is the principle of informed consent. Every interviewee in this project was informed about the research before the interview and observation began. This ensures that the participants can make an informed decision about whether they would like to participate or not. They were told what the research is about, as well as what it is used for, and how the observation and interview will unfold. The interviewees were then given the option of withdrawing from the research, if they were not comfortable with the conditions. Moreover, a consent form was drawn up, which the interviewees were then asked to sign. This consent form entails all about what the research is for, it being recorded for the researchers' purpose only, how to contact the researchers in case of further questions, and the participant's rights as a research participant. This ensures that the participants are fully aware of the nature of this particular research. Furthermore, the interviewees gave consent to them being recorded (Gibbs, 2018, p. 13 + Bryman, 2016, pp. 129-131).

Another ethical issue is the principle of anonymisation. What signifies qualitative research is that it is very personal and individual. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the interviewees will not be mentioned. Instead, they will be referred to as interviewee A, interviewee B, and so on. Furthermore, the anonymity given to the interviewees also entails changing sensitive information that can result in the interviewees being identified (Gibbs, 2018, pp. 13 + 21).

Limitations and challenges

One challenge in this project, which we realised after conducting the first couple of interviews, has been the way our interview questions were designed. About six of our questions are formed as yes/no questions, for example:

- Was the tutorial sufficient in explaining how the video game works/was to be played?
- Did you find the control scheme easy to use?

This could be seen as a limitation, as we cannot get much out of a yes or no answer. However, during the interviews, we made sure to follow up by asking 'probing questions'. This means that we asked the participants to elaborate on their answers, by asking probing questions such as: how so?; Why do you think that?; Can you say something more about why that is?; and so on. This resulted in gaining more relevant data (Kvale, 2007, pp. 58-61). Had we employed a quantitative research method, like a questionnaire, then we would not have been able to make the participants elaborate on their yes or no answers (Bryman, 2016, pp. 221-224).

Another limitation in this research project could be that we do not let the participants play a video game from each genre currently on the market, as we chose three specific genres. However, the issue of personal taste, when it concerns the type of video game one prefers, can vary from person to person. Therefore, we might have gained different perspectives if the participants had been introduced to video games from other genres than the ones chosen. We did, though, try to focus on how the three games went about teaching the player on what to do, and how this genre generally is.

Analysis

This section covers the analysis of the collected data. In this project, the collected data consists of gameplay observations in the form of field notes, and interviews in the form of transcriptions. The analysis is divided into four main categories. Each category will be described and organised in accordance with the theories in question, namely the self-determination theory and the mood management theory. The main categories are: the motivation to keep playing, The role of the tutorials regarding competence, User experience with the video games/ Voice of opinion for future consumption practices, and The effects of story on one's mood. In the first two categories, the collected data will be analysed by employing the self-determination theory, while the last two will be analysed by employing the mood management theory. Furthermore, the first two categories cover motivations, while the last two cover mood and consumption. Together, they complement each other, and allow us to analyse how the different elements of video game design affect casual players' game experience, and their consumption behaviour, which is the aim of this project. The four categories may occasionally overlap, as they influence each other.

These categories have been created based on our questions and defined themes. As mentioned in the methods section, this project employs a deductive approach. This means that the theories were chosen before collecting the data (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, before the observations and interviews were conducted, a list of codes were found in accordance to the types of questions asked. No new themes were found in the data, which is why our original codes construct the categories of this analysis.

The motivation to keep playing

This section will focus on the rewards of the selected video games: Portal 2; Final Fantasy VII: Remake; and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. Furthermore, this analysis consists of how the different rewards motivate or demotivate the interviewees to keep playing the video games. The self-determination theory is employed to determine what kind of motivation the interviewees are driven by, and where that puts them on the self-determination continuum. In other words, it is used to examine whether the interviewees are driven by controlled or autonomous motivation regarding the reward element of video games. This section on rewards is divided into two sub-categories, namely tangible rewards and intangible rewards.

The rewards differ, and not every one of the games contains tangible rewards. The first game, Portal 2, does not provide any rewards other than just solving the puzzles. The second game, Final Fantasy VII: Remake, however, presents a variety of rewards, such as being able to level up and become stronger, collection of potions and elixir when opening chests and boxes, as well as new abilities and different magic powers. The last game, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, does not present any tangible rewards in the tutorial section, which the participants are playing. However, the player can strive for visual stimulation in the form of cinematic executions.

Tangible rewards

When presented with tangible rewards, which the interviewees only experienced in the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the interviewees differed in terms of the type of motivation. Both Interviewee A, B and F expressed that they actively went for the boxes and chests, as the game told them that they could use what was inside to become stronger (Interview A, B and F):

> (...) they mention the boxes with the logo on top, and you can get like things from there, so I just kept like actively looking for these boxes whenever I entered like a new layer of the game, and that was fun. (...) mostly because I combine these boxes with items that can help you in battle I guess (...). (Interview B).

Interviewee C and D seemed to be more motivated by another reward, namely the chance to level up, but their reasons for being motivated differs slightly (Interview C, and D). For Interviewee C, the motivation to level up revolves around a desire to receive new abilities:

> (...) now I don't know about the game, but you probably get stronger abilities, stronger along the line, when you level up. Maybe not very level, but maybe every 5 level or so, you get a powerful ability. That would be rewarding to see (...). If it had that aesthetic or like cool animated style for every ability, for every character, I would be interested in seeing that, you know. (Interview C).

Interviewee C is, thereby, more focused on the reward of discovering how the different abilities are performed, and the graphical fidelity that is presented with them. Throughout the game, we observed that this interviewee also went after chests and boxes for the most part, but missed some of them along the way (Interview C), whereas Interviewee A and B were more actively seeking for the boxes. Interviewee F wanted *"(...) to get stronger, want to get more cool."* (Interview F), but here we also observed that this interviewee, much like Interviewee C and D, did not explore the digital space for chests and boxes throughout the game. Interviewee F said out loud that it was cool she obtained two potions when opening a chest in the beginning of the game, but later on, she began to focus more on which way to go, and which enemies to kill, rather than actively seeking for chests and boxes. This might correlate, since the interviewee stated that she gets stressed when there is too much fighting in the game. In other words, the interviewee cannot handle the situation well whenever there are a lot of enemies presented in the game (Interviewee F: Field notes). Interviewee D was also motivated to level up, but for a different reason than receiving new abilities. When asked if Interviewee D was striving to become stronger, the answer was overly positive: *"Well yeah I need to kill stuff. It would be nice to be a little bit stronger.*" (Interview D). We also observed that this interviewee tried to collect stuff when an enemy died, because they present a sparkly orb upon death. However, the interviewee did not seem to understand that these rewards were collected automatically, and the text on the screen was supposed to inform that the player had already received the rewards. The interviewee never mentioned anything about abilities, which probably correlates with the lack of abilities used during the gameplay, as we observed that she seemed confused about the mechanics of using said spells and abilities. When collecting chests and boxes, the interviewee only collected some of them (Interviewee D: Field notes). During the interview, she expressed no real interest in collecting them, as she was confused on what she gained (Interview D). Similar to Interviewee D, participant G also expressed a desire to collect what was in the boxes and chests throughout the game: *"But I like to look around and hit the boxes and get stuff from there. Yeah, I guess it's motivating, because you want to kill your enemies and then you can pass."* (Interview G). However, the reason for the desire to collect things in this case was more to explore the world and to kill enemies. The main goal was, therefore, to kill enemies and then the tangible rewards served as a bonus (Interview G).

Neither Interviewee A nor B seemed to chase the reward of levelling up: "*So, I did go after the boxes and the chests, but it didn't know the levelling up was a reward.*" (Interview A). What is

interesting to note in the game, Final Fantasy VII: Remake, is that most of the interviewees actively went for the tangible rewards, in terms of chests and boxes with potions inside, even though not all the interviewees were aware of what they could use those different potions for: *"(...) it says something about that I could use it to make potions, or something. I could use it to do something, so I was like, let's collect it (...).*" (Interview A). When asked about the reward of levelling up, Interviewee B had the same view on this reward as Interviewee C. But, as Interviewee B expressed, he did not have the chance to level up during the part of the game that he played, so he could only guess what levelling up would mean. When asked what he thought would come of levelling up, his response was very similar to Interviewee C: "*Like, some new ability that looks cool on the screen and kind of, ehm, is better than the ones that I have, since you progress over the game and become better."* (Interview B).

What is common for all the interviewees is when presented with a tangible reward, i.e. something to collect, then they all expressed a clear motivation to do just that. These interviewees are, therefore, driven by extrinsic motivation, in terms of collecting rewards. When narrowing the broad concept of extrinsic motivation down, we can identify that the type of extrinsic motivation, which all the interviewees seem to share, is external regulation. This means that the interviewees are motivated to obtain the rewards, which are presented to them, as well as other possible benefits. The latter is especially evident with Interviewee C and somewhat B, when aiming to obtain benefits, such as cool new abilities, as well as Interviewee D and G, who want to become stronger, hence being able to kill more enemies. These last two interviewees' main drive was to kill enemies, which could be deemed an intrinsic motivation. In this case, the interviewees are motivated to simply enjoy the game. This motivation is an intrinsic one, but to be able to kill more enemies and bosses throughout the game, the player must become stronger. Therefore, the motivation changes from an intrinsic one to an extrinsic motivation, more precisely an external regulation. However, this extrinsic motivation is driven by the intrinsic motivation to kill enemies, based on pure entertainment factors. The outcome is, therefore, a stronger character that can overcome more enemies more easily (Interview A, B, C, D, F, and G). In opposition to the majority of the interviewees, participant E seemed to be mainly driven by an intrinsic motivation. When asked whether she was interested in collecting rewards, the answer was yes, but contrary to the other interviewees, this participant viewed the collecting of rewards as being a way (Deci & Ryan, 2000):

> (...) to put the puzzle together to figure out what is going on, where, what can I find what, why are we here? It sort of like gives clues to sort of figure out where, where are we going next, what's going to happen now, and why are we here? (Interview E).

This means that the interviewee is using rewards as a way of exploring the world of the game, and as a way of going off the beaten path. In other words, this interviewee is much more motivated to explore the game instead of collecting rewards. Throughout the gameplay, we observed that this interviewee seemed excited when opening a chest to receive potions. However, it did not seem that she knew, or cared about, what their function was, as she did not try to discover their purpose. Based on this, Interviewee E is mainly driven by an intrinsic motivation, as she plays to explore and thereby just enjoying herself. As this interviewee does actively look for rewards, one could also argue that she is still driven, to some degree, by an extrinsic motivation, more specifically external regulation like the other interviewees. In other words, the interviewee could just choose to explore the world without collecting chests, but she still uses them as an incentive to explore the edges of the game world. Furthermore, she still utters words like ‘cool’ and ‘uhh stuff’ when opening the chests (Interview F + Interviewee F: Field notes + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Intangible rewards

The games Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order both do not present any apparent tangible rewards to the player. Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order do, however, offer tangible rewards later in the game, but the section our interviewees played did not offer any tangible rewards. Portal 2 offers audible stimulation, when the robot compliments the player with ‘good job’ whenever a puzzle is solved. However, this audible stimulation is not defined as a tangible reward, as it is part of the game, and no matter how long the player takes to solve the puzzle, the stimulation will be the same. In Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, the player can achieve visual stimulation. This presents itself when the player utilises a special technique to kill enemies, i.e. rewarding the player with a cinematic execution of that kill. This is not an obligatory task for the player, since he/she is in control of whether to achieve this cinematic execution. If this is something that the interviewees are striving for, then we have categorised that as an obtainable reward.

What we found interesting is that most of our interviewees had a tendency to search for or devise a personal reward when there is none. When it came to Portal 2, there was only one interviewee, who created his own reward (Interview C), whereas the rest just enjoyed the game and was motivated enough by the aspect of solving puzzles: *"(...) I wanted to solve the puzzle, and not just give up so I feel stupid (both laughing)."* (Interview A). For the majority of the interviewees, the reward of 'cracking the code', seemed to be motivating enough to keep playing the game. Only one of our interviewees, Interviewee D, was more motivated by the audible stimulation, where the robot compliments the player for solving a puzzle (Interview D). Most of the interviewees, however, seemed to ignore this voice, and did not deem it rewarding. Interviewee E was mostly confused about the purpose of the voice: *"It kind of felt like 'OK what's going'. I was not sure what to use the information for. So it felt like 'OK what, what am I supposed to think of that?'"* (Interview E). One interviewee even stated that *"Oh, (...) is there like a voice that actually says that?"* (Interview B). For Interviewee D, the reward was, therefore, a mix between the satisfaction of solving the puzzles, and the audible stimulation on being complimented on a job well done:

> (...) I think Otto or the little robot thing, I noticed that whenever you go to the next room, he's like really encouraging, like yeah that was very nice. Thank you. It was like wuhuu yeah I did it. I like that reward, he was nice. (Interview D).

From the data, we can further analyse that the motivation for this interviewee is always to just play games to have fun. In Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, the combat sequences, and the simple fact of overcoming enemies, is sufficient enough for her to keep playing the game: *"(...) I just like stabbing people a lot, I mean that's a reward enough.*" (Interview D). This interviewee is driven by an intrinsic motivation as she just wants to have fun and enjoy the game by killing some enemies or completing the game. Therefore, the drive to keep going has nothing to do with collecting rewards, i.e. she is not driven by external regulations. Based on this, Interviewee D is driven by an intrinsic motivation (Interview D + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

As a contrast, Interviewee C did always search for a reward. If there was no reward present, then he would just set a personal goal, which is to improve his skills in the game:

> And I think in this game if you're, maybe not the first run of the game but maybe the second time, you get the feeling I can do this faster, maybe a minute faster, maybe do it so fluently with the whole shooting of the portal, going through with the cube, tossing the cube. I think if you do that fast enough and maybe fluently enough, you can kind of get a sense of adrenaline rush (...). (Interview C).

For this interviewee, the reward is chasing an adrenaline rush, which makes the game more exciting. The interviewee even compares this adrenaline rush to playing a shooting game, and indicates that he is chasing that same feeling with the puzzle game. This is a different way of playing this game, as the puzzle game in itself is very slow, where the player can take his/her time to solve the puzzle. Contrary to the other interviewees, this interviewee has set a personal goal, and is therefore driven by an extrinsic motivation. The type of extrinsic motivation, which seems to guide this interviewee, is identified motivation. This means that the interviewee is playing the game to achieve his personal goals, namely beating his own time by speedrunning, i.e. completing the game in the fastest time. Thereby, the interviewee is not motivated by rewards, such as solving the puzzle, but seeks to implement aspects of other games, like from FPS games. In Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, the interviewee actively searched for a reward, and expressed that what kept him driven throughout the game was how fun the combat system was (Interview C + Deci & Ryan, 2000). Both Interviewee B and C found this aspect to be really appealing:

> (...) I think what made this game so good and want me to like keep playing and keep fighting was the sequences, where the camera angle changed for example, or these slow motion effects while fighting, or the different stunts that he did while fighting. (Interview B).

Interviewee A and E also showed some extrinsic motivation, when there was not a tangible reward present. Interviewee E also found the cinematic execution very rewarding. However, she was more interested in finding boxes or chests. These types of rewards are not present in the tutorial part of Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, but this was unclear to this interviewee: *"(...) it really itched in me to go search for stuff. That would be even more rewarding. But overall, the cinematic moves he*

made, it was just beautiful, beautiful." (Interview E). This means that Interviewee E is also extrinsically motivated, i.e. by external regulation, more so than the other interviewees, as she wanted more tangible rewards to collect (Interview E + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Interviewee A, on the other hand, seems to be driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. This interviewee stated that: "*(...) like for me I wanna kill all the enemies I encounter, but that's just like me and more like I wanna complete the game the most I can.*" (Interview A). This means that Interviewee A has set a personal goal when playing this game. The rewarding aspect for this interviewee, therefore, consists in the simple task of killing every enemy and completing the game. The interviewee does differ from the other interviewees in the type of reward she wants to receive, but does still share the extrinsic motivation. For Interviewee A, the type of extrinsic motivation she is driven by is identified motivation. At the very beginning she sets specific goals, and is driven to complete these throughout the game. At the same time, this interviewee is also driven by intrinsic motivation in that she initially states: "*(...) I think the only reward I had in mind was just having fun and finishing the game.*" (Interview A). The fact that the interviewee just wants to enjoy the game and explore the universe in the Star Wars Jedi: Fallen order game, implies that she is also driven by intrinsic motivation. An interesting aspect of this is whether this interviewee is mostly driven by her intrinsic or extrinsic motivations. In other words, whether it is possible for a player to just enjoy playing the game, while still having personal goals, i.e. feeling that something has to be accomplished other than *'just exploring the universe'* (Interview A). (Deci & Ryan, 2000 + Interview A). The majority of the interviewees seemed to be driven by what we would call intrinsic motivation in the puzzle game Portal 2. This means that they were motivated to keep playing, because they wanted to enjoy themselves and feel the thrill of solving a puzzle. Interviewee E was, furthermore, looking forward to exploring what the game has to offer. This is still considered to be an intrinsic motivation (Interview E + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Like most of the players, Interviewee B, F, and G were all extrinsically motivated whenever a reward was obtainable. These interviewees, along with Interviewee C, mainly found the cinematic execution in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order rewarding. As the game does not really present any collectable rewards during the tutorial, the interviewees were more than satisfied with the reward of knocking enemies down as the game presents certain attacks as a cinematic experience: *"It's more like getting through and you make a cool kill."* (Interview G).

For these three interviewees, the rewards are defined as being extrinsically motivating. This means that the interviewees receive something positive for their efforts. In this case, they receive a cinematic experience in the form of an attack that looks 'really cool'. What makes it an extrinsic motivation is that the player has to perform specific actions, and thereby strive to achieve this type of reward. From the collected data, we can deduce that these interviewees are mainly motivated by the idea of collecting the visual stimulation rewards, hence being controlled by external forces. However, they are not driven by personal goals, at least not at this stage, and they do not feel the need to constantly play. Therefore, this type of extrinsic motivation is the type called external regulation. One can discuss that there may be a chance that the interviewees will develop a personal goal, consisting of wanting to obtain new attacks, therein discovering different cinematic experiences (Interview B, F, and G + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In summary

From the analysis, we can deduce that when the game provides the player with tangible rewards, such as collecting stuff; or levelling up, then most of the interviewees are extrinsically motivated, more precisely driven by external regulation. Only Interviewee E was intrinsically motivated when presented with a reward. This means that most of the interviewees are categorised as being driven by controlled motivation, where Interviewee E is driven by autonomous motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

On the other hand, when the games do not present any apparent tangible rewards, but do offer something to strive for in form of visual stimulation, then the interviewees are still mainly extrinsically motivated to keep playing. This is interesting to note, as it showcases the players wanting to strive for something, and are motivated enough if they are rewarded visually instead of receiving a tangible reward. This means that most of the interviewees were driven by controlled motivation when introducing visual rewards. When examining the results from the puzzle game, Portal 2, then we can see that all the interviewees, except Interviewee C, were intrinsically motivated. This means that they are driven by autonomous motivation. In other words, they play for the fun and thrill of the game, and do not feel pressured by the issue of rewards to play certain games, i.e. they are not controlled by any external force (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

All in all, when talking about rewards, the majority of the interviewees prefer their inclusion. Most of them could adjust to the puzzle game without any rewards, but on the other hand were driven towards the rewards whenever they were present, where some even went looking for them.

The role of the tutorials regarding competence

This section will cover the tutorial and control scheme part of the analysis. This analysis will both take into account how the interviewees dealt with the different controllers, and how the tutorial conveys how to use the control scheme to the player. Furthermore, it will analyse the various elements in the different tutorial types, and examine whether they make the interviewees feel competent or not. In other words, whether the interviewees are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, or achieve a feeling of amotivaiton instead.

Tutorials

This section will focus on the tutorials in each of the three selected games. This analysis will, therefore, be divided into two categories. These are: Tutorial by exposition, and Contextual lesson tutorial (Suddaby, 2012). The first category is the tutorial type used in the video game Final Fantasy VII: Remake, while the latter is the tutorial type used, albeit in different ways, in the other two games Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. In this passage, we can analyse which kind of tutorial the interviewees find most motivating and appealing, by employing the competence part of the self-determination theory. As mentioned before, this theory believes that the fulfillment of competence helps in maintaining one's intrinsic motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Therefore, we can argue that if the interviewees feel competent, then they are more intrinsically motivated, and thereby more self-determined. This project believes that when receiving negative feedback, the individual experiences a lack of competence, while positive feedback is giving the individual the feeling of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Furthermore, we can analyse what kind of tutorial that works best on our casual players.

Tutorial by Exposition

As mentioned earlier, the video game Final Fantasy VII: Remake employs a tutorial by exposition approach. This means that the tutorial pauses the gameplay whenever the player reaches a new gameplay element, and then explains to the player how the game works with a tutorial box popping up with long sequences of text. Furthermore, each tutorial box has a short video that illustrates what will happen if the player does what the tutorial says. Then the player has to employ this knowledge in the scenarios. Thereby, the tutorial pauses the flow of the game (Suddaby, 2012).
When analysing the collected data, we can argue that this type of tutorial was not the most popular among our interviewees. About half of the interviewees found that the tutorial was sufficient in explaining how the game works, i.e. the core mechanics of the game (Interview A, B, C, and G). One interviewee expressed that he enjoyed how the tutorial provided him with information along the way, instead of presenting it all at once:

> I find mechanic wise that that's a neat idea. Cause you get it in smaller chunks instead of like a big, like, big chunk where you have to read it all through and forget most of it, so. I like that aspect. (Interview C).

Despite them finding the tutorial to be sufficient in explaining the core mechanics, the majority of our interviewees found that it was poorly communicated to them. The general opinion among our interviewees is that there is too much text in the tutorial boxes: *"I had a bit of a struggle. Ehm, because at the tutorial there was a lot of text in the screen, and I usually don't want to read all of it."* (Interview F). Throughout the game, the player is introduced with tutorial boxes, which both teach the player how to use the different controls, and how the X-menu with abilities and spells work, as well as what the ATB gauge is. This means that the interviewees were presented with a lot of information at once, often about things they do not comprehend. This might explain why we observed that many of our interviewees did not use the X-menu, which is used to choose spells and abilities, throughout the game. Consequently, having too much information discouraged more than half of the interviewees, who stopped reading the tutorial boxes after a while. For instance, with Interviewee C and E, we observed that both began to close the tutorial boxes, whenever they appeared, where they uttered words like 'yeah yeah' or 'just don't' (Interviewee C: Field notes, and Interviewee E: Field notes). Interviewee G justified her decision to not read the tutorial boxes

as a result of some of them not containing any information about how to use a specific button: *"Because I looked at it, and it didn't tell me to press any special buttons or anything, so I didn't feel like I needed that information."* (Interview G). Moreover, some of our interviewees found it annoying and disrupting that the tutorial pauses the game, which also happens a lot during fight sequences. This might also explain why so many of the interviewees closed the tutorial boxes, because they felt it disrupted the gameplay flow: *"(...) there was a lot of information given, and pause all the time, and that kind of ruins it a little bit (...)"* (Interview D). From this we can argue that the majority of the interviewees felt they were being bombarded with information, which also meant they forgot the mechanics they were presented with later on in the game. For instance, the player is introduced to the ATB gauge, which is filled up the more the player hits enemies. When this is full, it allows the player to access abilities and spells. This tutorial lesson was introduced in the beginning of the game. However, some of the interviewees did not know what the ATB gauge was: *"I don't think they [the game developers] did, because I didn't get it."* (Interview G). We also observed that practically none of the interviewees successfully used the ATB gauge, as most of the interviewees, who used spells and abilities, just pressed the button occasionally at random intervals. Another element, which practically none of the interviewees remembered throughout the game, is the use of the lock-on function, i.e. the ability to lock the camera on a specific enemy. In the beginning, the interviewees were introduced to this function, but they still did not use it throughout the game. When asked, whether they remembered this tutorial lesson, one interviewee answered: *"Oh, I think I didn't."* (Interview B). In other words, the interviewees are experiencing a sense of information overload with this tutorial approach. Consequently, the majority of the interviewees did not feel competent enough, as they could not recollect the different tutorial lessons throughout the game, such as the ATB gauge, and the lock-on function. Therefore, the interviewees experienced negative feedback, as they struggled to defeat enemies, and they did not feel competent enough to use the full mechanics of the game to their advantage. Moreover, this lack of competence resulted in the majority of the interviewees not wanting to play this game in their spare time, as they did not seem to grasp all the options available.

Regarding the size of the text of the tutorial boxes, three of the interviewees found that the text was too small (Interview A, E, and G). For instance, one interviewee expressed:

> (...) so I think the tutorial was really good actually. Some of the writing, cause there was a lot of writing at the tutorial, so you had to read a lot. And some of the writing were really small, so you had to really like close your, squint your eyes whatever you call it, and yeah. (Interview A).

We also observed that these three interviewees squinted their eyes, and even moved closer to the screen when trying to read the text in the tutorial boxes. This may, therefore, also be a factor in the interviewees not wanting to read all the text in the tutorial boxes, as it appears to be a chore for them.

One element of the tutorial, is that the characters in the game, i.e. Cloud and Barrett, is actually talking to the player during fight sequences, and instructing the player what to do. For instance, if the player is dying, the characters are instructing the player to heal themselves through natural dialogue. More than half of the interviewees noticed that this element is there (Interview A, B, C, and F), while others, who did not notice, still thought it was a nice touch: *"But it's a nice detail."* (Interview E). Another element, which can be argued to hinder the interviewees' gameplay flow, is that the tutorial does not teach the player what to use potions and Ethers for, or even where to find them in the menu. We observed that about half of our interviewees did not utilise potions of any kind, even though they at times were necessary. However, four of our interviewees managed to use potions to heal themselves, even though they did not know where to find the potions (Interview A, B C, and F). One interviewee stated: *"So I figured it out, it was items and healing (...)"* (Interview C), and when asked how another interviewee found the items, the answer was: "*Honestly just by pressing a lot of buttons. Just, sometimes when I pressed the wrong button, something else came up and then it was there (...)."* (Interview A).

All in all, the tutorial by exposition approach was not something our casual players felt optimised their sense of competence. As mentioned earlier, practically all of the interviewees did not know what half of the information provided meant, and could not remember all the information throughout the game, as they experienced information overload. This leads to many of the interviewees feeling stressed or annoyed throughout the different boss sequences, and they seem impatient as the fights are long. Therefore, the interviewees did not feel competent in their gaming endeavour. Furthermore, they received negative feedback as they did not know what to do and felt overwhelmed at the vast amount of information, and did not utilise all the options that could have

helped to overcome enemies faster. This resulted in the interviewees not feeling motivated to keep going, and, therefore, lost their motivation to keep playing. Only three of our seven interviewees said they would play the game in their spare time, while one of them said probably: *"Probably. But I'll need some time to get into it."* (Interview E). Another one of the interviewees, who was motivated to play the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake in their spare time, expressed that she hoped it would become more enjoyable over time, and she was mostly motivated by the fact that the game contains a lot of fighting sequences (Interview D). In other words, the majority of the interviewees felt a loss of competence, and therein a loss of motivation to play the game. We can argue that if the interviewees are motivated, then they are driven by an extrinsic motivation, which means they are overall driven by a controlled motivation. This coincides with the three interviewees, who would play this game in their spare time, because they are driven by other things, such as the graphics, improvements to the fighting element, or have a personal goal to become better. This means that there are certain factors that are motivating them, hence making it an extrinsic motivation (Interview B, D, and E). The four other interviewees lack motivation to keep playing, as they are neither extrinsically or intrinsically motivated, due to them feeling a loss of competence. This means that they belong to the category of amotivation (Interview A, C, F, & G). Interviewee C even said that if he had been on his own, then he would have stopped playing after a specific difficult sequence (Gagné & Deci, 2005 + Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Contextual Lesson Tutorial

The two other games, namely Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, employ a contextual lesson tutorial approach. This means that the tutorial explains the mechanics, and how to use the controls to the player, whenever they are needed. Therefore, the tutorial lesson is short and does only present the knowledge that the player needs in the scenario they are currently facing. Moreover, it does not pause the flow of the game (Suddaby, 2012). These two video games employ this tutorial strategy in different ways. Portal 2 provides the player with very little information, mainly in the form of signs on the wall and the floor. Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order keeps reminding the player what to do in different scenarios throughout the game with short text popping up on the screen. Furthermore, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order will not permit the player to continue in a certain instance, before performing the required action in that particular tutorial lesson.

With the contextual lesson tutorial employed in Portal 2, the majority of the interviewees found that the tutorial was overall sufficient in explaining how the game works:

> Yeah I think it was nice. I think I understand, hopefully. (...) in the beginning beginning, they kind of give you the "here you move forward and backwards and from right to left", and I knew there was something with the E button (...) but I think it was good, it was good (...). (Interview D).

This means that the tutorial lesson regarding how to navigate the digital space, is sufficient for the interviewees, since it illustrates what buttons to press. However, in terms of explaining how the portals work, then the general opinion was that the interviewees needed a tutorial lesson explaining the mechanics of the portals: *"Ehm, in regards to how you move around, yes. In regards to again the white walls and the portal thing of it, it doesn't."* (Interview A). We also observed that the majority of our interviewees had trouble figuring out how the portals work, as the tutorial does not explain how they function. Therefore, the problem with the majority of our interviewees is due to the amount of time they took to figure out precisely how the portals worked, which made them annoyed and frustrated. There was a lot of confusion about the fact that the orange portal is fixed, i.e. it cannot be moved, and that you exit the orange portal when entering the blue portal, and vice versa. Two of our interviewees even thought that they could shoot multiple different blue portals, which each leads to different places, even though they can only shoot one portal that moves when shooting another, and leads to the same place: *"It was difficult to find out where the portals go to, if you shoot one. It wasn't logical for me."* (Interview G). (Interview F, and G). Another issue with the portals, was that it took the majority of the interviewees a long time to figure out that you can only shoot the blue portal at white surfaces. This especially caused confusion when the white surface was located on the floor:

> Or like especially in this one setup where you had to like shoot on the floor to get through the floor, which is kind of unusual because you wouldn't guess that this is like a part of this because you would think "oh it's like at the walls or at the ceiling", but not on the floor. (Interview B).

A couple of the interviewees did not feel the tutorial was sufficient in explaining what to do, as it did not describe the portal system, or what button to press to interact with the world. Granted, the tutorial does introduce the 'E' key in the beginning, which is used to interact with things, but some of the interviewees did not remember this key being introduced:

> Not entirely, because I felt like I was really like completely walking in blind, didn't know anything about it. I was like, yeah you know the basic movement and stuff. But otherwise I kind of felt like I really had to figure out everything for myself (...). (Interview E).

This caused some frustration and annoyance to some of our interviewees. However, a lot of the interviewees liked the game, and thought it was a good approach to have the players learn by doing: *"I kind of like that, because it makes it more of a challenge if you actually have to think yourself."* (Interview D), while another expressed it as follows:

> I liked that you had to figure some of it out by yourself. It wasn't given to you that easy, but it was not like you didn't have any clue what to do. You sort of knew what to do, just had to figure out where to place the portals. (Interview F).

The player receives assistance from the tutorial in the form of signs on the floor, and at the start of each level. Most of the interviewees utilised these signs, and tried to understand what they meant, especially if they were stuck, and did not know how to solve the puzzle: *"(...) but I was like actually more focused on the, ehm, signs on the wall when they actually told me like how to do things."* (Interview B). Although some of the interviewees did not understand what the drawings meant, they still studied them and tried to make sense of it all. (Interview B, D, E, F, and G).
Overall, the majority of the interviewees had trouble with the portals, and requested a tutorial lesson on this. However, they still felt competent enough to keep playing, as they enjoyed the freedom to solve the puzzle at their own pace. In spite of this, only one of our interviewees stated that she did not want to play this game in her spare time (Interview A). This means that the other six interviewees felt competent, hence feeling motivated to keep playing. The interesting thing to

note is that most of them struggled to figure out the portal system, hence getting frustrated, while taking a long time to solve the puzzles as a result. However, the interviewees still felt motivated to keep playing the game: *"Ehm, I mean it was doable, sometimes a bit difficult, but it was doable."* (Interview D). In other words, as competence is viewed as being a part of maintaining intrinsic motivation, this means that these interviewees were driven by an intrinsic motivation, and therein felt self-determined. This means that they play because they choose to, rather than being controlled by certain elements (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The other type of contextual lesson tutorial is found in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. Almost all of our interviewees agreed that the tutorial approach used in this video game is the best out of the other tutorial approaches: *"Yes, it was short and it just said do this and push this and then you actually knew it and it was easy, and easy to like understand, and also easy to like memorise."* (Interview B). What the interviewees responded to the most, was: that the tutorial text was short; there was only a pause once or twice; and that playing the tutorial did not feel like a tutorial, but rather just felt like playing the game. For example, Interviewee D really enjoyed that the tutorial does not pause the gameplay flow, while teaching her what to do, and that you can get familiar with the control scheme while playing the game: *"(...) when they introduce how I do stuff, it's way better. They don't pause it, it's simple, it's right in my face, and they show me where to click, and I like that."* (Interview D).

One of the elements of this tutorial approach is that it will not allow the player to progress until he/she has performed the required action. Four of our interviewees experienced a lack of progression, as they did not realise that the enemies would keep coming until they performed the required actions. However, they all seemed to like this approach:

> Because you know you will get to that point, where you'll actually be able to do it. (...) Compared to, you just keep trying and you die all the time, and have to go like way back. It just feels like, I don't know. I think it worked. They made it easy for me. (Interview G),

and *"Because then later on, if I didn't do it, I wouldn't know what to do. So I kind of like that it couldn't go any further before you had actually done what they were telling you to do."* (Interview F). (Interview D, E, F, and G). Furthermore, the tutorial keeps reminding the player what they are capable of. In other words, whenever the player is fighting an enemy, the game will display a

tutorial text with information on how to reflect a blaster, evade and so on. This means that the game keeps reminding the player of the different options, which our interviewees found to be really helpful: *"(...) it actually told you a few times under the mini boss battle. Just to remember to dodge, or to block."* (Interview C).

One element of the tutorial, which did cause some confusion to over half of our interviewees, is when taught how to climb. The problem is that the tutorial text presents itself whenever the player is close to the wall they are supposed to climb, but is still displayed when the player is standing far away from the intended wall. This caused a lot of confusion, as our interviewees did not know where they were supposed to climb (Interview A, E, F, and G):

> And then I came to a desk with a guy and then it said, and then when I turned direction to, like over the edge, it said that I should push a button to climb. And I was like, well it only says it when I look this way, so I thought I had to go that way. But instead I had to go the opposite direction, and climb up a wall. So that was kind of misleading. So that could have been over by the wall instead, I feel like that would have been better. But other than that, I felt like it did give a good tutorial throughout the game. (Interview A).

Even though the tutorial offered a few confusions, then the overall impression among our interviewees was that they felt competent, and that they were aware of what to do. The instructions were simple and short, and easy to understand: *"It just says do this and push this, and I think I like this like the most, because it was easy and simple (...)."* (Interview B). As they felt competent, they were also feeling motivated to keep playing the game. As a result, all the players expressed that they would play this game in their spare time, where Interviewee G would prefer to play with friends:

> Ehm, I don't think I'll play it alone. I'll probably play it with friends, where we're sitting together, because I don't have the nerves to sit alone and play it. I just get stressed. But with other people, and I think I actually would love to enjoy to like, watch someone else play it. (Interview G)

This means that she does not feel competent on her own, and therefore has a need for the sense of relatedness to be fulfilled. One can argue that she can fulfill her need for competence, by playing with friends. As competence is viewed as an element that helps to maintain one's intrinsic motivation, then we can argue that these interviewees are all driven by an intrinsic motivation, leading to them being self-determined. This means that they have a feeling of autonomy, i.e. they do not feel controlled or pressured by any element to play video games. In other words, they purely play because they want to have fun (Deci & Ryan, 2000 + Gagné & Deci, 2005).
In the following section, the use of different control schemes will be analysed by employing the self-determination theory.

Control Scheme

This section will dive into the control scheme of the three selected games, and how competent the interviewees felt about using the different control schemes. To play the three selected video games in this study, the interviewees had to use three different types of control schemes. In Portal 2, the interviewees had to use keyboard and mouse, while the interviewees had to use a PlayStation 4 controller in the other two video games, albeit in two different ways. This section is divided into two categories. The first category is keyboard and mouse as a control scheme, and will analyse how competent the interviewees felt using keyboard and mouse. The second category is the PlayStation 4 controller as a control scheme, and will analyse how competent the interviewees felt using a PlayStation 4 controller. This last category will entail two different ways of utilising this type of controller. The competence part of the self-determination theory is used to analyse how competent the interviewees felt, when introduced to different control schemes. In this project, it is perceived that when one is having trouble with the control scheme, you receive negative feedback, but when succeeding, you receive positive feedback, hence enhancing the sense of competence, and in that maintaining an intrinsic motivation. Relatedness as part of the SDT is employed to some extent, as it connects to the competence for some of our interviewees.

Keyboard and mouse as a control scheme

In Portal 2, the player has to use the mouse to move the camera, and the keys W, A, S, D and E to move around and interact with things. From the collected data, we can analyse that the interviewees showed different preferences in connection to the type of controls. Out of the seven interviewees,

three of them seemed most familiar with the computer controls, while the rest were more familiar with the controls of the PlayStation 4. The three interviewees, who were most comfortable with the keyboard and mouse, seemed to figure out the mechanics before the game told them: *"It felt very natural. No problems there at all, because that's what I'm used to when I play Borderlands and that kind of stuff."* (Interview E). These interviewees are also the ones that have most experience with playing computer games: *"(...) I just think that's what I'm used to from other games."* (Interview F). (Interview C, E, and F). The rest of the interviewees showed some problems utilising the keyboard and mouse. Interviewee A had the biggest trouble, as this type of control scheme was not familiar to her in any way:

> No, I don't know if you saw but a lot of time when I had to go forward I pressed, like the pickup button, cause they are right next to each other. So, if I don't look at it, I usually pick the wrong keyboard, or the wrong control. And, when it comes to the mouse, I don't find it very easy, cause I, I don't, can't just slide the mouse around. I have to like slide it, and then pick it up, and then move it back to the position, and then move it around again. So I don't find it very easy or natural to use. That type of controls. (Interview A).

Others seemed confused in the beginning about how to use the controls, and some of the interviewees tried using the arrow keys on the keyboard, but that is not a part of the controls. However, they figured out pretty quickly how to use the control scheme, and did not have any real trouble for the rest of the gameplay session: *"They're close to each other. You have the one in the one hand, and the other ones within reach with the fingers. That makes it quite easy."* (Interview D). These interviewees stated that they are used to only playing PlayStation games, but had no trouble adapting to the computer controls (Interview D, and G). From our observations, we can determine that there is not that much difference between someone, who plays computer games regularly, to someone who has played a few computer games or never played any computer games, in connection to how to use the control scheme. This could be due to the fact that a computer keyboard is used by many on a daily basis.

From this analysis, we can examine that all the interviewees, except Interviewee A, had no real trouble using the keyboard control scheme. This means that the feedback received by the interviewees is positive. In other words, the interviewees feel competent in that they have no

significant problems using the controls, i.e. they can more easily complete the levels of the game. Fulfilling the need for competence means that their intrinsic motivation increases, as SDT believes that the need for competence must be fulfilled for an individual to maintain her/his intrinsic motivations. This brings them closer to being self-determined on the continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

PlayStation 4 controller as a control scheme

With the PlayStation 4 controller, the control scheme is different in the two last video games. The difference lies in which buttons to use to do certain things, and that you can jump in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, while that is not possible in Final Fantasy VII: Remake. The X-menu that can be used in Final Fantasy VII: Remake is a menu that appears when pressing the X button, where the player can choose between using spells, abilities, and potions. Most of the interviewees did not understand or like using this menu. About half of the interviewees pressed the X button a lot, but we observed that they seemed to be doing this by accident, as they did not use any of the options in the menu. Furthermore, as soon as they opened the menu, they closed it down, and continued pressing the square and circle button, i.e. the attack button and the dodge button: ***"****I just hit every button possible (laughing)."* (Interview D). Interviewee E, on the other hand, completely opted not to use the X-menu, as she thought *"It was confusing (...)"* (Interview E). Interviewee F did though figure out in the end, how to successfully use the X-menu to both use abilities, spells, and heal herself. The interesting part is that even when the characters in the game, i.e. Cloud or Barrett, told the player to use magic to defeat a boss, then very few of the interviewees actually did this. This could be due to the fact that they did not seem to understand the menu function, or they did not hear them. Three of our interviewees, however, did use the X-menu, even though they still did not completely understand this control scheme (Interview A, B, and C). For example, Interviewee A used spells and abilities on several occasions, but she seemed confused when this option sometimes was not available: *"I mean, I used spells and items, but I didn't really look at the ATB meter."* (Interview A). This means that when the ATB gauge is empty, then the player cannot use the options in the X-menu. This then caused some confusion with this interviewee, as well as Interviewee C. However, almost all of the interviewees seemed to not be familiar with this type of control scheme, where someone was better at adapting to this type of control scheme than others:

> I think at the beginning, because I just, I thought the X button was attack or jump, and I couldn't really jump in this game, so I just pushed like X when I wanted to attack, but attack was on the square on the left hand side of the triangle, of the cross thing. So that was like a little weird at the beginning (...) (Interview B).

This means that practically all the interviewees did not feel very competent when using the controls in Final Fantasy VII: Remake. This is especially evident in our observations, where we can interpret that many of the interviewees are annoyed or frustrated, when the menu keeps popping up during a fighting sequence. It further seems like many of the interviewees do not understand that when the menu appears, then the game pauses during the fight. Despite this, they still seem to become annoyed and slightly stressed. Moreover, many of the interviewees used a lot of time to defeat the bosses throughout the game, because they did not utilise any abilities or spells. Hence, the interviewees received negative feedback from the game, which means they have a lack of competence. This coincides with the majority of our interviewees stating that they would not play this game in their spare time. Interviewee C even stated that he would rather watch others play it: *"Personally not. (...) it's a game that I would have more fun watching others play."* (Interview C). This means that Interviewee C does not feel competent enough to play the game himself, but would rather obtain a sense of competence when playing it with friends, or just watching them play. This is where relatedness comes into play, because this interviewee does not feel competent on his own, i.e. he needs someone else to be there (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Moreover, some of our interviewees looked down at the controller a lot to see where the buttons were located, as they were not familiar with this type of controller: *"I think my issue is just I don't know the names of the buttons (...)."* (Interview B).

When the interviewees had to use the other PlayStation 4 control scheme, which is employed in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, this proved to be a much easier task for all of them. All the interviewees immediately knew how to jump with the X button, while many of them tried pressing X even before the game instructed them how to jump. From this, we can interpret that despite them being casual players, then they are still game literate to some extent, as they are aware of the X button usually referring to a jump function. Overall, none of the interviewees experienced any real problem with the control scheme. Two of the interviewees had a little trouble with the camera controls. In both of the PlayStation games, the player has to control the camera him/herself by

using the right analogue stick. This proved troublesome for two of our interviewees: *"But definitely the controls and where the enemies are, and how to, you know, steer the whole thing, to look around."* (Interview C). This could inhibit the player's competence, as some of our interviewees struggled with moving the camera, which resulted in them not being able to see the enemies coming at them, thus dying. We experienced that this was especially troublesome, when there were a lot of enemies approaching (Interview C, and G + Interviewee C: Field notes + Interviewee G: Field notes). Besides using the right analogue stick to move the camera, for one interviewee, the use of the R3 button seemed to provide another issue:

> Yeah, except from sprinting, and the other one, where you had to press the, was that the R3? Where you had to change, like, enemy. I didn't, still don't understand how I got further from that but. (Interview G).

As a result of having issues with using two important functions on the PlayStation controller, this interviewee became stressed, and stated that she would prefer to play this game with friends. Therefore, this interviewee can be proclaimed to receive negative feedback, in that she cannot play the game efficiently, and therein being stuck in the same place for a long period of time. For instance, it took the interviewee a long time to move past the tutorial on how to use the R3 button. Furthermore, this can result in a lack of competence (Interview G). Contrarily, the other interviewees received positive feedback, since they did not experience any problems with the control scheme. As mentioned earlier, four of our interviewees were most familiar with this type of controller, which became very evident when they were playing. This means that they feel competent in what they are doing, hence being driven by an intrinsic motivation: *"I knew a little more of what I was doing."* (Interview D), and *"Much easier. It wasn't, there wasn't any button that didn't make sense. That didn't feel misplaced, it just felt natural, ehm much more intuitive."* (Interview E).

In summary

From the analysis, we can deduce that the most popular tutorial among our interviewees is the contextual lesson tutorial. This type of tutorial provided a sense of competence to the majority of our interviewees, as it was simple with short text passages, and they were not bombarded with information, like they were in the tutorial by exposition type. As a result, the interviewees felt intrinsically motivated to consume Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order.

Generally, the interviewees felt most competent with the keyboard and mouse control scheme, and the PlayStation 4 control scheme used in the last game Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. The explanation can be argued to be that this control scheme is more familiar to our casual players than the control scheme utilised in Final Fantasy VII: Remake, as they have more experience playing games with that type of control scheme: *"(...) I know that usually in games you jump on X (...)."* (Interview A). Moreover, the more competent the player is, the more he/she is intrinsically motivated, hence receiving positive feedback when overcoming challenges to progress in the game. If they receive negative feedback, then we have experiences that they become less competent, and more annoyed and frustrated with the game. Furthermore, we can hypothesise that the heavy usage of the X-menu in Final Fantasy VII: Remake was due to the interviewees usually utilising that button for jumping. This could explain why the interviewees became flustered and annoyed when an unintended menu appeared, instead of making the character jump.

In the next section, the category of user experience and future consumption practices among our interviewees will be analysed, by employing the mood management theory.

User experience with the video games/ Voice of opinion for future consumption practices

This theme will discuss the overall experience of our interviewees during their play session with the chosen video games. These experiences will be analysed in accordance to the mood management theory to determine how their mood and different elements within the video games themselves, can have an impact on their enjoyment of the game, and their future consumption behaviours. As mentioned earlier, the mood management theory comprises four different dimensions, which can be utilised to narrow down the reasons for why these games are successful or not in optimising one's mood (Reinecke, 2016). The majority of the interviewees had a positive

experience with most of the video games that were presented to them. However, there was one particular video game that they were feeling primarily negative about, which is Final Fantasy VII: Remake. This section will initially focus on their experiences with Final Fantasy VII: Remake, due to the unique issues and difficulties that the interviewees experienced. They did not experience similar issues with the other games, which is why Final Fantasy VII: Remake will be discussed first. Subsequently, this analysis has been divided into two sections: negative video game experience, and positive video game experience.

Negative video game experience

Final Fantasy VII: Remake belongs to the Role-Playing genre, which in itself is a complicated genre to play. Therefore, most of our players demonstrated that they had some issues with the controls, and the dynamic of various game elements all at once. Interviewee A and C had very negative feelings towards this game, and showed signs of being frustrated during their gameplay session, which speaks to their mood levels being affected negatively (Interviewee A: Field notes + Interviewee C: Field notes). As Interviewee C explains in regards to a particular scenario during the tutorial:

> But for me it's just frustrating, cause if you hit the lasers 4 or 5 times like I did, maybe even 7 times, it's just, you get into that like box, where you just feel like you're fucking useless. (..) I was not about to throw the controller, but I was like, I hit the pause button and I was like talking to you that I was, like this is annoying. (Interview C).

During a section, involving specific timing and quick reflexes, Interviewee C experienced having a hard time getting through this challenge, and explained that this was so difficult that he felt useless and frustrated. This can be argued to be very damaging to one's enjoyment of any entertainment medium, since one's mood has become so negative that you would be willing to quit the experience all together. Consequently, Interviewee C's mood was altered negatively by playing this particular game, which could result in the interviewee never discovering the motivation to play or purchase any game that is similar to this. The mood management theory argues that no consumer would choose a type of entertainment medium that has resulted in one's mood being negatively affected. Consumers are in constant pursuit for maximising their pleasure and happiness.

Moreover, experiencing a product that inflicts the consumer with noxious emotions, such as anger, leaves the consumer with the desire to stop consuming that particular product, and continue to search for something better (Reinecke, 2016). This coincides with Interviewee C's response, when asked whether he would be willing to play this game in his spare time: *"No. (...) Personally not."* (Interview C). The product is not interesting enough to be consumed in his spare time. However, he would like to spectate someone else playing it, hence consuming it as a movie of some sort, which argues for the relatedness of video games. By consuming it accordingly, he can enjoy the game for what it offers in story and characters without the frustrating gameplay.
Interviewee A also had a similar frustrating experience with Final Fantasy VII: Remake, but for different reasons than Interviewee C. Here, the problem primarily seemed to be the game's approach to storytelling:

> (..) you take two steps there's story, you kill three enemies there's story, you walk ten meters there's story. I mean, there's story everywhere all the time, you don't really get to play more than a couple of minutes, if so, and then there's story again. So for me that's very tiring, and not fun. (Interview A).

As showcased here, Interviewee A found the story frustrating and ultimately not fun, which is the worst effect a game can have on the consumer, since it leaves the consumer with little incentive to further consume such a product. The same reason was given as to why she would not consider playing this game in her spare time. As the mood management theory argues, consumers tend to choose media products for consumption, based on an impulse depending on their current mood. If this casual player were to pick this game based on an impulse, and realised that the immense story, which was present, was boring for them, they would perhaps think twice as to what to choose next. This makes their decision process more thorough and thoughtful instead of an impulse (Interview A + Reinecke, 2016).
Interviewee E and F had similar opinions about this game, but still showed some interest in playing it in their spare time. What they found most disrupting about the experience, was the information overload, which the game presents to it's player during the tutorial. Here, the interviewees became overwhelmed with information, and were unable to figure out what they were supposed to do. For instance, one interviewee stated:

> (...) whenever there was the tutorial thing in the other side it was like, there was a lot of information and a lot of abbreviations that I not really understand. So I feel like I wasn't always sure what exactly to use it for. So, I was basically just tapping it, I didn't know what the hell to do (...) (Interview E)

Despite finding the aesthetics and the characters of the game interesting, the state of confusion becomes the primary emotion, which can be argued to taint the whole experience. The tutorial's purpose is to teach the player how to perform to overcome the challenges that are being presented to the player. If the tutorial fails at teaching the player efficiently, then it can be argued that the player will stay confused for a great portion of the game, which results in the overall experience not being enjoyable enough to continue playing. Interviewee F also experienced confusion, but also experienced an increase in her stress levels during intense gameplay sections:

> I like sometimes to get a break, because sometimes I get stressed out when the adrenaline starts pumping, so it's kind of nice to have these cutscenes, where I can just relax a bit. (Interview F)

As Reinecke (2016) described in his four dimensions of media consumption, consumers become stimulated when exposed to high intense action on screen, which can result in an elevated sensation of arousal and adrenaline (Reinecke, 2016). In the case of Interviewee F, the action sequences in this game, and any other games with these types of action sequences, makes her too stressed to enjoy the intense sequences. This incentivises her to take a break from the action, which cutscenes can provide in this case. Therefore, she would consume such types of media products in short amounts, due to the high stress levels she experiences (Interview F).

The overall opinion on Final Fantasy VII: Remake has been of the negative kind. However, there were two interviewees, who found the game enjoyable enough to consider purchasing and playing it in their spare time. Interviewee B and D found the overall experience fun, engaging and exciting, despite the complex gameplay at hand. Despite several of the interviewees experiencing issues

with the overload of information that the tutorial provides, Interviewee B found this type of tutorial to be functioning, as he states:

> It was actually very good that in the tutorial, which I only just played the, you kind of got explained along the way as you actually played on, like what things you can do, and what things you can't do and how things work. So that actually make it very good to understand the abilities you have and how you access the skills and the items and the potions and everything. So, it was good that it was explained, not all at once, but along the way part by part by part, and that's what actually make it really good I think. (Interview B)

Aside from his perspective on the approach to the tutorial, he also found the graphics to be beautiful, and found the action appealing and exciting. The same is evident for Interviewee D, who also enjoyed the high intense action, despite finding the tutorial confusing, due to the high amount of information being presented to the player (Interview D). Both interviewees were willing to purchase and play it in their free time, which correlates with the mood management theory's argument of consumers being more inclined to consume products, which will improve or reinforce their current positive mood (Reinecke, 2016). The rest of the interviewees were not interested in consuming this video game, due to their mood and experience being disrupted by confusing tutorial messages, tense action scenes, and drawn out story sequences. Final Fantasy VII: Remake was ultimately too complex for our casual players. However, Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order provided a more enjoyable experience for our players, which is why they will be discussed together, since they share similar elements, as to why our interviewees found them fun and pleasing.

Positive video game experience

When it comes to Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, the vast majority of our interviewees found these games enjoyable, and would like to play them in their spare time. The reasons why they found these games enjoyable differs among the interviewees, and the games themselves. Therefore, the arguments made here will be described in general, by not analysing the two games separately. The primary reason why the interviewees enjoyed these two games more than Final

Fantasy VII: Remake, can be argued to be the inclusion of a simple tutorial section. The tutorial section in Final Fantasy VII: Remake was deemed too confusing and complex by our interviewees, which is not the case in the other two games. Both games provide a simple introduction to the mechanics, and how the player is supposed to play the games. Our interviewees responded positively to this. For instance, one interviewee stated:

> Yes, I liked it more. It was also, it was way more simple, there wasn't too much text, I don't know why I needed that much text in the other one. Click here to do this, there you go. (Interview D).

Most of the interviewees found these tutorials to be more simple and easier to understand, which provided them with a more enjoyable experience, due to them feeling more competent in their gaming endeavors. This can be argued to inspire a more positive mood level. Therefore, when asked about their overall experience with the two games, the response did not insinuate that the games were frustrating, such as with confusing mechanics or complex information. Contrarily, their experience was positive due to the story elements and how puzzles were set up in the case of Portal 2. However, despite the puzzles providing a challenge, which some deemed frustrating at times, the interviewees still praised the game for what it offered in terms of content and entertainment:

> There's a lot of thinking, and, I mean it's a puzzle game. So, you have to think a lot to get out of situations, and sometimes there's an obvious choice, and sometimes there's not, and then you kinda get annoyed when you find out there's an obvious choice and you didn't find it at first. Ehm yeah, so it's challenging, so I like that. (Interview A).

Despite the overall praise that Portal 2 is receiving, some of the interviewees were not interested in playing for an extended period of time, or even potentially finishing the game (Interview D, and G). They were under the impression that the game did not have more to offer beyond the tutorial section, which could be interpreted as being signs of boredom. As Reinecke (2016) describes with the 'Excitatory Potential' dimension of the mood management theory, which discusses media

content's potential of providing stimulating visuals, consumers can become excited when exposed to action packed visuals, or feel relaxed by less action focused visuals (Reinecke, 2016). In the case of Portal 2, a puzzle game, it does not present stimulating visuals, but rather engages the player mentally. This aspect did not seem interesting enough for some of the interviewees, which leads to them not feeling engaged for long periods of time. Additionally, they might only choose to consume this game in short amounts, due to the lack of stimulating and exciting elements.
This has been proven to be the opposite with Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, an action-adventure game, which has been designed to present action packed scenarios with cinematic spectacles to the player. The interviewees also responded positively to this design choice, hence finding the action packed scenarios exciting and intense. Interviewee E described the experience as *"(...) like coming home in a way."* (Interview E), and further described that she felt as if she was a part of the universe within the game. This correlates with the second dimension of Reinecke's theory, which is the dimension of 'Absorption'. As the name suggests, a consumer can consume a media product and feel as if he/she has been absorbed into it's fictional world, hence feeling a complete sense of immersion (Reinecke, 2016). Therefore, Interviewee E's mood has been optimised to the point of complete enjoyment, which is evident in the way she responded to the question regarding her overall experience:

> It was amazing, I was hooked. I was hooked from the beginning, it was, because it felt so, like Star Wars, you would, you weren't in doubt that this was Star Wars. You weren't in doubt where it was going. It was amazing. (Interview E).

Along with Interviewee E, the rest of the interviewees were also feeling joyful about their experience with the game, stating that they would be willing to play the game in their spare time (Interview A, B, C, D, E, & G). However, Interviewee F found some of the action sequences to be stressful and too intense, which was similar to her experience with Final Fantasy VII: Remake. Despite feeling stressed in both games, she would still prefer the Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order game over Final Fantasy VII: Remake, due to her feeling more competent and self-assured with the former game: *"(...) there's the part I played, but there's a bit of action, and it wasn't that, it wasn't frustrating for me. I could actually do it, I didn't get stuck. I like don't being stuck."* (Interview F). As mentioned in the SDT section of the analysis, feeling competent in any

endeavour provides a positive feedback loop from the game, hence making the experience more enjoyable, due to the lack of failure and frustration. Therefore, the player is more inclined to continue playing the game, due to the constant positive feedback the game provides to the player (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In summary

To sum up, the interviewees had similar, yet different, experiences with the three chosen games. The majority of the interviewees were unpleased with Final Fantasy VII: Remake, due to the complexity of the controls and mechanics at play, which led to them not wanting to play it in their spare time. However, some of the interviewees were willing to play it in their spare time, due to the combat system being fun and engaging, and the visuals being beautiful enough to continue playing it. Here, it can be argued that Final Fantasy VII: Remake proved to be too difficult for our casual players, which altered their mood state negatively, and to some extent toxic, due to some of them feeling useless in their attempts at beating the game's challenges. The elements that aided in this result was the overload of information in the tutorial, and the complexity of game mechanics and its control scheme. These elements combined made it difficult for our casual players to immerse themselves in the game's digital world, and rather found themselves feeling frustrated and ready to discard the game for something else. The case is different with Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, since these games do not utilise similar approaches to tutorial and control schemes as Final Fantasy VII: Remake. For instance, our casual players found Portal 2 to be enjoyable, due to its calm nature of solving puzzles, hence challenging them mentally instead of challenging their reflexes and dexterity. Additionally, the lack of enemies made it a more comfortable experience for some of our players, since they would not feel stressed while solving the puzzles at hand (Interview F & G). The interviewees only showed signs of frustrations, when the puzzles proved to be too difficult, or the portal mechanic proved too hard to understand. Despite these frustrating elements, the interviewees still found the experience enjoyable enough to continue playing it in their spare time. The same is evident with Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. This game's approach to tutorial design was simple and easy to understand, while not being too stressful during fight sequences. Additionally, many of the interviewees showed increased signs of excitement with this game, due to it being based on the popular franchise Star Wars. Whether or not this had a greater effect on their enjoyment and mood state, will be discussed in the Discussion section. Portal

2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was received positively by our interviewees, primarily due to their simple tutorials and easy to understand game mechanics, which led them to feel competent, engaged, and excited for what the games had to offer.

Next section will analyse the story elements, and how it can potentially have an additional effect on our interviewees' mood and enjoyment factor.

The effects of story on one's mood

This section will focus on the story elements of the video games in question, and their effect on our interviewees' mood, and their motivation towards consuming products with similar story elements. This analysis will describe the instances, where the interviewees express signs of frustration or happiness, hence determining if these instances were affected by the video game in question, and what consequences that could have for their consumption of similar video games.

In regards to the story elements of the three selected video games, our interviewees had vastly different opinions on how these games told their stories. The stories themselves range from thrilling action, with characters fighting for their life, to slow and somber mystery settings, with comedic side characters. The stories are varied enough in the three games to provide something for each interviewee. In terms of the implementation of these stories, the approach, which each game takes when telling their story, is also vastly different. As mentioned before, the approaches range from pausing the game to provide story exposition, to no pauses between gameplay and story exposition. The opinions on these approaches are analysed and interpreted to examine whether these story approaches, and the stories themselves, have a negative or positive impact on the interviewees' moods, and their motivation to consume similar games.

To make the data more comprehensible, Final Fantasy VII: Remake and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order will be analysed simultaneously, since they both utilise cutscenes to tell their stories. Portal 2's approach to story, on the other hand, will be analysed on its own, due to it not utilising the cutscene approach. Therefore, each type of approach will be analysed in accordance to our interviewees' preferences and opinions regarding said approaches.

Cutscene approach

The cutscene approach, which has been employed in both Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order and Final Fantasy VII: Remake, was a divisive topic, in terms of how each game utilised said approach. In regards to Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the majority of our interviewees were either not interested, or against the utilisation of the cutscene approach. In contrast, the utilisation of the cutscene approach in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was received positively from the majority of our interviewees. The specific factors resulting in this contrast will be analysed during this section.

Cutscenes are designed to pause the gameplay to provide story exposition. Interviewee A was mainly against the story exposition pausing the game, due to her motivation mostly revolving around playing the game itself and not watching a movie. Interviewee A describes this storytelling approach as:

> Either you're moving forward two steps and then there's story, and then you have to kill three enemies, and then there's story again. Ehm, so that part I don't like, cause I feel like for me it's like watching a movie. Ehm, and that's not what I wanna do when I play a game. (Interview A).

The constant pausing of the gameplay itself can be argued to be leading towards disinterest in the game, since the two elements, story and gameplay, do not exist organically according to Interviewee A. Later on in the interview, Interviewee A expressed opinions about specific story elements that makes her uninterested in the cutscenes. As she describes, she likes the actual gameplay and combat system of the two games. This element of the two games is satisfying and, more importantly, fun for her, which can be argued to elevate her positive mood state. However, as soon as the games decide to pause the fun gameplay to provide story, she experiences boredom. This correlates to her statement when asked if the story elements serve as a motivating factor for her: *"No, cause to be honest, I really don't care."* (Interview A). Here, the interviewee clarifies that story elements usually provide a sense of boredom, which dampens her enjoyment with the actual gameplay. Moreover, she does not feel that the story complements the nature of the gameplay in the slightest. Seen from a consumer perspective, this can be considered to be a negative response, since Interviewee A would most likely not continue to consume these games or similar games, due to the narrative heavy approach that is in effect here. The fact that she

experiences a feeling of boredom, puts a damper on her overall enjoyment of the product, and she, therefore, would most likely look somewhere else for a better experience. According to the mood management theory, consumers, who are feeling bored or sad when consuming a media product, will actively look somewhere else to improve their current mood state (Zillmann, 2000). The same can be argued to be the case here, as Interviewee A was mainly feeling bored and frustrated with the overall experience, and would rather play a different video game that would not incorporate a narrative heavy approach. As she states in the introduction interview, she prefers games like *Spyro The Dragon* (Insomniac Games, 1998), and *Crash Bandicoot* (Naughty Dog & Vivendi Games, 1996), which are known for their lack of story elements and focus more on their gameplay elements (Interview A).

The opinions stated by Interviewee A has been presented here to represent the negative end of the spectrum, in regards to our interviewees' statements and opinions. The rest of the interviewees had mixed opinions about the cutscene approaches. For instance, two interviewees in particular were intrigued by what the story of Final Fantasy VII: Remake had to offer. Interviewee C, and especially D, were very intrigued by where the story was headed, and were happy with the storytelling approach. However, considering Interviewee C's stance on the story, he was more interested in where the story was going, rather than playing the game to completion. In other words, when asked if he was willing to play the game in his spare time, he was not interested in discovering what the gameplay side of the game had to offer, but more what the digital world had to offer with its story and setting (Interview C). This stance of watching someone else play the game is interesting considering that he incorporates the social dimension of gaming, by saying that he would enjoy the game more from a backseat perspective. He would rather watch a friend play it, while he consumes the story elements from the sidelines. It can be argued that he would rather consume this type of game as a movie, rather than as an interactive medium. This stance on video games feeling like a movie by using the cutscene approach is viewed similarly in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, since it also utilises cutscenes to provide story expositions. However, this game also tells its story during gameplay sections, by letting the player interact with the game during sections, where the story is in the forefront. Additionally, when traversing the levels by climbing on walls and jumping over bottomless pits, the game aims to design these sections as cinematic as possible, and our interviewees noticed these cinematic techniques. Interviewee E and G explained that it felt as if they were playing a movie, and that they would not mind watching another person play it,

hence consuming the game as if it was another Star Wars movie (Interview E, and G). Therefore, it can be argued that they were so absorbed in the digital world of Star Wars that they felt similar emotions, as when they previously watched a Star Wars movie, which creates a sensation of complete immersion (Reinecke, 2016). Due to feeling similar emotions, as when they consumed a Star Wars movie, the game is very efficient at simulating the movie experience, hence maintaining a constant positive mood state, and an optimised gaming experience.

A similar point can be made for Interviewee C, who expressed an increased excitement regarding Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, mainly due to it being related to the Star Wars franchise. The gameplay was perceived as being entertaining enough for him, although the story element could be argued to be the main element that had him excited: *"(...) I would have liked to gotten more into the story."* (Interview C). He is pointing out that the introduction did not provide enough story elements for him, and he would have enjoyed it more if there were more story details. The Star Wars franchise, and its subsequent media products, affects him in a positive way by making him excited, stimulated, and motivated to explore the digital world within this particular Star Wars game. This means that the story elements are very effective at altering his mood state positively, or, in this case, negatively, due to the lack of story elements in the introduction (Reinecke, 2016 + Interview C). From a consumption perspective, Interviewee C would not find much enjoyment from a video game, such as Final Fantasy VII: Remake, since it provides him with little satisfaction from the gameplay itself, while the story elements provide mystery, and intrigues him to discover the end of the story (Interview C).

Interviewee D, on the other hand, was very excited about both games, since she thought the gameplay was fun, and was especially interested in discovering what each story had to offer. For instance, about the story in Final Fantasy VII: Remake, she stated:

> Except the first part, I liked it. Cause they don't give you the entire story right away, so you wanna keep playing in order to find out what is going to happen. It's like watching a movie, but you're in it. You can control the movie, and I like that. (Interview D).

It can be argued that the experience with both games provided enough excitement for Interviewee D to continue consuming these products, and potentially similar games that focus on the narrative. The first part of Final Fantasy VII: Remake, which she is referring to, is the introduction sequence,

where the player is presented with an overview of the city of Midgar, and the world that the game will revolve around. Aside from this part, Interviewee D was feeling immersed in the game, and enjoyed the characters and their personalities, while feeling excited to see where it was headed. The uplifting music, and the conversations between the characters, helped to elevate her positive mood state, which in turn made the experience better (Interview D + Reinecke, 2016).
Lastly, Interviewee B provided his opinions, not on the story elements within Final Fantasy VII: Remake itself, but rather on the production quality of the story elements. He states:

> (...) I think what like I notice about the story was how good the voice acting was in this game, and how good the overall communication was between the characters compared to like other games. And, ehm, you could tell really that the voice acting added like sort of like a characteristic layer to the characters that made them feel more alive I would say, like more emotional almost. And that was good. (Interview B).

He was more impressed with the production quality of the story, than the story itself, which is an interesting dimension to analyse in regards to the consumption of media. This dimension made us wonder, whether it is possible for media products to be enjoyable, based on their production quality, and not the content itself. This could provide an interesting aspect to study further in another project. The interviewee mentioned, prior to this statement, that he was confused regarding the plot of the story, and was slightly bored by it, hence having a higher need to just play the game rather than watching the story play out. Despite the story itself inspiring a sense of boredom for the interviewee, he would still be willing to play the game in his spare time, purely based on the production quality of the graphics and voice acting. This statement provides insight into the mentioned dimension of media consumption, and the choices that are made purely based on production quality (Interview B).
Interviewee E, F and G all shared the same opinion about the story element, and the approach to storytelling in Final Fantasy VII: Remake. They found it pleasing and exciting to look at, while trying to figure out what is going on with the characters and their stake in it all. Interviewee E and G were slightly annoyed and confused as to what the plot is, since the game does not inform the player specifically what is going on, and utilises plenty of foreshadowing in its introduction sequence. However, they are willing to keep playing the game simply to figure out what the story

is all about, which means they are excited about what the story has to offer (Interview E and G). On the other hand, the majority of the interviewees found the story elements more simple and easier to follow in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order than Final Fantasy VII: Remake, which made that aspect of the experience more enjoyable. Interviewee B in particular, also pointed out that the protagonist of the story felt relatable to him:

> And I think this one was like the best, because I feel the hero here tries kind of be relatable with the main target group of the whole game, so you, I mean it's like easy for you to put yourself in the shoes of the hero, or kind of, you want to relate to the person you play, I think in this game the most. And that's also what appealed to me like the most of the story. (Interview B)

The sensation of relatability is very effective at optimising a consumer's mood state, according to the 'Semantic Affinity' dimension of media consumption. This dimension argues that consumers will respond positively to media content that echoes what the consumer is currently feeling (Reinecke, 2016). This means that the game has designed a protagonist, who is created with characteristics and a personality, that is easily relatable to the player. Therefore, it is easier to get attached to the main character, and enjoy his personality, hence making the experience more enjoyable. Additionally, Interviewee F viewed the cutscenes as being a break from the stressful action sequences. This means that the implementation of cutscenes functions as a break, and prevents Interviewee F from immediately feeling stressed and exhausted in the beginning of the game, which would decrease her mood and overall enjoyment of the game. Additionally, she mentioned that games with intense fighting sequences would stress her out to the point of needing a break from the game for an extended period of time (Interview F). Therefore, it can be argued that she would enjoy these types of games less, if they did not utilise a similar storytelling approach.

Lack of cutscene approach

The storytelling of Portal 2 has been structured differently from the two other games, the story is not explicitly told to the player, but rather through context clues around the level, and through comedic interactions with AI controlled robots. The main protagonist is mute and has no personality, which means that the primary source of character and personality emanates from the AI controlled robots that are talking to you. Therefore, the story is not at the forefront like the other two games, which utilised cutscenes to tell their stories. Portal 2 does not stop the gameplay to provide exposition, and our interviewees had mixed opinions about this approach. For instance, Interviewee A, C and G were not paying much attention to the story being told to them by the robots in the background, but would rather pay attention to the gameplay at hand (Interview A, C & G). Additionally, Interviewee A was confused about what was going on around her, since the story is not told explicitly to the player, and she required more details in the story (Interview A). Despite not paying attention to the story elements of the game, the gameplay was still enjoyable enough for them to continue playing in their spare time. Therefore, it can be argued that the story mainly serves as a tiny, but vital, role, which is to bring life to the desolate environments that the game occupies itself in. The mood management theory would argue that due to the story elements not being able to hold their attention, then they would rather consume something else, since it is not very interesting for them (Zillmann, 2000). However, due to the gameplay elements being so interesting for the interviewees, the game is still considered a success, despite them ignoring an essential part of the game (Interview A, C & G).

The rest of the interviewees found the story interesting. Whether it was the story itself or the comedic nature of the character interaction, these three interviewees found some enjoyment regarding the story elements. Interviewee D, E and F found the comedic nature of the robots to be funny, and expressed that this made them enjoy the game more:

> I think it was brilliant. I loved it. I think it gave, it was a fun, it was a fun way of getting into an environment that you're not used to being. It was really enjoyable. I don't know, I just love it when humour is used the way it is to get into this universe you're supposed to be in that make any sense. So I found it really really enjoyable. (Interview E).

Here, the 'Hedonic Valence' dimension can be argued to be at play, since the game's story was designed to implement a high usage of comedy. The hedonic valence argument revolves around media content being capable of maintaining a specific mood through emotional messaging, which, in this case, is comedy designed to make the consumer laugh. Therefore, these three interviewees enjoy content that is humorous, hence responding positively to the comedic nature in the game (Reinecke, 2016). Additionally, Interviewee D praised the game for not interrupting the gameplay for the sake of story exposition (Interview D).

Interviewee B, on the other hand, was more interested in the story elements than any of the other interviewees. The game also features paintings and messages on the walls of the different levels, to tell the story through these context clues, and he was very interested in seeking these paintings out:

> (...) so like the walls with the drawings on the walls. I saw them, I mean I figured out there were like scientists, and they messed up with like technology development, and then something bad happened (...) So I kinda thought that as soon as I saw something, I always wanted to just see what that is to get more info. (Interview B).

As Zillmann (2000) argues, consumers usually search for stimulating and action packed media content. However, some are more inclined to choose media content that is designed to lecture its consumers, which can be argued to be the case with this game and its context clues. Interviewee B's motivation for seeking out these clues was to learn more about the digital world within the game, which means he has a desire to educate himself as a player (Zillmann, 2000 + Interview B).

In summary

The cutscene approach can be useful at conveying story to players. However, the success of this approach depends on several different factors. These factors can be the player's personal tastes, such as what type of story they prefer, whether pausing the game is acceptable to the different players, and whether the story sequences feel drawn out or exciting to keep the players engaged in the narrative. The most popular opinion among our interviewees is that the story approach in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was exciting, simple to follow, and did not disrupt the gameplay flow, due

to integrating story sequences among gameplay sequences. On the other hand, the common consensus was that Final Fantasy VII: Remake's story approach was confusing, drawn out, and disrupted the gameplay flow for the majority of the interviewees. However, some of the interviewees found both story approaches to be pleasing. Therefore, it is difficult to define how the cutscene approach to storytelling can become successful, but these findings can narrow down what works and what does not work with said approach for casual players.

Portal 2's story approach was unique, in this case, due to it not utilising the cutscene approach. The interviewees mostly felt indifferent about this approach to storytelling, since many of them simply ignored the story, or were not paying attention. However, by implementing heavy amounts of comedic elements to the story, it helped some of the interviewees to feel more engaged with the story. Therefore, if players find a story to be entertaining, i.e funny in this case, then it can help players feel engaged in the story, despite the story not explaining the plot in great detail.

The following section will explore discussion points, which have been found from these findings.

Discussion

Discussion on the complexity of rewards

From the analysis, we discovered that our casual players are mainly extrinsically motivated when presented with rewards, regardless of whether it is tangible or intangible rewards. As mentioned earlier, this means that the interviewees are driven by controlled motivation, i.e. they feel pressured to play certain games, based on them wanting to collect certain rewards. The intangible rewards consist of visual stimulation, and we speculate whether the tangible rewards presented in the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake, is something that can keep capturing the casual players' attention throughout the game. Furthermore, we think it is worth discussing whether the players are collecting the tangible rewards because they want to, or simply because the game tells them to. The problem is, namely, that the majority of the interviewees did not know what they were collecting from the boxes and the chests. Therefore, they did not utilise what they were given. It does seem that the only reason they collected these rewards, was because the game introduced the rewards to them. Based on the analysis, we can deduce that the interviewees found these rewards

too complicated, as the game did not explain what to use these items for. Moreover, we found out that three of our interviewees did not know how to find the potions (Interview D, E and G), while the last four found out where the potions were by pressing random buttons (Interview A, B, C, and F). We also noticed that practically all the interviewees did not find all the chests and boxes. In other words, they did not really investigate the entire level looking for boxes and chests, which suggest that they did not know or care about what was inside. They all expressed a desire to collect what was in these chests and boxes, but maybe subconsciously they did not really care. In other words, they just did what the game told them to do. For instance, at some stages of the game, where the player is presented with different enemies, the majority of the interviewees killed all the enemies presented to them, where they actually could have just moved past them and progressed further in the game. This is a clear example that the interviewees did what the game wanted them to do, i.e. presented them with enemies it wanted them to kill, which they did.

Another reason why the interviewees did not collect all the chests and boxes could be that the interviewees were too stressed with all the enemies, to even consider thoroughly investigating the level for rewards. A couple of our interviewees seemed slightly stressed during fighting sequences, because some had trouble with moving the camera, therein having trouble killing the enemies (Interview E, and F). This could be argued to be the reason why they tend to overlook rewards throughout the game. Furthermore, many of the interviewees seemed to feel overwhelmed with certain elements, such as switching character to Barret and shooting targets in the air, and moving through lasers (Interview A, B, C, and G). This could all contribute to them not having a clear overview of everything, and leaving them to not explore each stage of the game for rewards.

This all leads to a bigger question, namely whether the rewards introduced in the video game Final Fantasy VII: Remake are too complicated, in that the game does not explain to the player what EXP is, what a Phoenix Down is, and in general what the different potions and ethers are used for. The solution could be that the game provides a tutorial on how to use the potions, what they are for, and where to find them in the X-menu. However, as our interviewees have already expressed that the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake provides too much information and text in the tutorials, it would be problematic to implement more tutorials and more information. Another solution could, therefore, be to implement a tutorial section, where the player is presented with a situation, in which they have to use a potion to complete a certain scenario. In this case, the player would be encouraged to use this function, and then, hopefully, be able to remember the information later on,

just like we saw was the case with the video game Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. The last question is then, whether Final Fantasy VII: Remake even has to present tangible rewards to the player. In Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, the only reward present is in the form of a visual stimulation, which seemed to be enough for the interviewees to strive for. Whether that can keep motivating a casual player to keep consuming, is a very interesting aspect to research further. From this research, we can certainly define a tendency that this visual stimulation is enough for our casual players as a reward.

Discussion on tutorial approaches

It can be argued that the tutorial approach utilised in Final Fantasy VII: Remake, was not comprehensible to our interviewees. The tutorial was deemed too complex, due to information overload, complex in-game terminologies, and constantly pausing the fun gameplay to provide further information. Therefore, the interviewees had a difficult experience with this game, which resulted in them not feeling motivated or incentivised to continue playing. Considering these arguments, it can be discussed, whether choosing Final Fantasy VII: Remake for this study, was a smart choice or not. On one hand, the reasoning behind choosing this type of game was to showcase this specific tutorial approach, and, therefore, observe how the casual players responded to such an approach. However, this choice resulted in the interviewees becoming frustrated at the overall experience, and not feeling motivated to consume the game further, hence losing a potential fan in the process. Moreover, it can be argued that Final Fantasy VII: Remake was not designed with casual players in mind, by not designing it to be casual friendly in conveying complex information to the player. The title of the game also seems to coincide with this argument. “Final Fantasy VII: Remake”, is a title that insinuates that the game was made for fans of the original game, due to the game being called a remake. Therefore, it can be discussed whether this game is friendly, in its complex mechanics and tutorial approach, to casual players and newcomers to the franchise. Based on our findings, it can be argued that the game was not designed to be easily accessible for casual players, hence resulting in our casual players having a negative experience.

The fact that the game was presumably designed for a dedicated fanbase, can be one side of the argument, as to why the tutorial was deemed too difficult by our interviewees. The other side can be the tutorial approach itself is providing a challenge that our interviewees were struggling with. As described earlier, the tutorial approach was the ‘Tutorial by Exposition’ approach, which pauses

the gameplay to provide information about the mechanics of the game (Suddaby, 2012). This tutorial type is usually employed in games with complex mechanics that are, to some extent, difficult for the developers to convey to the players. This is usually the case with RPG's, such as other Final Fantasy games. This results in the tutorial not feeling intuitive, and too complex for casual players.

However, the 'tutorial by exposition' approach can be discussed as being the reason why our casual players did not enjoy Final Fantasy VII: Remake, but how come the tutorial in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was so successful? This game employs the 'Contextual Lesson' tutorial type, which informs the player about relevant information when needed (Suddaby, 2012). This tutorial type was easy to follow and understand for our interviewees. However, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order contains elements within its combat system, which is inspired by a sub-genre that is known for being difficult. As Tom Senior, of the video game news outlet PCGAMER, describes, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was heavily inspired by elements from games that are developed by the company *From Software* (Senior, 2019). As mentioned in the video game history section, *From Software* are known for making intense and difficult games, with complex mechanics and control schemes that are hard to master. Additionally, these games do not contain easy to understand tutorials, or, more precisely, they do not attempt at teaching the player much of what they can and cannot do. However, due to Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order being heavily inspired by such games, it is interesting to note that our interviewees found this game to be the easiest, and the most enjoyable game out of the chosen games. Here, it can be argued that the utilisation of the 'contextual lesson' tutorial, and the fact that the game does not contain as complex and difficult elements as the games it was inspired from, results in the experience being less frustrating and less difficult to comprehend. Therefore, it can be argued that tutorials serve a vital role for a player's initial impression upon any game. As seen with Final Fantasy VII: Remake, the interviewees were not fond of the game, mainly due to the complexity of the tutorial, while Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was more enjoyable, arguably due to the tutorial being simple and satisfying to pull off.

With all this in mind, it can be difficult to determine what type of tutorial works for the general demographic of players. However, from this study it can be argued that simple tutorials, despite the game incorporating complex game mechanics, can result in players being captivated by the game from the start, due to feeling competent in their gaming endeavours.

Discussion on further consumption

As we determined in the analysis, our interviewees all showed a clear motivation to continue consuming the two games Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, and Portal 2. Contrarily, the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake proved to not be very popular to our interviewees. As has been discussed earlier, this reason for deselecting the Final Fantasy VII: Remake game can be due to the fact that this game is a Remake. Therefore, it has been created for people, who are already fans and know the universe, are familiar with the different control schemes, and all the options available. Furthermore, we identified in the analysis that the casual players have a tendency to be intrinsically motivated when playing Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. In the case of the latter, the casual players do feel somewhat extrinsic in that they desire to achieve the reward of visual stimulation. This means that our casual players are self-determined and autonomous in choosing which video games to play, and how long they are going to play it (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Now that we have established that our casual players were having fun and enjoying themselves, while playing Portal 2 and Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, i.e. the action-adventure game and the puzzle game, then we can discuss whether they will actually keep consuming these genres of games in the future. In other words, will our casual consumers purchase games that belong to the genres of action-adventure and puzzle, or will their consumption behaviour not change at all? This is an interesting aspect to discuss, as this project wants to explore how to increase the consumption behaviour of casual players in regards to video games.

To discuss this aspect, we need to examine the reasons why our casual players consume video games in the first place. When we asked our interviewees why they play video games, the majority of them answered that they were playing to just relax, have fun, and kill some time: *"Ehm, it's fun (laughs). Good time killer."* (Interview F). When employing the terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it becomes evident that all our casual players believe they are intrinsically motivated, i.e. being driven by autonomous motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005 + Deci & Ryan, 2000). They play when they want to, either because they are bored, they want to experience some thrill and excitement, or just want to relax and have some fun. One interviewee also expressed that she chooses the medium of video games when she is tired of using the medium of television: *"(...) just do something else than just watch shows."* (Interview A). As we can see, our casual players, in their own words, are not being controlled by any elements of the video games. This is very interesting, as this does not completely coincide with our findings. As we have discussed earlier,

our casual players are controlled by collecting tangible rewards, as well as achieve visual stimulation to some degree. This means that they feel they need to do something, i.e. collect rewards. Therefore, the casual players are not aware of them being controlled by certain elements of the video games. However, as we explored earlier, our casual players are intrinsically motivated when there are no tangible rewards, which coincides with their reasoning for playing. The question then becomes, how we capture the attention of these casual players. In other words, how we get them to consume more video games, when they just play for the enjoyment of it. As we identified in the analysis section, certain elements of the video game design capture the attention of the casual players. For example, the story has to be incorporated in the gameplay, in such a way that it does not disrupt the gameplay flow; and the tutorial has to be simple with short instructions, and provide a familiar control scheme. We can then argue that the casual players need to consume games within the puzzle or action-adventure genre, which we saw incorporates these working elements. The reason for this is that these genres have proved to be popular with our interviewees, and they are, therefore, more likely to capture the attention of the casual players for a long period of time. Therefore, the casual players need to explore what genre the different games adhere to when choosing a video game, as we saw they did not respond well to the RPG genre. Moreover, when marketing a video game to casual players, one could argue that you need to put emphasis on what kind of genre it is. However, then we need to assume that casual players know what the different genres entail. This may not be the case, as casual players are not game literate, meaning they do not know all the different terms and lingo (Sundbo og Darmer, 2008). For example, whether you can see the avatar you are playing or not, means that you are either controlling the avatar from a first person, or a third person perspective. One of our interviewees did not know what this was called: *"(...) what's it called when you're controlling the person and he's running around? It's called first point of view playing?"* (Interview G). Therefore, we cannot assume that casual players know what this means. Moreover, we could argue that when marketing a video game to a casual player, then you rather need to put emphasis on how the different elements are, such as explaining, or showing, how the tutorial is set up.

Another factor that influences the casual players' consumption behaviour is the cost of playing video games. Therefore, another factor that makes it difficult to enter this gaming world for casual players is that you need certain equipment. When watching a movie or a TV show, then all that is required is a television, or a laptop, or a phone or tablet. However, when playing a video game,

then you need a certain console, a desktop computer, or a gaming laptop. Today, we have a lot of different consoles, such as PlayStation (different versions); Nintendo Wii; X-box; and Nintendo Switch. This means that it can quickly become very expensive to equip yourself with what is required to play video games, especially if you want to play video games from different consoles (Kato, 2013). A couple of our casual players also mentioned that they play it either with friends, or with their significant other: *"Well, recently we got a PlayStation 4, or I just, ehm moved in with someone, who has a PlayStation 4."* (Interview B), and *"So, I play once in a while, only for fun with friends."* (Interview G). One could argue that these interviewees are only playing video games, because they have access to them through someone else's equipment. Therefore, one could assume that casual players, who live by themselves, do not have incentives to enter the gaming world, i.e. overcome this barrier of entry. In other words, playing video games can quickly become a very expensive hobby, which might be why the casual players are the largest group of consumers, but do not consume that many video games (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). Furthermore, if the casual players did manage to acquire the needed equipment, then the next barrier of which game to play, arises. As an example, Interviewee G mentioned that she had just bought a game called '*God of War'*, which was chosen by random, as she did not have any knowledge of the different kinds of video games. As a result, she had a negative experience, as she did not like this type of game at all. One could argue that this experience will inhibit our casual player from purchasing another game, unless she has tried it before at a friends house, for instance (Interview G). Another one of our interviewees also mentioned that she does not play video games, which she is not familiar with. In other words, she does not want to venture into new games and try something different (Interview A). This presents a big issue, as we then are dependent on the casual player having friends, family, or a significant other to show them new games, which the casual player then wants to play themselves.

Discussion about casual and hardcore players regarding self-determination

Based on the findings from the analysis, it can be argued, and discussed that casual players have a tendency to be more self-determined than hardcore players. In other words, whether the casual players are motivated to play games based on the pure fun of it, or their motivation are influenced by an external factor, such as rewards for achieving a specific goal. Our interviewees responded in a way that could signify that they would rather play for the entertainment factor, than to appease

another type of need, which could be impressing fellow peers, or achieving a certain goal for themselves within the games. These tendencies are not apparent with hardcore players, considering the amount of hours they play per week. As previously mentioned in the 'audience model', hardcore players are willing to play a plethora of different games, and are mostly interested in being challenged by games, hence playing to overcome a specific obstacle (Bateman & Boon, 2006). According to a survey, designed by the market research company Quantic Foundry, hardcore players are more motivated to play a particular game if it contains challenging elements, requires a high skill level, and competition among other players. The survey is designed to identify each type of player's initial motivation, when choosing which games to play, and in the case of hardcore players, they prefer competition and excitement over anything else. The opposite end of the spectrum, the casual players, prefer elements that encompasses fantasy, story, and the sensation of completion. Based on the primary motivational factors from this survey, and our own findings on casual players' response to different game elements, hardcore players tend to be extrinsically motivated to play games rather than intrinsically like casual players. Therefore, it can be argued that hardcore players are motivated to play games, not based on the pure enjoyment factor, but rather to acheive something. This can be the sensation of proving oneself to be better than one's peers, overcoming a difficult challenge, receiving satisfying rewards, and achieving a digital social status within the gamer environment, i.e a rank displaying one's skill level (Yee, 2018). Additionally, modern multiplayer games have been designed to capture players' attention for as long as possible, by implementing rewards for playing the game over an extended period of times. According to Game-Ace Creative Studio, which is a video game studio that specialises in crafting addictive video game designs, a common trope in crafting an addictive video game experience seems to be an efficient implementation of an addictive reward system (*Effective Game Mechanics: The Secrets Behind Addictive Gameplays*, 2018). Reward systems serve to reward a player for simply playing the specific game, achieving a certain milestone, or reaching a certain rank on a ranking system. These types of reward systems can be argued to have an addictive effect on players, which incentivise them to return to the game to receive more rewards. This coincides with the former argument of hardcore players being less self-determined than casual players, since it can be argued that hardcore players choose to play these types of games, due to the implementation of addicting reward systems. Hardcore players are usually motivated to play for other purposes than to have fun, and making progress on a progressional reward system can add

to their purpose to play games. However, the same could be the case, considering our findings on casual players. Our casual players were also intrigued by rewards in the chosen games. Despite the appeal of receiving rewards in video games, our casual players did not state that these rewards were the primary reason to play said games. The reasons for playing were mainly based on having fun, or experiencing a story unfold. Therefore, it can be discussed whether hardcore players are more inclined than casual players to play games based on rewards systems, and other external factors. The survey, designed by Quantic Foundry, argues that hardcore players would be more inclined to play games based on rewards, and the sense of accomplishing something (Yee, 2018). As a result, harcore players are less self-determined, due to being motivated by external factors, than casual players, who play for pure enjoyment or to experience a story.

Now that casual players have been argued to be more self-determined than hardcore players, it is vital to discuss the ramifications of this. As mentioned earlier, being self-determined refers to the idea that an individual is capable of choosing what activity to perform, based on intrinsic factors and not extrinsic factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, we can discuss marketing strategies, and their effectiveness on self-determined players i.e casual players. For instance, the announcement of the video game Battlefield 5 (2018) included specific video game terminology, which can be argued to speak primarily to the hardcore player audience. The announcement revolved around the game not including a certain type of reward system, namely the 'Loot Box' system (Makuch, 2018). Loot boxes are a collectible resource, which contains a randomised assortment of different kinds of rewards. These can be cosmetic rewards, to make one's character appear to one's taste; or game enhancing rewards, which makes one's gaming experience more efficient. These loot boxes are seemingly despised in the gaming community, since they have the ability to be utilised in a greedy manner by video game developers, and create trends that can lead to a gambling addiction, due to their nature of being randomised rewards, akin to a slot machine (Dunn, 2018). The earlier mentioned announcement regarding the lack of loot boxes in Battlefield 5 (2018), was utilised as a marketing strategy by the company EA, to signify to players that such a despised reward system would not be implemented. The validity of that announcement being successful as a marketing strategy, can be argued to be based on the sheer amount of gaming news outlets that reported on said announcement (Makuch, 2018). This signified that the lack of loot boxes was a phenomenal decision, which the majority of the gaming community could agree upon. However, it can be argued that casual players would not perceive this announcement in a similar manner to

hardcore players, since they might not even have a negative association with loot boxes, or are even aware of what they are. With that said, similar marketing, and commercial, strategies might not be as effective to use on casual players as on hardcore players, due to the former being more self-determined in their consumption practises.

Based on our findings, in regards to Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order in particular, our casual players seemed overly excited to play this particular game, compared to the other two games. This excitement can be argued to be based on their familiarity with the popular franchise of Star Wars. All of our interviewees were either familiar with, or a fan of the Star Wars franchise, and all showed signs of excitement and wonder as to what this game had to offer. Coincidentally, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was considered to be the best game out of the three chosen games. Therefore, it can be discussed whether a game being associated with a popular franchise, aids in captivating casual players' attention. As described earlier in the story analysis section, the interviewees were not as excited for the story of Final Fantasy VII: Remake, as they were about Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. This could be the result of our interviewees not being familiar with the franchise of Final Fantasy, while being fans of the Star Wars franchise. The sense of familiarity can be discussed to have a great effect on consumers' enjoyment of a specific product, hence our consumers being more excited about Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, than the other two chosen games. A similar case is happening with the recent release of the video game 'Marvels' Avengers' (2020). As the title suggests, the game revolves around playing as one's favorite superheroes, while beating several enemies in the process (Crystal Dynamics & Eidos Montréal, 2020). The game is based on the massively successful franchise of 'The Avengers' (Marvel), hence being capable of captivating casual players, who might not play often, but are fans of the franchise. According to a tweet made by the developers' Twitter account, the game was designed to be accessible to as many players as possible, even casual players, who are not adept at playing games (Fischer, 2019). The game is able to captivate any player, who is also an 'Avengers' fan, which coincides with the argument that games associated with popular movie franchises, can reach a grander audience, herein the casual player demographic. The effectiveness of associating games with popular movie franchises, can be discussed and analysed further in another study. In this study, it can be argued that Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order was deemed enjoyable and fun for our interviewees, based on its association with the popular franchise of Star Wars. Therefore, in regards to captivating self-determined casual players, it can be argued that having games be associated with these popular

movie franchises can captivate them more effectively than utilising gaming terminologies, or describing the game mechanics in the marketing campaigns. The latter strategies can be argued to be more effective towards the hardcore player demographic.
The next, and last section, of this project, will conclude all the findings. Based on these, we can answer our problem formulation.

Conclusion

This last section will conclude our findings. Our problem formulation for this project is: How do the different elements of video game design affect casual players' game experience, and their consumption behaviour? The analysis was divided into four different sections, which each examined different elements of video game design.
We can conclude that our casual players are driven by controlled motivation, i.e. external regulation, when presented with tangible rewards or an intangible reward in the form of visual stimulation, which they deemed as an extra layer of enjoyment. However, when presented with no rewards, then the casual players are intrinsically motivated, i.e. driven by autonomous motivation. From the three chosen games, we can further conclude that the players are driven by rewards, but if they are not present, then the simple enjoyment of playing a game and having fun is enough.
When examining the control scheme element, then we can conclude that the casual players felt confident when using a control scheme, they were familiar with. The control scheme in the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake did not feel familiar to any of the interviewees. Therefore, it left the players with a lack of competence, and therein making them feel amotivated to keep playing. Additionally, when feeling a lack of competence, then one's mood state becomes negatively altered, since one needs to feel competent to feel happy and confident. The interviewees' overall experience with Final Fantasy VII: Remake was deemed negative, due to their mood state being negatively altered, based on its complicated tutorial approach and complex mechanics. Therefore, the interviewees would rather consume a different video game to gain a positive mood state. However, in the other two games, the control schemes provided the casual players with a sense of

competence, therein attributing to create an intrinsic motivation, i.e. playing for the thrill and enjoyment of the game.

Regarding the element of tutorials, we found there are two types of tutorials, namely the 'tutorial by exposition', and 'contextual lesson tutorial'. We can conclude that the former provided a lack of competence to the casual players, i.e. making the players feel amotivated, as this type proved to be too complicated to comprehend. We can further conclude that this type provided too much text and information, as well as too many abbreviations that the players did not understand, which provided them with a negative experience. We later discovered in the discussion section that the game Final Fantasy VII: Remake, which employs a 'tutorial by exposition' approach, is created for the fans of the franchise. Therefore, it is not very casual player friendly, which is supported by our casual players not liking this tutorial approach. With the other tutorial approach, 'contextual lesson', we can conclude that this works efficiently for the casual players. This type of approach provides a sense of competence to the players, and aids in creating an intrinsic motivation and a positive mood state. Additionally, these two games provided the interviewees with elements that were found to be exciting, relaxing, immersive, and relatable, in terms of the main protagonist in Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. Therefore, we can further conclude games with this type of approach, are suited for casual players, and are games that they are motivated to play.

When moving on to the element of story, then we had two approaches: the cutscene approach and the lack of cutscene approach. With this element, we can conclude that our casual players are most pleased when the cutscenes do not disrupt the gameplay flow, as a result of the story sequences being integrated with the gameplay sequences. This, in turn, resulted in some of the interviewees feeling immersed, due to cinematic elements being utilised when conveying the story. When the game is utilising a lack of cutscene approach, then we can conclude that the casual players feel indifferent, and do not actively search for story elements. However, the use of comedic relief as part of the story has proven to be popular among the majority of our casual players.

To sum up, the different elements of video game design each affect the casual players' game experience in different ways. Complex video game designs affect the players negatively, due to them feeling a sense of incompetence, i.e. feeling amotivated to keep consuming. The feeling of incompetence provided them with a negative experience, which in turn made them feel a noxious mood state. Contrarily, simple, and intuitive game designs, and elements, provide the player with a sense of competence, hence creating a positive experience. This means that the players were

motivated, mainly intrinsically, to keep consuming these types of video games, due to feeling confident in overcoming the challenges at hand. From this we can further conclude that our interviewees are mainly driven by autonomous motivation, i.e. they are in control of when to consume and what to consume. It can further be concluded that the consumption behaviour of the casual players can be affected by the games being associated with popular movie franchises. This association affects the casual players positively due to them finding the popular movie franchises to be exciting, hence incentivising them to consume games they are associated with. To conclude this section, our casual players have been defined to be self-determined, due to them being mainly intrinsically motivated by the different video game elements. Therefore, it is a difficult task to capture the attention of the casual players, as they are not game literate, and their main motivation to consume video games are to simply enjoy the activity of playing.

References

- Bateman, C. M., & Boon, R. (2006). *21st Century Game Design*. Charles River Media
- Banyte, J., & Gadeikiene, A. (2015). The Effect of Consumer Motivation to Play Games on Video Game-playing Engagement. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 26*, 505-514. doi:10.1016/s2212-5671(15)00880-1
- Blaikie, N., & Priest, J. (2019). *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation* (3rd ed.). Medford: Polity Press
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Conroy, S. (2020). *Video Game Industry Statistics, Trends & Data - The Ultimate List*. WePC | Let's Build Your Dream Gaming PC. Retrieved September 11, 2020, from https://www.wepc.com/news/video-game-statistics/
- Crystal Dynamics, & Eidos Montréal. (n.d.). *Marvel Avengers - About the game*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from https://avengers.square-enix-games.com/en-us/
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01
- Della Porta, D., & Keating, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dunn, E. (2018, October 27). Loot Boxes: What's all the fuss about? Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://mediawrites.law/loot-boxes-whats-all-the-fuss-about/
- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith, J. H., & Tosca, S. P. (2013). *Understanding video games: The Essential Introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge
- *Effective Game Mechanics: The Secrets Behind Addictive Gameplays*. (2018, January 16). Game-Ace Creative Studio. https://game-ace.com/blog/effective-game-mechanics-the-secrets-behind-addictive-gameplays/
- Fischer, T. (2019, September 01). Marvel's Avengers Won't Only Cater To Casual Players and Marvel Fans. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://comicbook.com/gaming/news/marvels-avengers-ps4-xbox-one-pc-casual-players/
- Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *26*(4), 331–362. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.322

- Gibbs, G. R. (2018). *Analyzing Qualitative Data (Qualitative Research Kit)* (Second ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hitchens, M., & Drachen, A. (2008). The Many Faces of Role-Playing Games. *International Journal of Role-Playing*, *1*, 3–18. http://www.ijrp.subcultures.nl/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/ijrpissue11.pdf
- *How to make a good video game tutorial.* (n.d.). School of Game Design. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://schoolofgamedesign.com/project/good-video-game-tutorial/
- Insomniac Games. (1998). *Spyro The Dragon.* [PlayStation Game]. California, US: Sony Computer Entertainment
- James, M. (2018, October 21). *Newbie Friendly Fighters: Are Fighting Games Becoming Too Easy?* Nerd Dirty. https://nerddirty.com/games/newbie-friendly-fighters-are-fighting-games-becoming-too-easy/
- Karhulahti, V.-M. (2011). Mechanic/aesthetic videogame genres. *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference on Envisioning Future Media Environments - MindTrek '11*, 71–74. https://doi.org/10.1145/2181037.2181050
- Kato, M. (2013, June 3). *Opinion – The High Barrier To Entry Of Video Games*. Game Informer. Retrieved form https://www.gameinformer.com/b/features/archive/2013/06/03/opinion-the-high-barrier-to-entry-of-video-games.aspx
- Klung, C. G & Schell, J. (2006). *Why People Play Games: An Industry Perspective.* In Vorderer, B. & Bryant, J. (Eds.), *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses and Consequences (pp 104- 114)* Taylor & Francis e-library, 2009
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The Field behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *39*(1), 61–72. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.39.1.61.18935
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Conducting an interview.* Doing Interviews (1st ed., pp. 51-66): London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lafrenière, M.-A. K., Verner-Filion, J., & Vallerand, R. J. (2012). Development and validation of the Gaming Motivation Scale (GAMS). *Personality and Individual Differences*, *53*(7), 827–831. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2012.06.013

- Levy, S. (1999). Motivation research. In S. J. Levy & D. W. Rook *Brands, consumers, symbols, & research* (pp. 462-465). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781452231372.n45
- Makuch, E. (2018, May 28). Battlefield 5 Has No Loot Boxes. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://www.gamespot.com/articles/battlefield-5-has-no-loot-boxes/1100-6459238/
- Mallett, C., Kawabata, M., & Newcombe, P. (2007). Progressing measurement in sport motivation with the SMS-6: A response to Pelletier, Vallerand, and Sarrazin. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *8*(5), 622–631. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2007.05.001
- Moizer, J., Lean, J., Dell'Aquila, E., Walsh, P., Keary, A., O'Byrne, D., Ferdinando, A. D., Miglino, O., Friedrich, R., Asperges, R., Sica, L. S. (2019a). An approach to evaluating the user experience of serious games. *Computers & Education*, *136*, 141–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.04.006
- Mora-Cantallops, M. (2018). Transhistorical perspective of the puzzle video game genre. *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1145/3235765.3235768
- Naughty Dog & Vivendi Games. (1996). *Crash Bandicoot.* [PlayStation Game]. California, US: Sony Computer Entertainment
- Neys, J. L. D., Jansz, J., & Tan, E. S. H. (2014). Exploring persistence in gaming: The role of self-determination and social identity. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *37*, 196–209. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.04.047
- O'Reilly, K. (2005). Where to begin. *ethnographic method* (pp. 25–58). London: Routledge.
- O'Rourke, P. (2012, November 8). *Are video games getting too accessible?* Canada.Com. Retrieved from https://o.canada.com/technology/gaming/are-video-games-getting-too-accessible
- Park, G. (2020, April 27). *So you want to be a gamer. Here's how you can start.* Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2020/03/27/so-you-want-be-gamer-heres-how-you-can-start/
- Pot, J., & Fitzpatrick, J. (2018, March 10). *Why Old Video Games Were So Hard: The Unofficial History of Nintendo Hard*. How-To Geek.

https://www.howtogeek.com/219142/why-old-video-games-were-so-hard-the-unofficial-history-of-nintendo-hard/

- Przybylski, A. K., Rigby, C. S., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). A Motivational Model of Video Game Engagement. *Review of General Psychology*, *14*(2), 154–166. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019440
- Reinecke, L. (2016). Mood Management Theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects,* 1-13. doi:10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0085
- Respawn Entertainment. (2019). *Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order* [PlayStation Game]. California, US: EA
- Saunders, M. N. K., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students (5th Edition)* (5th ed.). Harlow: Pearson.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2003). Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln. (Eds.). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (pp. 292–326). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Senior, T. (2019, June 08). Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order borrows systems from Dark Souls and Metroid Prime. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://www.pcgamer.com/star-wars-jedi-fallen-order-borrows-systems-from-dark-souls-and-metroid-prime/
- Sheldon, K. M., Williams, G., & Joiner, T. (2003). *Self-Determination Theory in the Clinic: Motivating Physical and Mental Health*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sirani, J. (2020, May 18). Top 10 Best-Selling Video Games of All Time. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://www.ign.com/articles/2019/04/19/top-10-best-selling-video-games-of-all-time
- Standage, M., Duda, J. L., & Ntoumanis, N. (2006). Students' Motivational Processes and Their Relationship to Teacher Ratings in School Physical Education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *77*(1), 100–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2006.10599336
- Gough, C. (2020, July 24). U.S. most popular video game genres 2018. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/189592/breakdown-of-us-video-game-sales-2009-by-genre/

- Suddaby, P. (2012, August 31). The Many Ways to Show the Player How It's Done With In-Game Tutorials. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/tutorials/the-many-ways-to-show-the-player-how-its-done-with-in-game-tutorials--gamedev-400
- Sundbo, J., & Darmer, P. (2008). *Creating Experiences In The Experience Economy (Services, Economy and Innovation)*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Pub.
- Square-Enix. (2020). *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* [PlayStation game]. Tokyo: Square-Enix
- *The high barrier of entry to video games.* (2014, August 22). [Online forum post]. Reddit. Retrieved September 14 2020 from: https://www.reddit.com/r/Games/comments/2e8isw/the_high_barrier_of_entry_to_video_games/
- Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory: A View from the Hierarchical Model of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 312–318. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1449629
- Valve Corporation. (2011). *Portal 2* [Computer Game]. Bellevue, Washington: Valve Corporation
- Webb, K. (2019, April 4). *An insanely difficult new game from the creators of "Dark Souls" has some players demanding an easy mode, but hardcore fans think it would ruin the creator's vision*. Business Insider. https://www.businessinsider.com/sekiro-shadows-die-easy-mode-difficulty-2019-4?international=true&r=US&IR=T
- Weinstein, A. M. (2010). Computer and Video Game Addiction—A Comparison between Game Users and Non-Game Users. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, *36*(5), 268–276. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.3109/00952990.2010.491879
- Williams, G. (2018, February 25). Active Learning: The Pedagogy of the Game Tutorial. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://www.popmatters.com/111485-active-learning-the-pedagogy-of-the-game-tutorial-2496084217.html
- Yee, N. (2018, August 01). What Men and Women Consider Hardcore Gaming Are Not The Same. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from https://quanticfoundry.com/2018/08/01/casual-hardcore/

- Zillmann, D (2000) *Mood Management in the Context of Selective Exposure Theory*, Annals of the International Communication Association, 23:1, 103-123, DOI: 10.1080/23808985.2000.11678971
- Zissou. (2019, October 26). *Are Fighting Games Too Difficult? – PRESS BUTTON WIN*. Press Button Win. https://pressbuttonwin.com/are-fighting-games-too-difficult/