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In-game transactions in Free-to-play games: Player motivation to purchase in-game content

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Abstract

Throughout the last two years the revenues from in-game transactions in video-games have increased due to its growing presence both in traditional retail games as well as digital due to the fact that more and more games have become free. This growing presence is the basis for answering the question of what motivates players to spend money on in-game purchases in free-to-play games. The research found that having a well designed game is a very important factor that makes players purchase content. Many respondents made purchases based on emotional reasons such as wanting to look cool. People also made purchases to avoid grinding and to gain competitive advantages. In summary people think that their purchases were justifiable since the games are free but the common consensus is that while cosmetic items are acceptable, pay-to-win items which provide a competitive advantage are not.

Key words: microtransactions, in-game purchases, free-to-play, pay-to-win, loot boxes, player purchase motivation

Terminology

Battle Pass: An items that grants players rewards for completing certain tasks or missions.
Discord: A popular chat and communication app used by many gamers
DLC (Downloadable content): Extra content that can be purchased which adds to the game.
Freemium: A portmanteau of the work free and premium, indicating that it's both free and paid.
Free-to-play: Games that are initially free to start playing. They come with no upfront cost and players may choose to purchase in game content in the game after they have tried it.
Gamer/player: People who play games.
Grinding: A term used in games where players would have to perform mundane task over a period of time to get in-game advantages or proceed with the game.
Loot box: An item that when opened gives a random or a set of random items.
Microtransactions: In-game purchases made with real money.
Packs: A collection of in-game items.
Pay-to-win: Items/content that give an advantage over other non-paying players
Premium: An object for which you would have to pay.
Premium game: Games for which a person would have to pay first and then start playing.
PvP: Player versus player, indicating a competitive scene where a player competes with another player.
Seasons Pass: Another form of a pass which grants players access to future contents of the games. Examples of such contents are DLCs or maps.
Skins: Cosmetic items that change the look of a character or object. Does not affect gameplay.

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1. Introduction

The global games market generated a total of $137.9 billion in revenue in 2018 which is a 13.3% increase compared to 2017 (Newzoo, 2018). This figure is projected to continue growing for the next few years (Newzoo, 2018). The games industry is in a healthy state where the different sectors (PC, mobile and console) except browser games continue to grow. A large portion of the revenue ($87.7 billion) is generated by free-to-play games. This model allows players to play a game for free without paying anything upfront but contains many additional content that players can chose to purchase in the game. These in-game purchases are known as microtransactions. Examples of content can be, extra costumes for certain characters or weapons, booster packs to increase experience/money gained, emotes, etcetera (Duverge, 2016).

Most games today have some form of microtransaction included (Pearson, 2013; Messer, 2017). This microtransactions based business model has now become the more profitable business model when compared to the "premium" model, where customers purchase the full game upfront, or subscription based models (Oh and Ryu, 2007). Microtransactions can generate a lot of income for the publishers of a game (Kanji, 2017). Investigating the player's decision to purchase microtransactions may give some insights about why microtransactions are so successful in generating revenue.

To achieve this, we interviewed various people who have played free-to-play games and have purchased any form of content in any free-to-play game. We have decided to use free-to-play games only in our research since it is easily accessible to most players and these games primarily employ the microtransaction based business model in the game. The data collected from the interviews were later data coded into various categories by using thematic analysis which helped us narrow down specific reasons why players purchase certain kinds of content. Our results showed that players have different motivations for purchase depending on the content type. However, players prefer to purchase content in games they enjoy playing.

2. Background

2.1 Business Models

There are several business models that are used to monetize video games, however, they can be classified into six major models according to Olsson and Sidenblom (2010). A game publisher may chose to employ more than one business model in their games. These six models are:

- **Retail:** This model is where consumers purchase a physical copy of a game from a physical store.
- **Digital:** In this model consumers purchase a digital copy of a game from an online store (e.g. Steam) which can then be directly downloaded to a computer or gaming console.
- **Subscription:** In this model, consumers will have to pay timely recurring payments in order to continuously play the game. (E.g. An online only game requiring internet access such as “World of Warcraft”)
- **Microtransactions:** This model provides players with extra content that can purchased. Often used in free-to-play games.
- **Player Trading:** This is a model in which players can trade digital currency or in-game items and the publisher of the game takes a cut from these transactions.
- **Advertising:** In this model a game contains advertisements which are shown in the game and the publisher generates revenue by selling ads instead.

We are particularly interested in looking into the microtransaction based business model since this is the business model that is used by most free-to-play games as their source of revenue.

2.2 Free-to-Play Games

Many free-to-play games use microtransactions as a big part of their business model. This model is also known as “freemium”, a portmanteau of the words "free" and "premium", where the game is given for “free” to all users but user may choose to pay (premium) for additional content. Free-to-play games employing the microtransaction business model has the potential to generate a higher income than premium games.

Free-to-play games have no “pay first” barrier for players. In other types of games, players would have to pay the full price of the game first before they can start playing it. Meanwhile in free-to-play games, there is initially no need to pay anything in order to play the game. How these games make revenue is by employing the microtransaction business model where they sell in-game content or services. Virtual items that are sold in the game allows players to obtain content that are either functional props or decorative props (Holin and Chuen-Tsai, 2007). Functional props are items that provide a statistical boost to players while decorative props are purely cosmetic and change the look of characters or items in game. There are several other kinds of microtransactions which are explained in further detail in section 2.3.

Another aspect of free-to-play games is that the player is free to purchase as little or as much of in-game content as they would like. There are no limits to how much money a player can spend on microtransactions in a game. Therefore a player could potentially spend more money on microtransactions than they would have for a premium game. We believe this might be one reason why free-to-play games are so successful in generating revenue and therefore we will be using these kind of games in our study.

2.3 Microtransactions

There are many different kinds of content that is sold via microtransactions. Most of these are usually of small scale and such items generally cost under $10, hence the name micro-transaction. However, there are some kind of microtransactions that cost more than $10 and these usually add more content to the game in the form of extra levels or characters. These are more commonly known as Downloadable Content (DLC). Some of the most common types of content which can be purchased are:

- **Cosmetics:** These items change the look of the player's characters or items. These items do not change the balance of the game in any way. It also includes other content that does not alter gameplay but allows the player to express themselves (e.g emotes).
- **Expansions:** The aforementioned DLC falls under this category. It adds more content to an existing game in the form of extra levels, more missions or new characters without causing any imbalances.
- **Exclusive Items:** These are extra items that players can purchase which may or may not be available for purchase in the game. These items may cause imbalances in the game by being more superior than items that can be obtained in game. These are commonly known as "pay-to-win" items in that case and are frowned upon by the gaming community.
- **Time:** These are more popular in free mobile games where people purchase "time". These games have mechanics which force a player to wait for a certain length of time unless they choose to pay to bypass this delay.
- **Loot boxes:** Purchasing a loot box gives you a chance of obtaining a random item or set of items. It is a highly controversial (Kuchera, 2017) form of microtransactions. Especially due to its similarity to gambling (Zendle at al., 2019) and the effect it has has on younger audiences.
- **Convenience:** Content that provides players with convenience benefits such as extra inventory slots, fast travel, etc.

Players may have different motivations to purchase certain kinds of microtransactions. We believe that cosmetics and skins are the most popular kind of microtransaction because of their prevalence in games. A large number of games that contain skins are multiplayer games as well so there may be a social aspect as to what motivates players to purchase cosmetics. However, games that are more competitive may encourage players to purchase more premium items to gain advantages over other players in the game. Therefore we will also be looking into content type purchased which may give us more insights about motivations for purchase.

2.4 Theory of Consumption

According to Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991), who developed the theory of consumption as a framework to explain purchase behaviours, they have identified five consumption values which have an influence on the consumer's choice when purchasing a product. With their study, they have concluded that when a consumer makes a choice of purchasing a product it is influenced by one or several of these values in combination.

These values as defined by Sheth et al. (1991) in their study are:

2.4.1 Functional value

Sheth et al. (1991) describes the functional value of an alternative as:

"*The perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance. An alternative acquires functional value through the possession of salient functional, utilitarian, or physical attributes. Functional value is measured on a profile of choice attribute.*"

Functional values have been thought to be the primary driving force for purchase choices. The thought behind is that people purchase a certain product for what they would require it for. An example would be, to purchase a car to move from one point to another. Now within it, there may be multiple other functional factors that decides which car a consumer purchases. These factors may be based on attributes such as fuel economy, durability or brand.

This can be applied to digital games as well. A player, in a game, may purchase a gun to kill their enemies. We believe this would be a purchase motivated by functional values. There would be other factors involved, in which kind of gun would be purchased, like damage or rate of fire. All of which falls under functional factors.

2.4.2 Social value

Sheth et al. (1991) describes the social value of an alternative as:
"The perceived utility acquired from an alternative's association with one or more specific social groups. An alternative acquires social value through association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups. Social value is measured on a profile of choice imagery."

Purchases made due to social values are usually products that can be shared with other people, such as gifts, or products that have high visibility to other people, such as clothing. Once again, this can be applied to games as well. We believe skins and cosmetics items fall under this category. Cosmetics are highly visible to other players and may help players stand out in the social circle in games, which possibly drives their purchase.

2.4.3 Emotional value

Sheth et al. (1991) describes the emotional value of an alternative as:
"*The perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity to arouse feelings or affective states. An alternative acquires emotional value when associated with specific feelings or when precipitating or perpetuating those feelings. Emotional value is measured on a profile of feeling associated with the alternative.*"

Purchases that may be made because it evokes a certain emotion in consumers fall under this category. A few examples of this can be, buying tickets to watch a horror movie for the fear, or eating at a certain restaurant that evokes a certain mood due to the surroundings. We believe that certain games are purchased due to their emotional value. We believe certain in-game purchases can be made that empowers players with new abilities. An example of this can be certain new characters or items. It can bring a heightened sense of emotion when players feel empowered.

2.4.4 Epistemic value

Sheth et al. (1991) describes the epistemic value of an alternative as:

"*The perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge. An alternative acquires epistemic value by questionnaire items referring to curiosity, novelty, and knowledge.*"

New experiences provides epistemic values for consumers. Switching from their current brands to try something different or eating at a new restaurant can be considered purchases that are done due to epistemic values. For games, we believe these to be expansion packs or DLCs that provides new experiences for the player to fall under this category.

2.4.5 Conditional value

Sheth et al. (1991) describes the conditional value of an alternative as:
"*The perceived utility acquired by an alternative as the result of the specific situation or set of circumstances facing the choice maker. An alternative acquires conditional value in the presence of antecedent physical or social contingencies that enhance its functional or social value. Conditional value is measured on a profile of choice contingencies*."

Products which are purchased depending on certain situations can be classified to be under conditional values. For example, seasonal gift cards that are purchased for that season or a cake bought for someone's birthday. In regards to games, we believe that the aforementioned, "time" based microtransactions fall under this category. Players spend money to stop waiting and this can be considered a conditional value purchase.

2.4.6 Theoretical Framework

The theory of consumption by Sheth et al. (1991) will be used as the theoretical framework of our study and will be used to break down the reasons of purchase of digital content in games. We will be using the framework as a guide when we look into analyzing the responses received and possibly see if there is any ties with the theory of consumption and player purchases. The theory has been tested in over 200 applications while giving excellent predictions on consumer purchase behaviours. Therefore, we believe the theory can be applied to digital products as well.

3. Purpose and Research Question

Our goal is to find out what kind of content do players choose to buy in free-to-play games and the possible psychological reasonings behind the purchase. This is important due to the fact that many games today employ microtransactions in their games even in certain fully priced premium games (Makuch, 2018). This has caused for some debates in the gaming society on the use of microtransactions (Makuch, 2018). However, free-to-play games enjoy a lot of success with microtransactions (Newzoo, 2018). Therefore we wish to study microtransactions in free-to-play games. We will also collect data on player attitudes towards their purchases. This data can then be utilized to best design games and microtransaction in a way to satisfy the players. Therefore our research question is:

"What motivates players to purchase content in free to play games?"

4. Method

4.1 Structure

For this research paper we intend to use a qualitative method. The goal is to research what players spend their money on in free-to-play games and the motivations behind their expenditures. Qualitative research is defined as empirical data collection and sees humans as subjective and complex beings. This means that humans possess abstract ideas and thoughts which are logical starting points for qualitative researchers to explore. Researchers typically employ open-ended questionnaires and focus groups to collect data and through the data they try to discern trends or themes among the respondents (Landers & Bauer, 2008).

4.2 Data Gathering

To gather the required data we conducted semi-structured interviews with students on site at Campus Gotland and online text based interviews with players that we can find in our discord servers. Therefore the sample group is a mix of students from the university and other players from the discord servers. The participation criteria is that the respondent plays digital games which are free-to-play and they must have purchased content in that particular game. To ensure that the respondent fulfill the requirements we used two screening questions before the interview. All the data was gathered anonymously with the interviewees being told about it before the interviews.

4.3 Interview Guidelines

The interview contain questions on which games they play, for how long they play and if they spend money on in-game purchases within those games. If they have spent money there are also questions on how much they have spent and on what types of items or services. Further questions focus on their motivation for purchasing. The interview also investigates the players' thoughts about their in-game purchases and their reflections on whether or not those purchases have had any effects on their gameplay experience. In summary, the interviews collect rudimentary data such as what type of game, playtime, and player preferences. Thereafter more in-depth questions deal with purchase behaviours and motivations while the last section asks about their overarching feelings in regards to their purchases. Our interview guidelines are shown in Appendix A.

4.4 Playstyle Questionnaire

As a complement to the theory of consumption, we asked the respondents to complete a questionnaire which determined their playstyle. The survey is part of an older research publication by International Hobo (2004). The questionnaire contains several statements about the players' preferences and course of action in games which the respondent can agree or disagree with. At the end of the questionnaire the respondent is assigned a value of how strongly associated he or she is with each playstyle. The values range from dominantly being the highest association down to the lowest being not significantly in a five-step ladder. As described in the study by International Hobo (2004) in the four player type categories are:

- **Conqueror:** The conqueror is a player with a preference for challenge an who prioritizes finishing as well as mastering their games.

- **Manager:** The manager focuses on mastering systems and their victories within the game is not a goal, rather it is a confirmation on whether or not they have acquired the necessary skills.
- **Wanderer:** For wanderers the experience is essential while challenges are less important.
- **Participant:** The participant is more concerned with the emotions and involvement in the game. Multiplayer might be appealing but not always for the sake of competing. These players usually have great logistical optimization skills, meaning that with the necessary motivation and tools they can find efficient ways to solve tasks.

These playstyles are flexible and context dependent. A player may be associated with only one playstyle or all of the playstyles with varying degrees of involvement with the playstyle. We want to investigate if certain playstyles may be cause for some purchases. For example, conqueror type players purchasing more functional items.

4.5 Data Analysis

For the analysis, we used thematic analysis (Terry et al., 2017) to analyze the data obtained from the interviews. By using thematic analysis, we look for broad patterns and repeating themes. It allows us to narrow the data down to useful and relevant chunks. This way we can identify the possible reasonings behind the respondents' reasons for purchasing items. The analyzed data was segregated into different themes and categories depending on the data provided by the respondents. We then look for different patterns and recurring themes from the data obtained and compare these categories with the different values in the theory of consumption and then create a final set of categories based on the data and comparison. This may give us some kind of pattern to see if one such value can be of a higher priority than the others when players decide to make a purchase. Or it can be a combinations of several different values.

5. Result and Analysis

5.1 Interviews

A total of 12 interviews were conducted for our purposes. Seven of the twelve interviews were conducted verbally by asking people from Campus Gotland. We asked people around Campus Gotland if they were willing to help our study by taking part in the interview. While the other five interviews were conducted online through a text based messaging app. The online people were chosen from Discord servers that we are part of. Once again, they had to agree to take part in the interview and we picked the first few people who responded to us. The only criteria both groups had to fulfill was that they either are playing or have played a free-to-play game and have purchased content in any of those games.

We had respondents that covered a wide range of playstyles and their play time per week ranged from 10 to 40 hours. The respondents played a variety of different games from different genres. From the responses, League of Legends has featured in five of the twelve interviews (~42%), while the card game Hearthstone features twice (~17%) and the rest of the games only once (~8%) each.

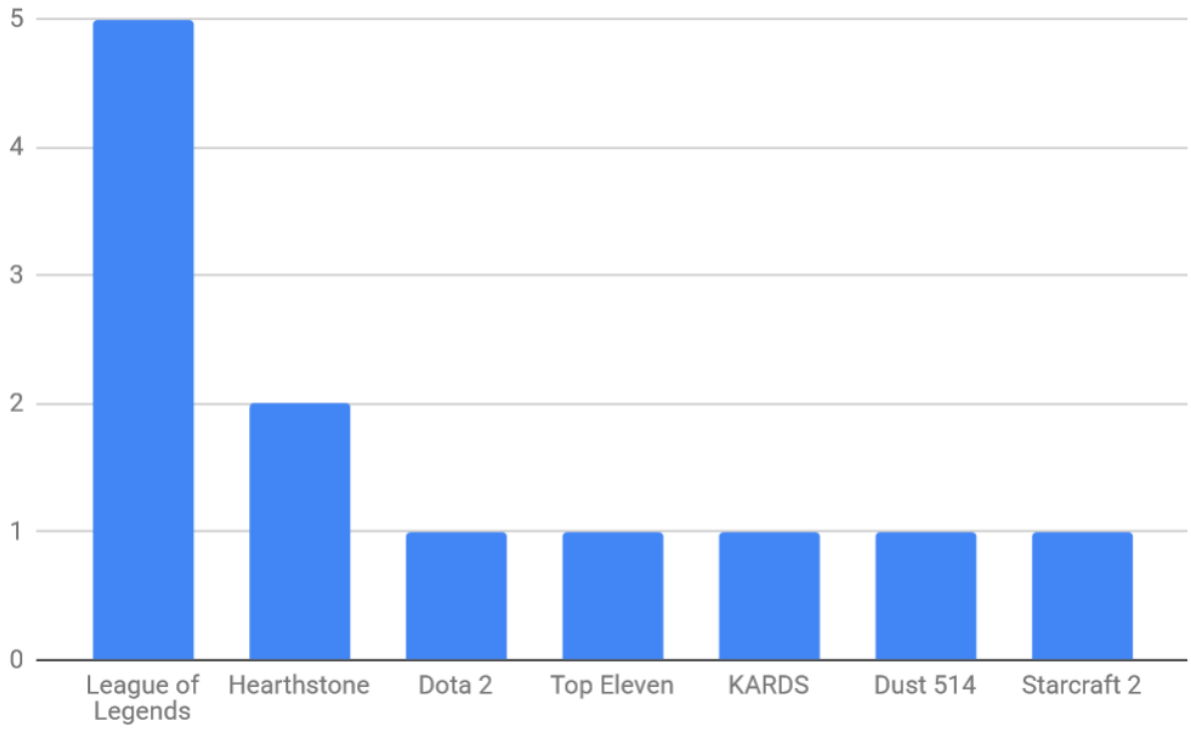

Chart 1: Free-to-play games mentioned by respondents

The respondents also purchased various different types of contents and had some very different reasons for purchasing them. The full transcribed interviews will be attached to this paper as an appendix.

5.2 Motivation for play

Based on the answers we could identify six factors in total which translated into the players' motivations for playing. A few respondents stated multiple reasons for playing the game

- **Social:** The most important incentive were the social aspect of playing with friends and other people.
- **Game Design:** Game design was also a very important factor for many respondents.
- **Characters:** A few respondents noted by saying that having different characters in a game being an important motivation for them to play the game.
- **Interest:** Real life interest (e.g football) is a factor for a few respondents.
- **Customization:** A few respondents stated being able to customize gear and characters as being important to them to play the game.
- **Competitiveness:** We had one respondent state competitiveness in a game as being important for them to play.

We have group these factors into a chart to show how many people stated which factors are important for them to play a game.

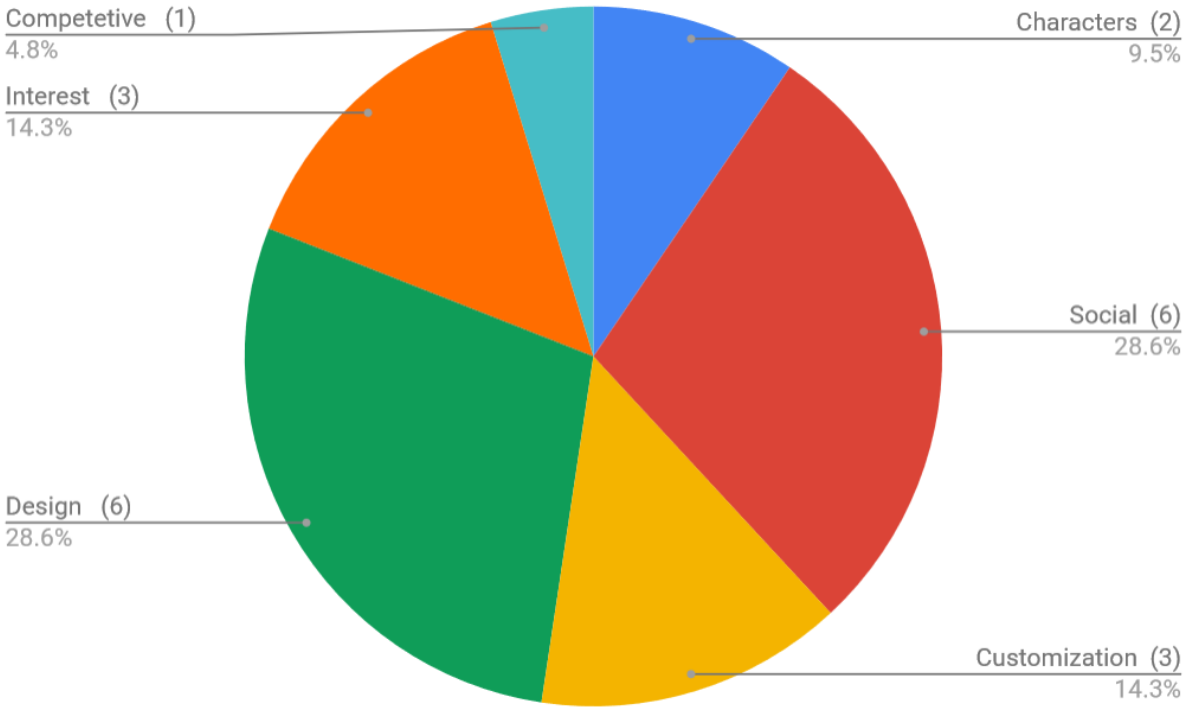

Chart 2: Motivations for play

With this data we wanted to know if reasons for playing a game might factor into purchase decisions. However, we have found no strong evidence linking motivations for playing with any particular reason for purchasing content. Although six respondents stated that they played games due to social reasons only one of them actually purchased content for social reasons. Respondents who noted as having different characters being a reason for them to play the game, have not bought any characters in the game with real money. We had only one respondent who said they play the game for competitive reasons and their motivation for purchase was competition. However, this could be a single case and the number is too small for a concrete answer. As such, this section may require studies on a larger scale to see any proper results.

5.3 Content type purchased

Five major types of content stood out in our data set. They are described here from most to least popular.

1. **Cosmetics:** Cosmetic items which for example can be different costumes for the playable characters in the game.
2. **Additional Content:** This involves extra characters and stages in the game, content that expands the scope of the game.
3. **Battle Passes:** These passes contains content that can only be obtained over time or through completing different tasks.
4. **Packs:** Packs are a collection of items bundled together. For example, seasonal items can be bundled together for a pack.
5. **Loot boxes:** These usually contain randomized items of varying rarity and value.
6. **Virtual currency:** This is often a type of imaginary currency tied to a specific which can be purchased with real money and is used to buy other content within the game.

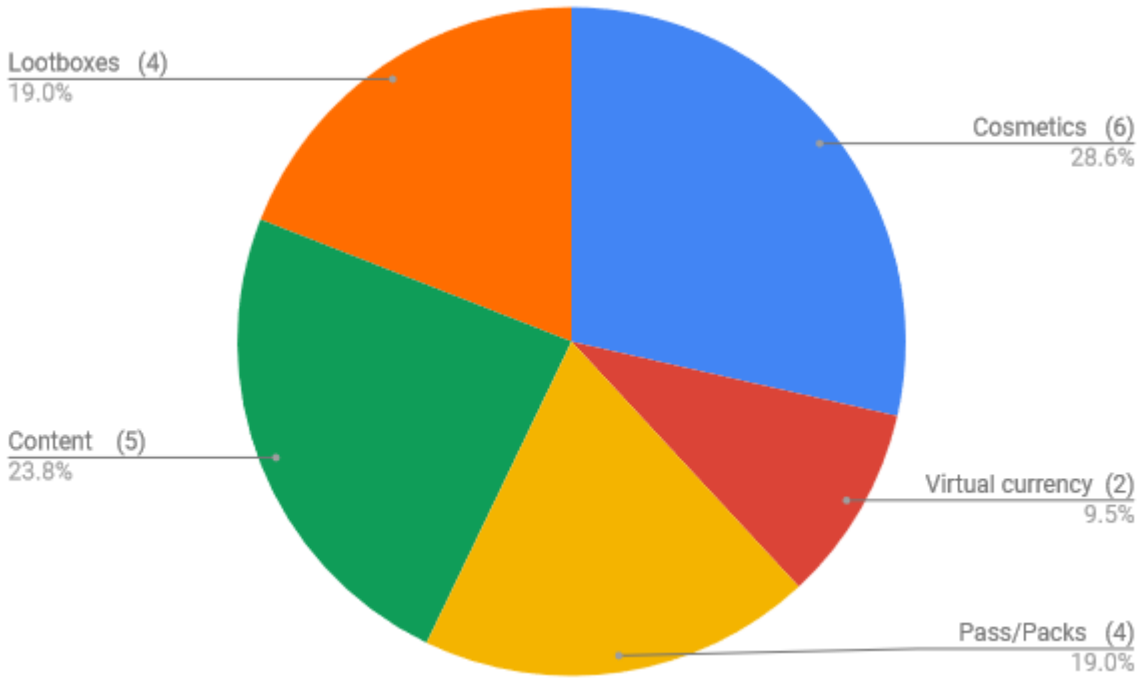

Chart 3: Content type purchased

5.4 Categories and themes

Based on the information we have received from the interviews, we have categorized the major motivation of purchasing microtransactions into seven categories. We have found that five of these categories overlap with the ones stated in the theory of consumption. This confirms that the theory of consumption can also be applied to digital products as well and the theory is still solid after this many years. As such we have decided to classify these under the same values as done by the theory of consumption because of their extreme similarity.

The other two categories that we were able to make from the data provided are something that was not covered by the theory of consumption. These two categories are *Economic* and *Hoarding.* Economic reasons arise from when players perceive the value of the content relative

to its price and then makes a decision to make a purchase. The other category was quite unexpected, there were several respondents who mentioned buying items for getting more items. We will go into more detail about these categories below.

Since, these categories do not fall under the theory of consumption. A new framework may be required for games and digital products. It could be built upon the existing framework and new values may be added to it. The original theory was developed in 1991, during which digital products were nearly non-existent. With the ubiquity of computers and the internet, many more purchases are digital products and subscriptions, which may need an updated framework of the theory of consumption. This may be something to look into with future research.

5.4.1 Emotional

Based on the interview responses that we have received, the purchase of mainly cosmetic items generate an emotional feeling from the respondents. Some of the statements made by our respondents are as follows:

> "*it just feels, I dunno, more cooler to just feel like you can dress yourself up and just like, okay I have this cool skin"*
> "*I just wanted to make my main characters look cooler…"*
> - ***Respondent 1***

These comments show that purchasing skins does arouse an emotional response from the respondent. This outlook is echoed by several other respondents,

> "*...all the cosmetics. Like, it's fun.".*
> - ***Respondent 4***

> *"Overall it provides a modified experience for a familiar champion. I would say it was a way to enhance my experience with using a favorite champ for me."*
> - ***Respondent 7***

> *"Some skins look very cool and just gives an added flair when you wear it…".*
> - ***Respondent 10***

When we categorized our data, we saw that these can all fall under the emotional value category as defined in the theory of consumption. Since it was a perfect match, we have decided to leave the category as it is and grouped all of the emotional responses into it. Overall, we see that these kind of responses are generated from the purchase of cosmetics items. Of all the interviews that did mention skins as purchase content, the reason for purchase has always been due to the emotional value provided by the purchase.

5.4.2 Functional

A few of our respondents mentioned purchasing certains items that gave them a chance at beating other players in the same game. All the purchases made here were done due to competitive reasons. Since, not paying for anything in the game puts the player at a disadvantage, the players had to purchase better items to keep being competitive with other paying players in the game. A few of the quotes by the respondents are:

"...you needed to buy this in order to get the best players, to beat the other people playing the game. And so, I thought I wanted to up my level a bit and I decided to purchase it and then get some better players."

- ***Respondent 3***

This was a clear indication that the respondent has purchased content that gives an advantage over other players and the reason for purchase was to gain this benefit and beat other players. Other respondents also purchased content for the same reason, stating that,

"*... provided you with huge..huge advantage since you got cards that other people couldn't get. if you played for free you couldn't get those cards…*"

- ***Respondent 5***

"*...it added cards and rewards that were not available otherwise unless you payed them."*

- ***Respondent 12***

Purchasing the additional content certainly provided items that players playing for free could not obtain and therefore giving an edge to paying players. Overall, only three of the twelve respondents mentioned about purchasing content for the functional value of it. All of these choices have been related to PvP (Player versus player) reasons. All of the content purchased in this category also falls under pay-to-win items.

In our original data coding, this section was categorized as purchase due to "competitive" reasons. However, after referencing with the theory of consumption we found out that this category belongs to the functional value where a person makes purchases for the benefit it provides. Therefore we have chosen to categorize it as such.

5.4.3 Epistemic

In regards to games, this kind of value can be generated by players trying out something new for a change of pace or to satisfy a curiosity. A few of the quotes made up respondents are:

"But the solo adventures I mean I got to play some more content which was fun…"
"And also unlocking more solo content felt like, I unlocked more gameplay…"

- ***Respondent 5***

"Because it added new gameplay [...], Which spiced up the gameplay so.".

- ***Respondent 12***

"*...which offer new gameplays."*
"*It's a new way of playing the game that's being offered…".*

- ***Respondent 11***

This indicates that the content purchases do add to the existing gameplay of the game and make it more interesting. This shows that acquiring new gameplay is an integral part of creating epistemic value and this value motivates their purchase. In all of the quotes, players have purchased them to get items and provide new ways to play an existing game.

5.4.4 Conditional

The reason for the purchase of such content is due to another reason and can mostly be due to how games may be designed to promote the purchase of these kind of content. We can see some examples from the respondents.

> "*Originally it was kinda the trap-thought I think with free to play games, that well i haven't paid anything for the game so essentially it's free, so it's no biggie if I pay a couple of hundred crowns now and then…".*
>
> - ***Respondent 2***

The respondent states that they have decided to purchase the game because it was initially free and maybe it's the psychological feeling of consuming something for free of it that made them buy the in-game content. However, a more clear example is represented by the other respondents.

> "*...didn't want to spend the time to build up enough in-game currency to get the champions…".*
>
> - ***Respondent 7***

> "*I traded in game currency in order to escape grinding to earn the money."*
>
> - ***Respondent 10***

This is possibly due to the pay-or-grind kind of mechanic that is present in these games. In these types of game there are usually an in game currency of some sort that must be earned to purchase in-game content which may take time depending on the game. However, players may also purchase it with real money and thus saving themselves a lot of time. A major theme for this seems to be to escape grinding and to save time.

5.4.5 Social

We had only one respondent that directly states purchasing content for social reasons.

> "*Some skins look very cool and just gives an added flair when you wear it in game and can show it off to other players."*
>
> - ***Respondent 10***

Part of the reason seems to be emotional and part of it is social both of which influences the purchase decision of the respondent.

5.4.6 Economic

The purchases here have been due to the perceived value of the item relative to its price. A few of the quotes made by the respondents are listed below:

> "*As it turned out, I ended up more than doubling the value of what I got out of the orbs than what I spent on the tokens."*
>
> - ***Respondent 7***

This is in regards to the game called “League of Legends”. These orbs and tokens mentioned are the passes and loot boxes that are present in the game. In essence, the respondent says that by buying the pass for a seasonal event the rewards received from the pass for the event ends up doubling in value of what can be purchased directly. Other respondents also give economic reasons for purchase of content.

> “*An offer/discount for beginners/one time offer(5 american dollars for 10 card packs), same price as 2 packs but I got 10.”*
>
> - ***Respondent 9***

They also further state that,

> “*I will probably not buy more unless there is another cheap deal that would give me more than normally.”*
>
> - ***Respondent 9***

This indicates that getting a better offer or deal is a major factor in the purchase decisions for the respondent. If the content was not on discount they perhaps would not have bought the product. Respondent 10 also states something similar as they chose to buy content in packs because,

> “*... it was a good value for money, if there is a skin I like and it comes in a pack it is more worthwhile to buy the pack as you would get more content by paying just a little bit more.”*
>
> - ***Respondent 10***

Thus, respondent 10 chooses to buy content in packs rather than individually because the value of the pack is greater. In all of these cases, this is all relative to the value of the items as perceived by the respondents.

5.4.7 Hoarding

A few of the respondents mentioned buying content to get even more content from their purchase. It was more difficult to code data into this category as we initially believed some of the data in this category belonged to the economic category. However, since the respondents do not mention the value of the item and only mentions wanting to get more items we decided a new category was justified. A few of the quotes made by the respondents in this section are:

> *“I wanted loot. Like the cosmetics, so all the cosmetics. Like, it’s fun.”*
>
> - ***Respondent 4***

Respondent 4 answered this when being asked for his motivation for purchase of a *pass* in the game. The said pass gives out certain items for completing missions in the game and a lot of these missions provides different kinds of rewards which can be different in-game items to loot boxes that gives a random item. Other respondents had similar reasons for purchase.

> *“And when I bought the card packs there was just… I mean I was very much into the game and thought it would be fun to open 50 card packs and also get a head start….”*

"the card packs was really just… yeah I just wanted to open more packs."

- ***Respondent 5***

Respondent 5 mentioned it was really addicting to open card packs, which share the same function as a loot box in other games, and they said that they just wanted to open more and more card packs.

"I have noticed that I end up getting a lot more of one than the other."
"This promotes getting the other component, which is relatively cheap, to "complete the set"."

- ***Respondent 6***

Respondent 6 mentions this in regards to hextech chests and keys in the game "League of Legends". They are essentially loot boxes and a key to open them. Respondent 6 mentions that they end up always getting one in larger quantities than the other and it compels them to purchase the other part to make a complete set and open the chest.

"If I bought the tickets, I could buy more chests in game, that could possibly contain more skins."

- ***Respondent 8***

Respondent 8 readily states that they purchase tickets in the game which grants them more loot boxes and hence chance for more items.

A lot of items that were purchased here seem to loot boxes or items that give loot boxes. A few respondents also mentioned how they were not too happy with their purchases in regards to these types of content.

"afterwards I was like uhh, it wasn't really worth it, it was mainly you know, loot crates or card packs in this case, and I didn't really get anything super nice from it either so there's that also."

- ***Respondent 5***

"But, it was quickly apparent that it was cheaper to buy specific skins than wait for hextech."

- ***Respondent 6***

We see a pattern here that people were trying to purchase content in an attempt to get more and better content. However, when they do not get any better items it leaves them dissatisfied with the purchase.

5.5 Playstyle questionnaire

From the playstyle survey, our respondents varied quite significantly from each other giving us a large variety of playstyles. A table with the result of what playstyle each respondent got can be found in Appendix B. Based on our conclusions, there was no data that pointed to any significant correlations between their purchase behaviours, motivations and playstyles.

6. Discussion

Through our study we have found many reasons to why players choose to spend money in games despite it being optional. The interviews amounted to a wide variety of players with various playstyles and playtimes. However, all of them were very familiar with games and have been playing games for quite some time. An interesting thing to note is that a majority of respondents preferred playing single player games but all of the free-to-play games mentioned were multiplayer or had multiplayer elements in the game. There are quite a few factors in the interviews that does not necessarily fall under the motivation of purchasing content but may have an influence on the purchase decision. We shall discuss some of these below along with a few interesting patterns we have noted from the interviews.

6.1 Cosmetics

Cosmetics items were the most purchased items by the respondents. We had assumed before our study that cosmetics would most likely be the most purchased content and that was confirmed to be true. However, we had also assumed that the reason for purchasing cosmetics might have been due to social reasons. Skins and emotes would allow interaction with other players or showing off to other players. However, this did not turn out to be the case as everyone who bought skins in games had bought them entirely for self satisfaction. There was only one respondent that said that they had purchased a skin to show off to other players but also stated that they bought the skin because it looks cool and adds flair when they wear it. A lot of the respondents used terms such as “cool”, “fun” or “exciting” when referring to skins purchases without noting anything to do with the other players. This shows that the players do enjoy purchasing skins because it makes the character look better and evokes a positive emotion within them.

6.2 Pay-to-win items, loot boxes and negativity

A few of the games mentioned by the respondents had clear pay-to-win items for purchase. The few respondents who bought such an item did so to get a clear advantage over other players playing the game. It was clearly evident that the competitive nature of the games promoted the purchase of content that provided clear benefits to the buyer and to keep up with other players doing to the same. At the same time, this was heavily frowned upon by our respondents and they did not like pay-to-win items. A few quotes from our respondents are:

> *“...it decreased my experience cause it started weighing down a little on me that I had to put out so much money for a game that is essentially free-to-play. So I kinda stopped at some point it started feeling I was throwing away too much money”*
>
> - ***Respondent 3***

> *“Ah yes, I mean it can affect... my experience when I feel like it's an unfair advantage to buy something...when you feel like you must buy it in order to like equalize the game, the play field.”*
>
> - ***Respondent 4***

> *“...and I think because people were pissed that paying users got an advantage compared to not paying users…”*

- ***Respondent 5***

"I don't play the pay-to-win games because how much money you invest in the game shouldn't determine the end result of playing it. I played another game called PlanetFall 2. This game has those pay-to-win elements that you have to basically use after a certain advancement level if you want to really join the higher areas of the game. This feels forced to me and really kills any enjoyment I might get from playing the game. "

- ***Respondent 7***

However, we do have one respondent which did enjoy paying for pay-to-win items.

"Yes, I bought more packs, that led me to have more powerful and more normal cards. Which lead to me having more specialized and possibly powerful decks. Being stronger allows me to have more fun since I win and my decks are more what I desire."

- ***Respondent 9***

In one of the games, Hearthstone, which was mentioned twice in the interviews, they had pay-to-win content which the respondents said was later removed by the publisher due to community backlash. Other respondents had also mentioned in other sections of the interview about pay-to-win items and their dislike for them. The overall outlook for pay-to-win items are negative with one respondent stating that they do not play games with pay-to-win elements.

Loot boxes also suffer from the same negative outlook. Players that state that they have purchased loot boxes have not been pleased with their purchases. Although they do not regret the decision, they do believe that purchasing other content instead of loot boxes would have been a better purchase. We have a few quotes from the respondents to support this fact.

"...it wasn't really worth it, it was mainly you know, loot crates or card packs in this case, and I didn't really get anything super nice from it either..."

- ***Respondent 5***

"But, it was quickly apparent that it was cheaper to buy specific skins than wait for hextech. However, I do stand by my purchases."

- ***Respondent 6***

"I try to avoid any purchases that are gambling or random chance because I consider it a true waste of money. With a skin purchase I can see what I am getting and even do research ahead of time before purchasing."

- ***Respondent 7***

6.3 Free-to-play and enjoyable games

Another huge pattern that we discovered by going through the interviews was that players were more comfortable with spending money on content because the game was free, with one respondent directly stating that it was a reason for purchasing content in the game. A number of respondents also stated that they are willing to pay for games that they enjoy playing. We believe this to be a major reason for the success of free-to-play games. By not having any entry costs in regards to the game, players can choose to play the game without any payment and if

they enjoy it they end up paying for content. A few quotes from the interview that state this fact are:

> *"Mmm, I mean I played the game so much, like basically almost every day. So I feel like it was worth it, like I never bought something that I don't really want."*
> *"...it's a game that I really care about so I don't feel like it was a waste of money…"*
> - ***Respondent 1***

> *"I haven't paid anything for the game so essentially it's free, so it's no biggie if I pay a couple of hundred crowns now and then…"*
> - ***Respondent 2***

> *" I mean I spent countless hours playing that game so why not, pay for something once in a while?"*
> - ***Respondent 4***

> *"so it was kind of expensive but also since the game is free I did not spend any money on it initially."*
> - ***Respondent 5***

> *"For me it is a way to enjoy a game without having to pay first to play it. If I really enjoy the game then I have no issues purchasing content to support the continued development of that game. I feel completely comfortable with the purchases I have made so far."*
> - ***Respondent 7***

> *"I mean for playing 6 years and only spending that little money on the game and spending the amount of hours I have playing the game, I feel fine about it."*
> - ***Respondent 8***

> *"I have clocked in over 3500+ hours in the game. And with that in mind I think what I spent on the game was worth it."*
> - ***Respondent 10***

This is a really strong indication that a game which players enjoy playing is a huge factor for players to spend money on the game without regretting their purchases. The game being free also helps with this fact since players are less likely to regret any purchases on a free-to-play game. We believe this to be a very important indirect factor that affects purchases made in games. Players are less likely to buy content in games which they do not enjoy playing.

Another interesting fact is that none of the respondents ever had any negative views on any of the purchases that they made with only one respondent being neutral to the question. We have had respondents that have spent over 4000 SEK (swedish kronor) on a free game without regretting any purchases. A lot of the reasons mentioned by the respondents state that they enjoy the game and the amount of time spent of the game makes it well worth paying for the game.

7. Conclusions

Based on our study we can make a few conclusions about motivations for purchase in free-to-play games.

It is reasonable to assume that a lot of the purchases made was based on emotional satisfaction. Half of the respondents have purchased cosmetic items and they were made on an emotional basis. Players who bought items for their functional value have almost always done so to beat other players. Due to the competitive nature of such games, it is reasonable to assume that the games were designed that way to promote the sale of these items. Players also purchased extra content in the form of new characters or additional playable content for their epistemic value. They only do this when they already enjoy playing the game and are looking for something new to try out in the same game. There were also a few cases of players purchasing content due to economic and conditional reasons. Therefore deals and offers on content promote the sales of items to an extent. Players purchasing content for conditional reasons (such as escaping grinding) do so, once again, if they are already enjoying the game that they are playing and choose to pay to escape the repetitive or time consuming parts of the game.

Although the motivations for purchase does fall under one or more of the different values of consumption, they are all very dependent on the game itself. Players are only paying for games which they already enjoy playing. Apart from cosmetic items, almost all the other purchases are made due the respondent's engagement with the game. Many respondents said that it was alright to spend a bit of money on the game because the game's initial cost was nothing. Those who enjoyed and continued playing the game are far more likely to spend money on the game.

Another important aspect is the players' view on the type of content purchased. Skins and additional content are viewed positively while pay-to-win items and loot boxes are viewed negatively. This does affect the volume of money spent on the game as money spent on cosmetics or extra content in all cases were more that the amount of money spent by those who purchased pay-to-win items or loot boxes.

Thus, to summarize our findings we can say that:

1. Players are more willing to pay for content in well made games that they enjoy playing.
2. Motivations for purchasing content differ depending on the content type.
3. Content that does not affect the gameplay are viewed more favourably and are purchased more frequently and vice versa.
4. Games which have design elements that promote the sale of certain kinds of content (e.g pay-to-win items) do have a certain degree of success in selling said content.

8. Future Work

Our study researches the possible reasons for players to spend money on free-to-play games. However, this research is very limited due to time and various other constraints. More research needs to be conducted in this field to get a better and more concrete understanding of player spending reasons and what can affect it. A few suggestions for future work are listed in the following sections:

8.1 Motivations for purchase of microtransactions in premium games

A lot of the respondents stated that they felt it was okay to spend money for content on a game that is essentially free. We know there are games being published by many companies that are fully priced premium games and yet employs the microtransaction based business model (Pearson, 2013). Will the player attitude remain the same with a fully priced game?

The overuse of microtransactions in premium games has caused much of a backlash from the gaming community and overall negativity towards microtransactions (Kim, 2017). How to best implement in-game transactions and how to design games with these transactions in mind to guarantee increased revenue is an ongoing concern in the industry. Game publisher EA's Star Wars: Battlefront 2 (EA, 2017) and its attempts of implementing microtransactions were met with so much criticism that they had to temporarily remove them from the game (Sinclair, 2018).

Since many new games, such as Anthem (EA, 2019) and Fallout 76 (Bethesda, 2018) are following suit and are being met negatively (Kain, 2019), this area needs more research.

8.2 Factors outside of the game

Our research showed that having a well-made and enjoyable game promotes the purchasing of its content. However, as noted in our limitations section there are several outside factors that can influence the purchase of content. All of our respondents are over 20+ years of age. We have no data on other age groups. Perhaps other age groups have different reasoning for purchasing content. Younger consumers are also more likely to haphazardly spend money of content and are more likely to regret the purchases. A few of our respondents noted that loot boxes and pay-to-win items are addicting to purchase and they stopped themselves. However, younger consumers could be more susceptible to it.

We also have no data on economic status of the players, perhaps players with lower economic status may be more inclined to purchase deals and passes to get better value out of their money. Another important factor is region, players from Asia spend more money on microtransactions that their western counterparts (SuperData-Research, 2019). This may also vary from country to country.

8.3 Mobile games

Our research was open to all kinds of free-to-play games. However, of all the respondents we had, eleven of them were players of PC based games while one game was browser based. We are missing a large sector of free-to-play games which are mobile games. A majority of free-to-play games revenue come from mobile games (SuperData-Research, 2019) which is also a

growing sector of the gaming industry (Newzoo, 2018). The results might differ substantially from a PC game, since mobile games are designed differently. People usually have their phones with them all the time and could be playing games on their phones during various times throughout the day.

8.4 A more focussed study

Our study, while trying to be focussed, was still too broad. We received several different games from our respondents each with different kinds of contents that can be purchased. Though we have categorized them in the best way possible, it may be a better idea to focus on one game and interview players of that particular game about their motivation of purchase. This gives a better baseline for categorizing things and to possibly get better results, albeit for one type of game only.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guidelines

Screening questions:

1. Do you play digital games? (video games, mobile phone games, computer games etc.)
2. Are any of the games you play free-to-play games? (games that are free to download but contain optional purchasable items/services within themselves)

Introduction

- Present the thesis and its purpose.
- Inform about the data collection procedure and the respondents' confidentiality (GDPR).
- Shortly describe the contents and structure of the interview.
- Reassure respondent that participation is voluntary and at any time can the participant quit the interview.
- Ask if the participant has any questions regarding the interview and the thesis.
- Ask for consent to partake.
- Two screening questions will be asked to ensure the participants' eligibility for the interview.
- If the candidate is eligible then ask for permission to begin the interview. If not, thank them for their time and wish them a pleasant day.

Basic questions to get to know more about the interviewee:

1. **What genre of games do you prefer to play?**
2. **How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?**
3. **Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?**
4. **Are you currently playing any free-to-play games? If, yes then please name them.**
5. **How much money have you spent on said game(s) in total?**

Next up, the core interview: (more descriptive answers):

1. **In regards to the aforementioned F2P game that you named:**
    a. **How long have you played this game(s) for?**
    b. **What about this game(s) makes you play the game?**
2. **Have you purchased any content in the aforementioned game(s). Can you name some of the content you have purchased?**
3. **You have mentioned that you have bought content in the game (ask again for each different content type)(refer to the different values of consumption):**
    a. **What made you decide to buy this particular content?**

   b. **What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?**

4. **How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?**

5. **Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?**

Extra questions,

1. **Do you have any more information that you would like to add?**

Ask for clarification on any answers that may be misinterpreted.

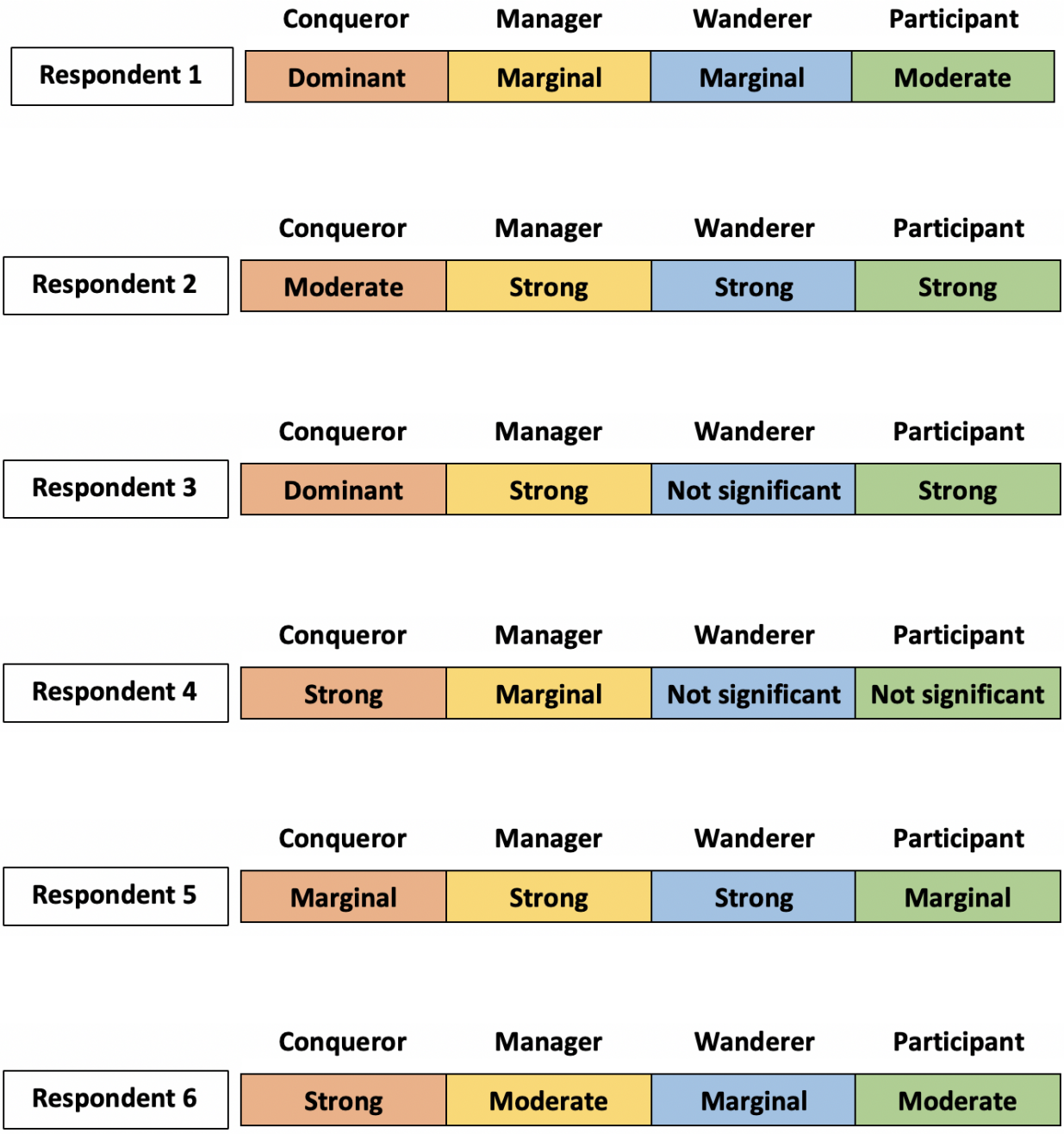
Ask interviewee what kind of player do they identify as?

- **What is the most important aspect of a game to you when you're playing it?**
- **Ask the players to fill a survey after the interview (Takes 5 mins), to find out their playstyle. (Based on the International Hobo study about player playstyles)**
- **Link:** http://survey.ihobo.com/DGD/DGD1.shtml

End of interview

_____

Appendix B: Playstyle survey result



	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 7	Not significant	Moderate	Moderate	Strong

	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 8	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate

	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 9	Marginal	Dominant	Strong	Not significant

	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 10	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong

	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 11	Dominant	Moderate	Strong	Dominant

	Conqueror	Manager	Wanderer	Participant
Respondent 12	Dominant	Dominant	Strong	Moderate

Appendix C: Transcribed interviews

Interview 1

Ok, let's start with some basic questions.
The first one: What genre of games that you prefer to play?

Eeh, (heavy sigh) God. RPG games eeh…

RPG:s?

FPS, yes. I guess those are my preferable genres I would say. Open world games as well.

Okay.

Yeah, and then we're talking generally like everything that i like, it's not just the free to...?

Yeah, this is general.

Yeah, RPG, FPS eh open world games... eh, yeah.

Perfect.
Ok, second question: How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

Oh, that's a good question (small laughter). Eeeh, maybe, oh God, around 15…

15? Ok, that's a pretty good number.

A little less or more (laughter) I don't know, I have no clue.

Do you have any preference whether you want to play singleplayer or multiplayer games?

Say it again.

Do you have any preference in player single player or multiplayer games?

What do you mean with preference?

Do you… Do you like playing singleplayer or multiplayer more?...

Ooh!

Or is there none?

Ooh, eeh I think. I actually think singleplayer. Eeh, I mean I like for example story in games and stuff like that that I can kinda get into myself. But I mean I love playing League of Legends and Overwatch, but I'm you know, playing too, with other people. So I don't know it's... I feel that i get more from single player, I would say.

Okay.
And are you currently playing any free to play games?

League of Legends. Definitely.

League of Legends.
Is there any more?

Eeh, I mean not currently. I played… I mean PUBG was free for me for not a long time ago. Fortnite I tried but I'm not playing those very often. Like, League of Legends I basically almost play every day.

Okay.
So how much money have you spent on League of Legends? Roughly.

Ooh, that's a good question. Maybe a thousand crowns.

A thousand crowns?

Yes. That's maybe not much but… (laughter)

Alright, some more general questions.
When you are playing a game what is the most important aspect of a game to you?

Ooh, that's a good question, holy shit. Eem, I mean… Basically the game itself needs to be fun to play or just be entertaining overall. So I mean… Oh God, I have no idea, that's such a good question… Do I have to answer that I know every time? (laughter)

Okay.

Or, I don't know. I have no clue actually. Eeh…

Okay, well, that is fine.

Maybe we can go back to it later. But yeah, it's… that was a difficult question. I never thought about it much…

Okay, let's start with the core questions for our thesis.
In regards to League of Legends…

Yes.

How long have you played this game for?

For maybe 4 years.

4 years, okay.
And what about this game makes you play it?

I just love the play typ… The playstyle I would say. I mean it's interesting that they have so many characters or champions or… Yeah, that you can play. Yeah I think they have like around 150 characters now. Eeeh, even if that's like overwhelming when you play at first, it's just, I like it because it's, so many things that you can just choose between. Eeeh, and I also like that they have like these different aspects like you have a… A top that's like more, usually, like more tankier and then you have a jungle and then you have mid and that's support, an adc, and I kinda usually go with support for example. So when I (stutter) c-can play a game where I can kinda be more of a support player then I usually enjoy it more because I know exactly what i should do. So, I really like how they make, or their support characters in the game… Are very interesting to play as, eeh I would say. Eeh, and I just like this kinda genre overall. Eeeh… Yeah.

Okay.
Next question.
Have you purchased any content, in League of Legends?

Yes.

Can you name them?

Skins.

Skins?

Yes, I think that's basically what i only have been paying for. Yeah, skins.

So, in regards to skins. What made you decide to buy this particular content?
Well, I guess, eeh for example I have some characters that I play the mo… more. For example my mains, and it just feels, I dunno, more cooler to just feel like you can dress yourself up and just like, okay I have this cool skin so... Eeh yeah, I just wanted to make my main characters look cooler basically, I guess. If that's a good answer…

What are the thoughts on the purchases that you have made in this game? Do you think… What do you think about it?

About, oh say…

About, about the purchase…

About…

About skins, yes.

What I think about it?

Yes.

Like now afterwards?

Yeah.

Or?...
Eeh, if it was like worth it or not? Or... Is that basically the question… Or?

Eeh, yeah.

Mmm, I mean I played the game so much, like basically almost every day. So i feel like it was worth it, like I never bought something that I don't really want. Like it's always something that I've been kinda like looking at for weeks and I'm like "Okay, I really, really want that.". So I don't feel like it's a waste of money. Sure, I can probably put it on something that's… You know, that I should probably put it on instead… Like you know, eeh, stuff that I need. But you know, it's a game that i really care about so I don't feel like it was a waste of money… In that sense.

Okay.
Well, next question is: How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

Ooh, can you rep… Can you… Say it again or like…
How does the...pricing…

Okay...
Or change the sentence out of the question.

Okay. How does the pricing of these skins, affect your purchase decisions?

So like, so if I like, how I… Why i decide to chose to purchase something for example?

Does the price affect your purchase at all?

I guess, yes it does but also not. because the, usually when something is more expensive it's usually cooler or more… yeah, interesting to look at. So I have bought stuff that are way more expensive than the like very regular skins for example because not many… i guess it comes down to that you're more unique in that sense like if your buy the more eeh, expensive ones then you know you'll be one of the few that has them. SO, that also wanna makes me purchase them, but then I also have, for example skins that are cheaper, eeh maybe to also characters that i don't care about as much. So i usually buy like cooler skins for the players that i play as the most, I would say so…

Okay.

Yeah.

Our last question is: Does purchasing skins affect your gaming experience experience in any way?

I mean yeah, sure. I would say yes because I mean every time i have a, or… Every time I purchase like a really, really like epic skin or… Then I really feel like it's, I'm just getting a bit happier. Like yeah, this is awesome, i get more excited about playing the game. because this is also, you know in league of Legends they can also make these kinda cool, eeh, do you

call them emotes? Or… when you do, I don't know what it is called. Eeeh, but it's just like you can do more in the game as well or it changes what the character can do as well or like how they're throwing away an ability. Like it's just like oh, it's it's, it just looks way better for example. it kinda changes your way of how you're looking at the game as well. Cause all of a sudden like what you usually do has changed as well. So, I would say that it just like makes the game more interesting.

Alright, thank you. that would be the end of the interview unless you have anything else to add.

No, I don't think so.
Alright, thank you very much.

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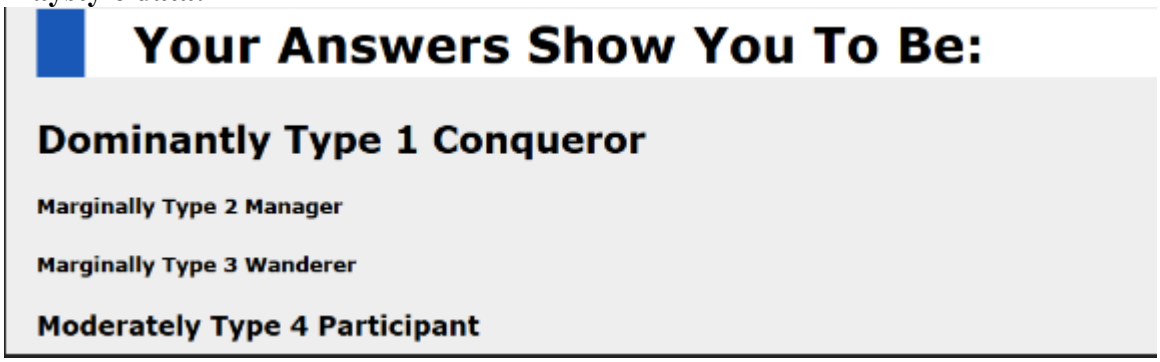


Interview 2

So, question number 1: What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Role playing games.

Role playing games, yes.

And how many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

i would say between 10 and 20 hours.

Mm, 10 and 20 hours.
Do you prefer to play singleplayer or multiplayer games?

Depends greatly in day to day differences.

Okay.

But mostly role playing games i like to play by myself and then none-roleplaying games I usually play with other people.

Ah, I see.
And are you currently playing any free to play games?

League of Legends.

League of Legends. And how much money do you think you have spent on League of Legends?

It was some time ago but you can kinda check it up and i think, i think currently I would've spent up to 4000 swedish crowns, I think.

Okay, so we'll continue with some basic questions: And in regards to League of legends, how long have you played this game for?

Since it was released, and i think that was in 2009.

And what about League of Legends makes you wanna play the game?

Its great deal is nostalgia cause long time ago, and it was one of the first games I played with friends.

And you said you had purchased, or purchased content in this game.

Yes.

And would you like to name some of the items you have bought? Or what kind of items.

Well, it's all the same. Cause recently the included loot boxes and whatnot that all the different games are doing currently. But it's just skins for my part, like skins for champions, for the, well the avatars you play, just to make them cooler I guess.

Yeah.
And about these skins that you have bought. What made you decide to buy these skins?

Originally it was kinda the trap-thought I think with free to play games, that well i haven't paid anything for the game so essentially it's free, so it's no biggie if I pay a couple of houndred crowns now and then and then that thought kinda repeated itself over and over again until it was way more expensive than any other game that it not free to play that I have played.

Do you have any thoughts on the purchases that you have made In League of Legends?

(thinking)

Like, in general.

No, not really. I guess it's i did it because I wanted to. i don't have any specific thoughts on it, no.

And in regards to the pricing of the content you have purchased, how has the pricing contributed to your purchase decision?

There are a lot of options and the things mostly that are different with the skins I think, is that some of them offer more differences than others. Like there are very simple skins, that just reskins the avatar, then there are those who changes voice lines or animations and whatnot. And... It depends, but usually I only buy the more expensive ones because they offer more difference than a simple skin for example.

And the next question. Does purchasing additional content affect your game experience? And if it does, then how?

Yes, I would definitely it affects it. In most… It's mostly humorous manners. Cause like just, like to buy funky skins and stuff that looks funny. Usually, and that's mostly becoming… Since I just play with friends, it's mostly just joking around and meming with it. But it's definitely making it more enjoyable.

Perfect. Yeah, so we just have one additional question and that is if you have anything to add or something that… Something in general...

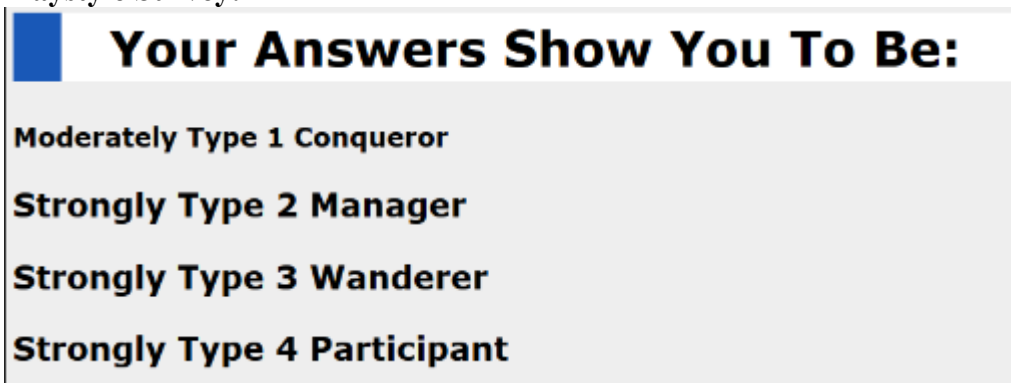
No, not really.

No?

No.

Okay, perfect, yeah, then we're done.

Playstyle Survey:



Interview 3

So, let's start with some basic questions.

Yes.

So the first question is: What genre of games do you prefer to play.

Well i prefer to play FPS games. So Call of Duty and Battlefield are my usual go-to games I think. And the occasional strategy games.

Excellent.
How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

Not that many, it used to be a lot more. So around… 10, 15 hours.

10 to 15 hours, okay.
And the next question: Do you prefer playing singleplayer or multiplayer games?

Multiplayer for me.

Multiplayer.
Are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Let me think… Sometimes I just jump straight into a game and that's about it. I occasionally play like a backgammon game that's like a free-to-play online thing. Very very basic but that's about it that I play at the moment... No, at the moment I don't not play a lot more.

If we look in total, which would be the free-to-play game that you have played the most do you think?

I used to play quite a bit of… I don't exactly remember the name of it, but it was a football manager game on facebook that was free-to-play where you could sort of trade players and, and you could, yeah, play matches against other players you were in a sort of league system. I think it was called "Top Eleven". But i'm not entirely sure.

Okay, so next question then.
Of the games you said, or all of the games you can think about. In the free-to-play games then. How much money do you think you have spent?

I have spent some. In for instance the football manager game, but it's less than 100 swedish crowns I think.

Okay, so let's jump to the core questions.
In for instance the football game you talked about.

Yes.

Since you said it was your most played game…

Yeah.

How long have you played this game for?

Well, I think I played it during a year basically. I think I would play it every other day for maybe an hour two hours. Very casually, so I would jump in and out of it sort of. And it wasn't, it wasn't that consistent I would say so it's hard for me to estimate. But there was like, there was like one year where I was really really into it. I think, played it if not every day then every other day yeah.

And what about this particular game made you play it?

Well I mean, I think the first thing is that I'm a big football fan. And so, immediately when you have football in a game I can sort of jump straight into it, almost. But there was also this thing of being able to customize your team and build your own team to test against other players. So that was, so, the sort of competitive element of it with the ability to customize your team that I think that was what really got me into it.

And you mentioned that you had paid for items in this game.

Yeah.

Can you name some of the content you purchased?

So, in this game you need to have a currency to transfer players from other clubs. And so depending on how much of this currency you are willing to put down, to get this player, you will need to, I mean the only way to get this currency you would have to buy it from their in-game store. And that is; that was the thing that I would spend my money on, in an attempt to get the better players.

So the next question then is: What made you decide to buy this particular content?

The main thing was that it became evident to me at some point that you needed to buy this in order to get the best players, to beat the other people playing the game. And so, I thought I wanted to up my level a bit and I decided to purchase it and then get some better players. But I also stopped eventually because I figured that I would have to spend too much money on this currency. And then, yeah…

The next question then: What are your thoughts on the purchases you made in this game?

Well, I think it was, it was okay. Because I didn't go overboard with it and I got a lot of fun out of trying to play with this team that I could get from playing, or for paying with this, for this currency. So what I got out of paying was pretty good at the time. Obviously now I don't really play it anymore so you can say that during that, later on it would be a waste but at the time I enjoyed it and I think it was okay.

So now we only have three additional questions left.

Okay.

So how did the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

In such a manner that in the beginning that it was pretty cheap to get this currency that I needed to buy. And so it was, I felt like there wasn't a bit, there wasn't really no risk involved. So that's why I decided to do it as well, but as I got further and further into it i needed to buy more and more and therefore the risk also increased for me. Like i would be losing more money than, maybe not gaining that much. And so that's kinda how it evolved.

Did purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? And if yes, then how?

Uum, it did. I mean, in the beginning again it made it better because then I could, with this currency and getting the better players, I could start defeating even better players and especially the players on my current level at the time. But again, as it evolved again it decreased my experience cause it started weighing down a little on me that I had to put out so much money for a game that is essentially free-to-play. So I kinda stopped at some point it started feeling I was throwing away too much money and it was a sliding hill that could just keep eating away my money. So...

I understand.
So we're basically done.

Okay.

The only thing that remains for me to ask is if you feel that you have any additional comments or something.

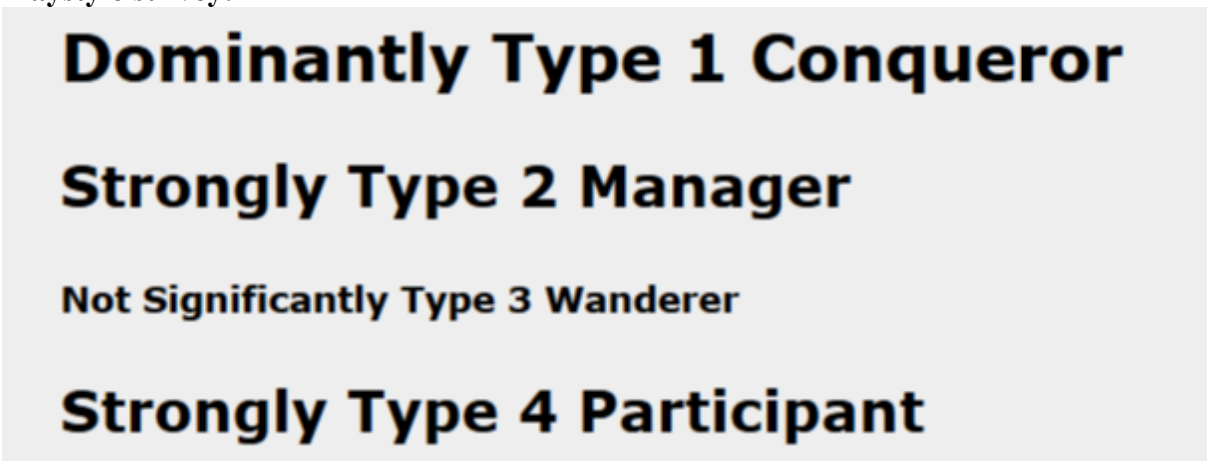
No, not at the moment I think.

Okay, then we're done.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Playstyle survey:



Interview 4

Alright, first some general questions
What genres of games do you prefer to play?

RTS and MOBAs

Okay, How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

Varies quite drastically. When I have time I might spend like 12 hours a day, when I don't have time, which like now for instance, I don't spend any time playing at all.

Okay, do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

I kind of like both. But I think most of my time has been sunk into multiplayer games.

Alright, are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Yes, DOTA 2

How much money have you spent on DOTA 2 in total?

Not a whole lot, maybe 300 kronors over the span of like 7-6 years.

Ok. Alright then the next are the core questions.
And in regards to DOTA 2, how long have you played the game for?

Oh yeah, but if DOTA 1 counts then I've been playing since I was like 10 so..

Ok, lets just put it at DOTA 2

Yeah. Umm..oh wait, how old am I? I am 24 now. I started playing second year of gymnasium. How old are you then? Like 16. Yeah, 17. So, yeah.

Seven years

Yeah

Alright
What about the game makes you play the game?

Ah... like the sameness and like… its always the same map right but you have different bits so it's like the sameness of it but also you can play it very...very differently depending on what role you have and what hero you play.

Okay. Have you purchased any content in DOTA 2?

Yeah

Can you name some of the content that you purchased in DOTA 2?

Yeah, mostly compendiums. So like during like the winter season or season season like [?] they come up with compendiums and you can, you can pay [for] them and then you get like a bunch of free stuff basically that, I mean it's not free but you know it varies how much you [need?]

Okay
In regards to that content, what made you buy it? What motivation did you have?

I wanted loot. Like the cosmetics, so all the cosmetics. Like, its fun.

Alright
What are the thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

I mean I think its fair. You played for… as long as you pay for stuff that doesn't affect the gameplay...I think it's fine.

Okay.
How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

Well, I mean I'm a student so I won't be spending like a whole lot of money on stuff that is basically useless. I don't know, for like visualizing stuff. But ah... I don't know I mean if I like the gaming.. I mean I spent countless hours playing that game so why not, pay for something once in a while?

Okay
Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If so, how?

Ah..so there's like a couple of thing that might affect gameplay sometimes. When they like come with skins for the map. There was like one skin in particular which was like a box for the trees so you could really easily see past [?] you took which kind of affects gameplay. And then there is also like...there was this arrow ability that one of the heroes have which was a straight arrow in a line, but then there's this other spell that another hero had, was like a snake. And basically what they did is, they made the snake look like, no, the arrow look like the snake. So, the thing with the snake ability is you wanna to hit it when it took the light with it as soon as possible but the arrow you don't wanna hit so it made for some poor, like, gameplay decisions when you walk into the arrow just because it looks so similar to the snake ability. Wait, what was the question?

How does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience?

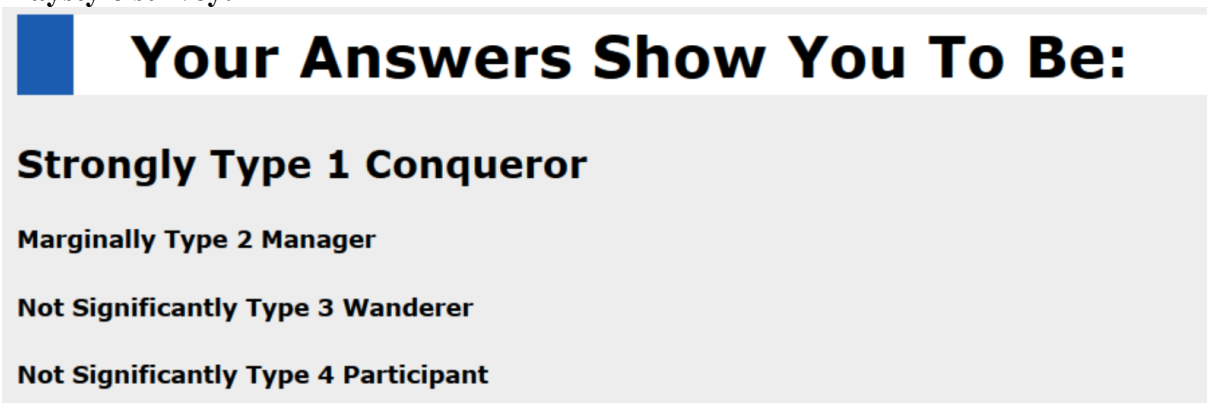
Ah yes, I mean it can affect... my experience when I feel like it's an unfair advantage to buy something...when you feel like you must buy it in order to like equalize the game, the play field. But other than that, I mean it's just nice to look aesthetically pleasing, look unique in some way.

Okay, that would be the end of the interview unless you have anything else to add.

No.

Alright, perfect.

Playstyle survey:



Interview 5

Ok, first question
What genre of games do you prefer to play?

I usually play role-playing games but also some strategy games.

Ok
How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

Very [?] dependent on which game I'm into and also if I got any commitments but I could play like… I could play 20 hours a week but usually not.

And, do you prefer to play single player or multiplayer games?

I prefer single player games or multiplayer games where I can play solo. Competitive games can also be fun but then I like 1v1 situations.

And, are you currently playing any free to play games? If yes, then which?

Sometimes Hearthstone but not that much right now

How much money have you spent on Heartstone?

I would say almost a thousand crowns maybe like 800 swedish crowns, that's also during a few years

So, then to the core questions
In regards to Hearthstone, how long have you been playing this game for?

So I played a lot for maybe two-three years, that's also when I spent the money. I haven't spent money since when I've played more casual. So yeah, is that an answer?

Yeah.
And what about Hearthstone, in particular, that made you play this game?

What about Hearthstone that made me play it?

Yeah, exactly.

Umm, I guess, some of the social aspects. All my friends played it and then I started to play it with them and then I…. enjoyed it so I played, like not with my friends as well and then I kept playing it and I.... I feel like once I'm invested in a game I keep playing it.

And you mentioned that you purchased content in Hearthstone, then can you name some of the content that you purchased?

So basically half of the money I spent on, I bought two adventures or what they call it so I got to play some solo content that rewarded me with cards that I could use in a, in a competitive environment.

And the rest of the money I spent on like, I think I pre purchased card packs from a new expansion.

And what made you decide to buy this content?

I guess I…. really enjoyed the game and I also wanted to play more competitive since those expan…., or not the expansion packs but mostly the solo adventures provided you with huge..huge advantage since you got cards that other people couldn't get. if you played for free you couldn't get those cards so. And also I mean the solo content seemed fun also, so there's that. And when I bought the card packs there was just… I mean I was very much into the game and thought it would be fun to open 50 card packs and also get a head start into the new...new what you would call it patch or something.

And what are your thoughts on the purchases that you made?

I'm more happy with the expansion, no with the solo adventures because the expansion pack preorder just felt…. afterwards I was like uhh, it wasn't really worth it, it was mainly you know, lootcrates or card packs in this case, and I didn't really get anything super nice from it either so there's that also. But the solo adventures I mean I got to play some more content which was fun and I also knew what cards I got. But then I was mad cause they phased out the solo adventure card sets and I think because people were pissed that paying users got an advantage compared to not paying users so I they wanted to phase...phase that out.

How does the pricing of the content contributed to your purchase decisions?

Umm….. so it was kind of expensive but also since the game is free I did not spend any money on it initially. And also unlocking more solo content felt like, I unlocked more gameplay but the card packs was really just… yeah I just wanted to open more packs.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If it does, then how?

Oh yeah totally. I both got the solo adventures which was fun so I could play on my own for a while and it was kind of challenging, some of the encounters but also I got the huge advantage since I could build greater decks and play competitive more successfully.

Then we're done. I just want to ask if you feel that you had any additional comments or anything to add?

No, not really.

Ok. Then we are done.

Playstyle Type:

Your Answers Show You To Be:

Marginally Type 1 Conqueror

Strongly Type 2 Manager

Strongly Type 3 Wanderer

Marginally Type 4 Participant

Interview 6

What genre of games do you prefer playing?

RPGs, Action/Adventure, MMO and MOBA

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

In school weeks, around 10 hours a week

Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

I don't have a preference. I enjoy both

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Yes, league of legends

How much money have you spent on League of Legends in total?

That is very hard to estimate, since I have been playing since 2016

do you have any rough estimates? it doesn't have to be accurate

I know it's a lot, but will have to check

a rough estimate will do

Give me a few mins to pull up some numbers
On my eune account, I have 30 euros spent this year

How long have you played League of Legends for?

Since 2016

What about this game makes you play the game?

Well, a lot of people I know play the game

Have you purchased any content in League of Legends? Can you name some of the content you have purchased?

Mostly skins, sometimes the hextech items during events
Sometimes the expensive champions when they go on discount (with real currency, for faster unlocks)

Can you explain what are hextech items?

A fancy way of saying loot boxes

What made you decide to buy skins?

Usually, when I play a certain champion enough, I buy the skin because they enhance the appearance and have better visuals and effects during the game

What made you decide to purchase Hextech items?

For that, I have to grudgingly attribute it to the marketing tactics by riot.
Specifically, the offset in chests and keys (having one a lot more than the other)
As well as event items that have certain chance rewards
And, of course, the initial curiosity when they are first released

Can you elaborate more about chest and keys?

Chests are awarded for playing a champion really well. But are locked to one per champion per season (year), and an additional weekly limit.
Keys were awarded randomly, but are now awarded based on honors
I have noticed that I end up getting a lot more of one than the other. For instance, I have 4 spare keys in my EUW account and 2 spare chests in my EUNE account
This promotes getting the other component, which is relatively cheap, to "complete the set"

What are the thoughts on the purchases that you have made?

As mentioned earlier, hextech crafting had a factor of "initial excitement" because it was newly introduced. But, it was quickly apparent that it was cheaper to buy specific skins than wait for hextech. However, I do stand by my purchases. Does that answer your question sufficiently?

yes it does
How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

I have seen some skins and noticed they were overpriced. But they were not skins that I wanted or bought. Same goes for their "masterwork chest", which is a slightly more expensive loot box which guarantees a cosmetic item. However, these include emotes that I have no interest in, and are therefore not worth the price, especially since I find the non-cosmetic items from the cheaper box more useful.
Overall though, I find the prices to be more or less fair, in terms of the things I purchased.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?

For this, I will refer to a specific skin in a champion I play a lot. The infamous Master Yi. Project Yi adds enhanced visuals, and makes the ultimate move of the champion a lot more visible and noticeable
As such, it is easier to play around the timing of the ultimate, with this skin.

ok, i just wanted to ask one thing for clarification

Ok?

on your last answer you say that it is easier to play around the timing of the ultimate

Yes

what exactly do you mean by this?

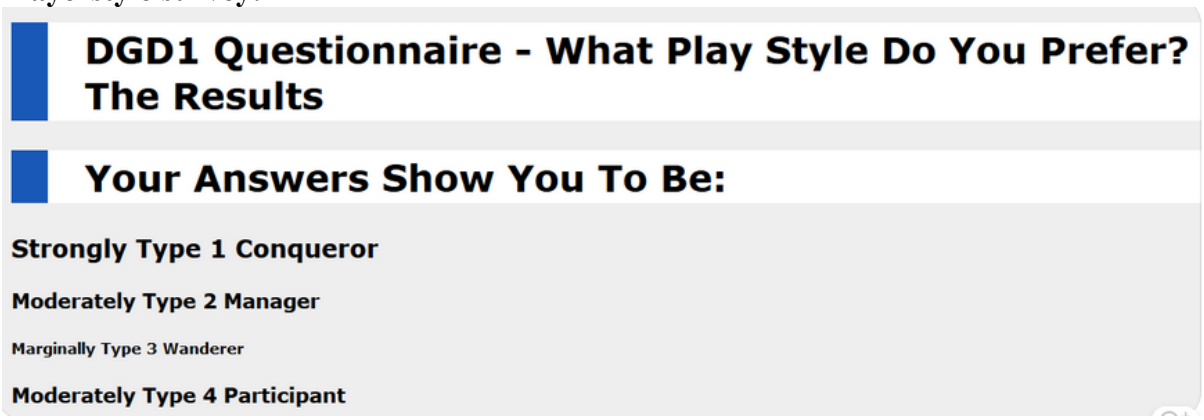
Because the sound effects and visuals are more prominent with the skin
In the normal skins, it just switches to the running animation with very little sound effects.
With Project Yi, it adds particle effects and a dedicated (noticeable) sound clip.

That concludes the interview
do you have anything else you would like to add?

No, that's all

Thank you for your participation

Playerstyle survey:



Interview 7

What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Typically I like to play single player games. Something similar to Fallout 4, Mass Effect or the like. I also enjoy building games like City Skylines and Satisfactory.
I have played quite a few MMO's as well.

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

I would say that it is between 10 to 40 hours depending on whatever I am doing.

Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

It tends to be more situational for me. If I have people that I usually play with that are available I would prefer to play multiplayer games. If that isn't something I can do then I generally play a single player game I can just save and come back to.

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Currently, the only F2P game I play is League of Legends.

How much money have you spent on said game in total?

I would guess it to be around 100 euro.
since 2016

How long have you played this game for?

Three years now on and off.

What about this game makes you play the game?

I only play the game for the multiplayer friend aspect. I enjoy playing in a team with my friends. Although I normally don't like competitive games anymore I do enjoy sharing experiences with my friends.

Can you name some of the content you have purchased?

I have purchased champions, skins, tokens and some keys for unlocking loot boxes I got from games.

What made you decide to buy champions?

I created a second account to play on with a friend and didn't want to spend the time to build up enough in-game currency to get the champions I normally played on my other account.

What made you decide to buy skins?

I really liked the artwork and look of the skins for the champions I was playing. It was a way for me to appreciate the effort that went into creating them and look good at the same time. In League of Legends it is more than just a look or skin for the champion. It comes with a full set of emotes, different recall animation and model work. Overall it provides a modified experience for a familiar champion. I would say it was a way to enhance my experience with using a favorite champ for me.

Can you explain what are tokens and what made you decide to purchases these tokens?

League of Legends will run various themes throughout a year. Most of the time there is a theme they run during the world championships. These tokens are something you earn from normally playing the game but have boosts you can purchase giving you a larger amount of the tokens. These tokens can purchase different items that are only available that the time of the theme. The money I was going to spend on the tokens would give me the chance to get items out of the "orbs" that I could get with the tokens. The orbs are loot boxes or chests that contain items. As it turned out, I ended up more than doubling the value of what I got out of the orbs then what I spent on the tokens.

What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

For me it is a way to enjoy a game without having to pay first to play it. If I really enjoy the game then I have no issues purchasing content to support the continued development of that game. I feel completely comfortable with the purchases I have made so far. I do feel sometimes compelled to purchase other items but don't because basically it would be an overspend for me in terms of the value of the game.

How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

I try to be very careful with the pricing because these purchase are for digital products that don't actually exist. Where they do exist is only within confines of the respective game's ecosystem. As video games tend have their own life cycle it means that those items inherently have an extinction date built-in. I try to regulate my purchases with a comfort level to feel that I really enjoy what I get from them purchases which makes up for the fact that I spent money. I try to avoid any purchases that are gambling or random chance because I consider it a true waste of money. With a skin purchase I can see what I am getting and even do research ahead of time before purchasing.

So the prices
I usually compare with the other items offered.
League has their skin prices usually go down over time however they tend to maintain higher prices on the more popular items to maximize their return which is easy for me to understand.
If I feel that something is too expensive then I don't buy it.
I do my best to try to figure out what the value is to me and then use that to figure out the pricing structures for purchasing.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?

As I am only playing League right now it only affects my gaming experience in the aesthetic sense. I don't play the pay-to-win games because how much money you invest in the game shouldn't determine the end result of playing it. I played another game called PlanetFall 2.

This game has those pay-to-win elements that you have to basically use after a certain advancement level if you want to really join the higher areas of the game.

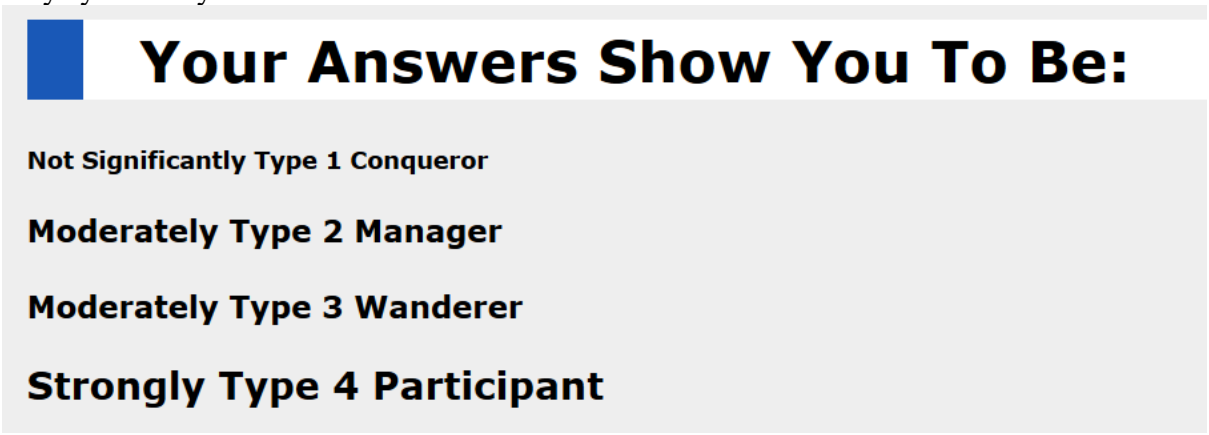
This feels forced to me and really kills any enjoyment I might get from playing the game. League, on the other hand, only changes the "look" of the game without altering the game play or mechanics. That actually provides me with a much better feeling of the game which causes me to enjoy it more.

Alright
Is there anything else you would like to add?

Nothing that I can think of, no.

Ok, that concludes the interview
Thank you for your participation.

Playstyle survey:



Interview 8

What genre of games do you prefer to play?

do I have to pick one?

you can name any number

Hmm, I would say strategy and open world rpg games

alright
How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

hmm roughly 30

Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

single player

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games? If, yes then please name them.

League of Legends

How much money have you spent on said game in total?

500kr

How long have you played this game for?

6 years

What about this game makes you play the game?

being able to play with friends and work together

Can you name some of the content you have purchased?

I have only ever purchased cosmetics (skins), and tickets for events to get more skins

What made you decide to buy skins?

I liked how they made the character look in game, and wanted mine to look the same. Plus it was my main champs so I figured that I kinda need a skin for it

What made you decide to buy these tickets?

If I bought the tickets, I could buy more chests in game, that could possibly contain more skins

Chests, meaning loot boxes?

Yes

What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

I mean for playing 6 years and only spending that little money on the game and spending the amount of hours I have playing the game, I feel fine about it.
because I have the option of earning it for free or paying for it

How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

When it comes to the skins in league, I usually look at the weekly/monthly sales on the skins and see what they have so I do think about the price. Unless it's a skin I really want but it can still take me months to get it
the price makes me hesitate

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?

additional content such as skins, chests, etc? (in free-to-play games) or generally?

the content that you have purchased in league of legends

To a certain extent yes, but only visually. It makes it nicer/cooler to look at I suppose.
I can get compliments for them so it makes me feel good about my purchase to a certain degree.

Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

I meant to write 35 hours instead of 30 but other than that no*

alright
that concludes the interview

Thank you for your participation

Playstyle survey:

Interview 9

What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Strategy, RPG, MMO

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

40h
More or less

Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

Single Player games

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games? If, yes then please name them.

Yes then : KARDS, World of Tanks, War Thunder and League of Legends

Which one of these do you play the most?

Right now = KARDS

How much money have you spent on said game in total?

5 dollars

How long have you played this game for?

Like how many hours or when did I start?

when did you start?

this month

What about this game makes you play the game?

Strategy, World war II theme, NO chat(no toxicity), new game so I feel like I have the same amount of experience as others(more or less)

Can you name some of the content you have purchased?

Overall or only in that game?

in that game

Card packs(so loot boxes)

What made you decide to buy this particular content?

An offer/discount for beginners/one time offer(5 american dollars for 10 card packs), same price as 2 packs but I got 10.

What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

They are pay-to-win, the more packs you open the bigger chance you get to get more powerful cards. The only argument is that if you gain a pack or buy a pack the cards in them are still random.

How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

I will probably not buy more unless there is another cheap deal that would give me more than normally.
It is too expensive otherwise.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?

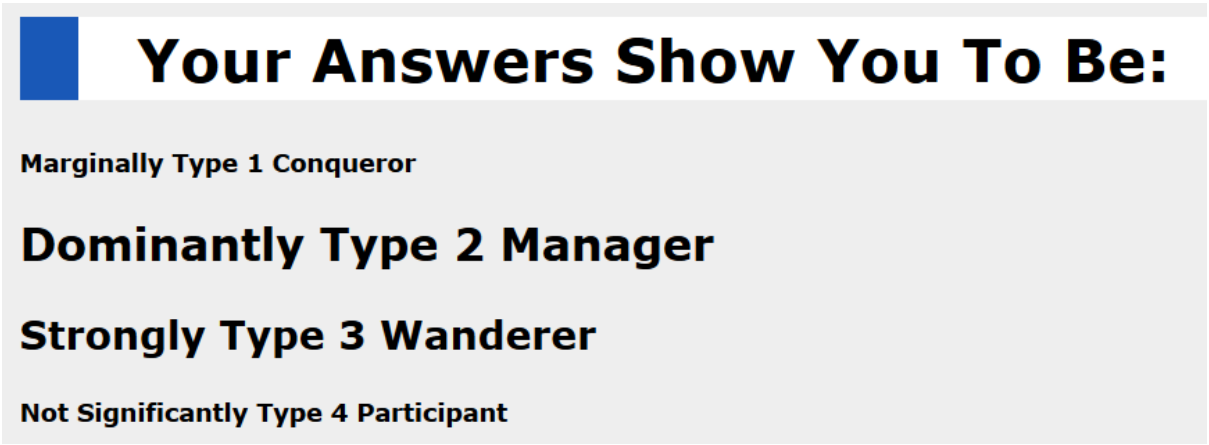
Yes, I bought more packs, that led me to have more powerful and more normal cards. Which lead to me having more specialized and possibly powerful decks.
Being stronger allows me to have more fun since I win and my decks are more what I desire.

Alright
Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

No, I think that's all!

alright that should conclude the survey
Thank you for the participation

Playstyle Survey:



Interview 10

What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Action adventure, RPG, MOBA

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

25 hours roughly

Do you prefer playing single player or multiplayer games?

Single Player games

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games? If, yes then please name them.

Not right now. But I used to play a lot of an MMOFPS called Dust 514 before the servers closed down

How much money have you spent on said game in total?

4000+ SEK

How long have you played this game for?

4 years, when the game was in open beta to when it ended

What about this game makes you play the game?

The very neat customization system both for cosmetics and in game stats build. It also helps that it is squad based and I like playing with people I know to make new strategies and hopefully win games. The game had a very nice economy system as well.

Can you name some of the content you have purchased?

Skins, content packs, in game currency (indirectly).

What made you decide to buy skins?

Some skins look very cool and just gives an added flair when you wear it in game and can show it off to other players.

Can you describe what are content packs and what made you decide to buy them?

Content packs are a collection of contents in a pack, usually these contains a skin or sets of skins and some XP boosts and a few game items are added in to increase the value of the pack. I decided to buy these cause it was a good value for money, if there is a skin I like and it comes in a pack it is more worthwhile to buy the pack as you would get more content by paying just a little bit more.

Can you explain what do you mean by indirectly purchasing in game currency and what made you decide to purchase it?

The game has its own in game currency which is used to buy all the consumables in game and they need to be earned by playing. However, in game items are consumed whenever you die and therefore you need to keep purchasing more consumables using in game currency. The game included a player trading system where you can trade items or money with other players. I would buy some skins and sell them to other players for in game currency.

I did this because there were times when I needed in game money. For example, a tank in the game would cost a lot of in game money can cost as much as you can earn in a single match so if you lose two in one match you're already in the negative. Therefore I traded in game currency in order to escape grinding to earn the money.

What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

The purchases have all been fair. I have never purchased anything that was not worth the money. I have clocked in over 3500+ hours in the game. And with that in mind I think what I spent on the game was worth it.

How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

I usually buy packs which are cheaper and collectively give me more items that may be useful. I do occasionally wait for discounts on some skins. Usually I would only buy stuff if its worth the price. $10 per skin for a free to play game is a fair amount.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gaming experience? If yes, how?

Yes. Although cosmetics doesn't affect gameplay it does make my character look better and increases my satisfaction level when I'm playing the game. And purchasing in game currency has enabled me to just enjoy the game by escaping grinding.

Alright
Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

No, nothing in particular

alright that should conclude the survey
Thank you for the participation

Playerstyle survey:

Your Answers Show You To Be:

Strongly Type 1 Conqueror

Strongly Type 2 Manager

Moderately Type 3 Wanderer

Strongly Type 4 Participant

Interview 11

And I'm gonna start with some basic questions for you.

Mmhm.

What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Usually FPS.

Okay.
How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

Can I go with 20+?

20+, alright.

Do you prefer playing singleplayer or multiplayer games?

Multiplayer.

And are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Uum, yes.

Can you name them?

Starcraft 2.

Starcraft 2.
And how much have you spent on this game in total?

10 bucks.

10 bucks. Okay.
In regards to Starcraft 2, how long have you played this game for?

I've… I'm gonna say somewhere maybe around a hundred hours.

A hundred hours, okay.
And what about this games makes you play the game?

It's well designed. It's fun, it looks good and it's a solid establishment over the first game.

Alright, have you purchased any content in Starcraft 2?

Yes.

Can you name some of the content that you have purchased?

Yeah, two commanders each one costing 5 euro which offer new gameplays. So…

Okay.
What made you decide to buy these?

They looked fun and when I tried them I had more fun, therefore it was worth the price.

Okay.
What are your thoughts on the purchases you made in the game?

5 bucks, worth it.

How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

Eeh, decent enough, it's not overpriced and it's… Since there is multiple commanders that you can buy for 5 euros it's not like you're forced to buy any of them. So, I say it's a fair enough price.

Okay.
Does purchasing additional content affect your gameplay experience? If yes, then how?

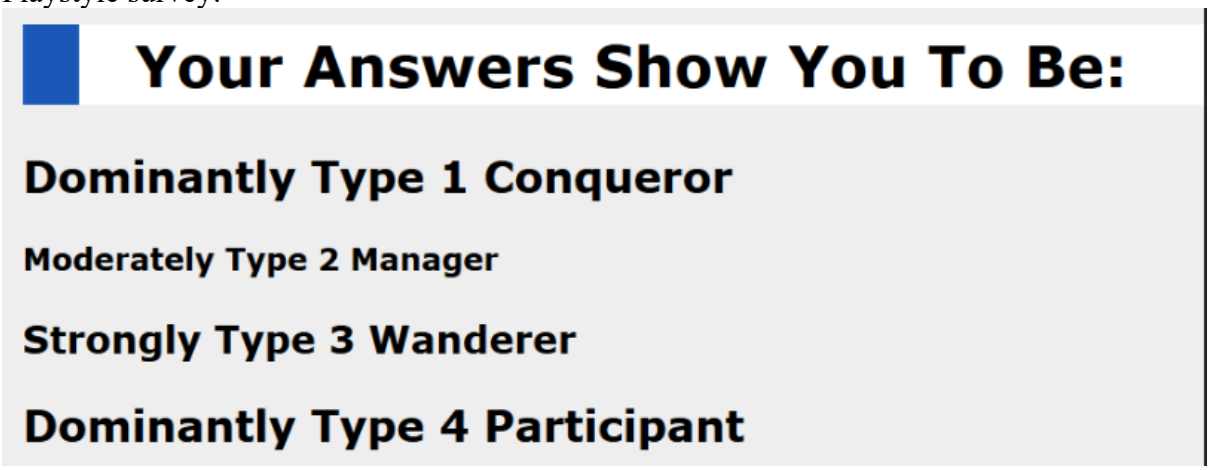
Well, in this particular case yes because it's not a cosmetic change. It's a new way of playing the game that's being offered which doesn't give me, let's say a particular advantage but a new way to have fun.

Okay.
That would be the end of the interview unless you have something else to add.

No.

Alright, perfect.

Playstyle survey:



Interview 12

Okay. What genre of games do you prefer to play?

Strategy games.

How many hours a week do you spend playing video games?

30 plus hours.

Do you prefer playing singleplayer or multiplayer games?

That depends on what games I am playing. Usually single player games.

Are you currently playing any free-to-play games?

Yes, many of them.

Okay, can you name the one which you play the most?

Yeah, Hearthstone.

How much money have you spent on said game?

Ooh, maybe i don't know 500 kronor-ish.

500 kronor, okay.

Maybe a bit more.

Okay, how long have you played Hearthstone for?

Ooh, eeeh, ever since it came out. Eeh, took a bit of a break from time so I would say 200-300 hours plus.

Okay and what about the game made you play the game?

Excuse me?

What about Hearthstone made you play the game?

Ooh, card game and the strategy of thinking ahead and different decks you can build to create a synergy.

Okay.
Have you purchased any content in Hearthstone?

Yes. Both card packs to get more cards and the single player adventure modes that they released that added new game modes.

Okay.
What made you buy card packs?

Eeeh, it was to fill up the collection of the deck so I could build more interesting synergy of the decks. They do offer free stuff, but it's a lot faster and you have a higher chance to get something you want if you buy them.

And what made you decide to buy the solo adventures?

Because it added new gameplay, it added cards and rewards that were not available otherwise unless you payed them. And they were kinda reminiscent of the old World of Warcraft-style raid… Which spiced up the gameplay so.

Okay.
What are your thoughts on the purchases that you have made in the game?

It was worth it for when I was playing it and now going back and trying out fun new combinations of cards is always good so it was worth the purchase.

Alright.
How does the pricing of the content contribute to your purchase decisions?

The cards packs in themselves were on a good price range that it didn't feel too expensive but it didn't feel very cheap either. But with enough spacing it was worth it. Same with singleplayer content, when it was released it was a very good price for what it offered.

Does purchasing additional content affect your gameplay experience?

Yes and no. It doesn't affect it because you can get cards for free otherwise by doing quests and earning free in-game coins. But buying it makes it… You have a easier and a bigger chance of having fun, or not fun, but easier chance of getting the cards to build the crazy combinations that makes it more fun.

Okay.
Do you have any more information that you'd like to add?

No.

Okay, that would be the end of the interview.

Playstyle survey:

Your Answers Show You To Be:

Dominantly Type 1 Conqueror

Dominantly Type 2 Manager

Strongly Type 3 Wanderer

Moderately Type 4 Participant