Marketing experience in gaming industry

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Statement of authenticity

I hereby state that my graduate thesis is authentic result of my own work and that in writing the thesis I didn't use any other sources except for those that are cited. Ethically appropriate and acceptable methods and techniques of work were used for the preparation of the paper.

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Abstract

This thesis is about marketing experience and how it affects different type of industries. First part of the thesis defines my points of experience marketing and how it can effect customer experience. Second part of thesis is about experience marketing in gaming industry and it also involves a research that was done for the purpose of writing this thesis. This thesis will map experience marketing from its first mention by Pine and Gilmore in their book Experience economy (1998), till today where it is connected to all kind of other industries as well as the future it holds for marketing in general. This thesis will also describe key benefits and setbacks experience marketing can have for companies and some examples of successful and unsuccessful experience marketing campaigns. Focus of last part of thesis is on experience marketing in gaming industry and how it can affect customers and how brands can benefit from experience marketing campaigns in gaming industry. At the end of thesis there are research results of how hardware, video games, and social aspects of video games influences people and their experience regarding video games.

Keywords: marketing experience, gaming industry, customer experience

Contents

1. Introduction

The main theme of this thesis is marketing experience, its development and influence on success of failure of different companies, brands and products. And then marketing experience will be transferred in a specific segment of today modern industry; in the gaming industry. As a term experience, experiential or just marketing experience is rather new and it has become a hot topic among marketers across the globe. This new term is being frequently used on almost every conference, every seminar and every online lecture done by marketers, marketing gurus, agencies, CEOs and marketing consultants. But in reality there is a little data that can in a holistic way summarize the meaning of the term marketing experience and especially there is little scientific data and sources which tries to connect experience marketing and the gaming industry. So this thesis will try to summarize the term marketing experience and prove that a gaming industry and its users can be helpful to different kinds of companies, brands, products in expanding their revenues, impact and influence by using tools from marketing experience and incorporating them in games.

1.1.   Content

First topic covered in this thesis is marketing experience in general. The evolution and history of marketing experience and who were the first authors to use this term. After that a couple of definitions from leading experts in the experience marketing research and two definitions by experts who are practicing experience marketing on a daily basis will be explained. And a summarized definition from the author of this thesis will be showed and it will be based on a real life example based on experience as marketing specialist in a clothing company Varteks d.d. The paper continues by discussing key points in experience marketing and then continues by listing some of the main benefits and roadblocks that people can encounter by using experience marketing. Examples of some of the best and worst marketing experience campaigns will be listed. Before concluding the subject, a link between marketing experience and gaming industry will be shown. That chapter will present what gaming industry is, how it evolved and some of the most important statistics about it. Also examples of how marketing experience can be used in gaming industry by brands that have core business outside will be shown, results from a research about gamer experiences will be presented and connected to marketing experience.

1.2.   Methodology

This paper is written based on secondary data sources collected online such as academic papers, eBooks, online articles and YouTube videos. After collecting the required materials, they have been studied alongside everything found related to marketing experience,

experience marketing and experiential marketing. These secondary data sources were basis for collecting primary data that was analyzed and explained later in this paper. From those articles and videos skeleton of the paper has been made and then connected it all together by citation and paraphrasing different authors and summarizing.

1.3.   Type of data

Type of data used in this paper was mostly secondary data gathered online from different sources, such as google scholar, researchgate, YouTube and online websites. Other than secondary data author of this paper has also done his own research regarding experience gamers have regarding gaming hardware and video games and how they affect their life and what kind of feelings and experiences gamers have when it comes to video games.

2. Marketing experience

Marketing experience is a term many authors like Resul Öztürk (2015) use when talking about customer satisfaction advertisement or building customer loyalty, but marketing experience is all that and more. Since people started trading goods, the experience of trading was something that affected future trades in a way where traders who gave better prices or where more pleasant where first marketers who tried to build relationship with their customers and managed to create better customer experience. Since then customer experience has grown ways beyond just a pleasant feeling during buying or consuming products and services. Today marketers focus on building personal experience that will boost customer engagement and grow loyalty towards the product or service they are selling.

2.1. History of experience marketing

Experience marketing as a concept was first introduced in 1998. when two Harvard professor published an article called Welcome to Experience Economy (https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy). The article at that time by Pine and Gilmore (1998.) introduced a new way of thinking of what economy today would look like. At those times globalization and digitalization has just started and concept of capitalizing on experience rather than on products or services was unfamiliar. Pine and Gilmore (1998.) separated the evolution of economy in four stages based on a birthday cake:

1. Agrar economy – mothers made birthday cakes from scratch by mixing all ingredients together by themselves and it cost them a couple of cents.
2. Industrial economy – to save time mothers bought premixed ingredients and made cake with them and they payed 10-20 cents for those premixed ingredients.
3. Service economy – parents bought cakes for 10$ - 15$ so they didn't have to bake them and they could save a lot of time.
4. Experience economy – parents take kids to Chucky chees, McDonalds and other kinds of business that offer memorable experience for the kids.

In their theory Pine and Gilmore also put the experience economy on a chart together with other economies to show how economic value has progressed with time and the values are detriment by competitive positions going from undifferentiated products to completely differentiated products and pricing that goes from market prices to premium goods prices (https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy).
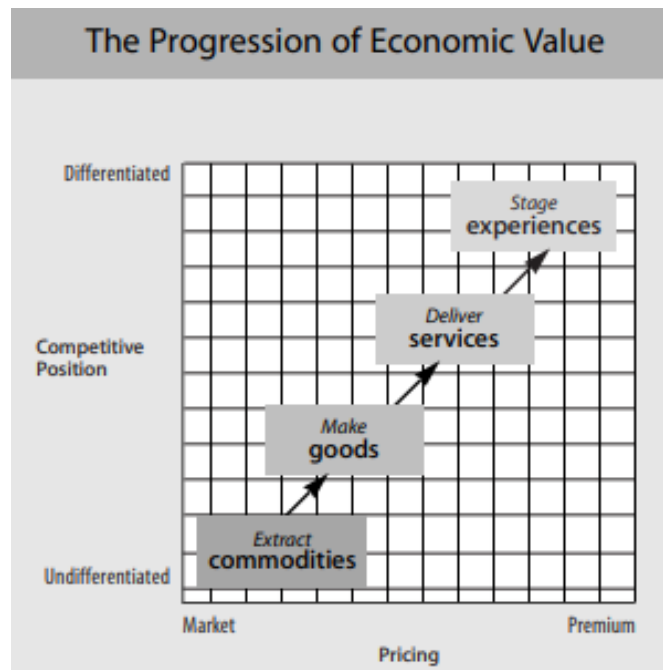

Chart 1 the progress of economic value; Retrieved 1.9.2019. From https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy

What it can be seen on the chart are four types of economies according to Pine and Gilmore. In the lowest left corner is the agrar economy and it is defined by the ability to extract commodities which are same as everywhere else and they come at a market price. The second economy is industrial economy which makes goods that are a bit different from others and their cost is slightly higher than commodities extracted by agrar economy. Service economy is third as economic value has progressed considerably from agrar and industrial economy. It's main goal is to deliver services to those that seek it and it comes with higher coast than the first two. Last economy on this evolution chart is experience economy as it is defined by premium pricing and it's the most differentiated economy out of all four.

But experience businesses didn't start with theme parks and fast food restaurants, it can be said they started as far as the first human civilizations. In ancient times traveling bards, merchants and story tellers often profited by marketing on singing stories and describing faraway places. By entertaining people and giving them experience of discovering something they haven't seen or heard before they made a living. According to Intergalactic gaming (2018)

entertainment evolved as human civilization progressed, theaters, arenas and other places opened to give people a memorable experience. In ancient Rome gladiator arenas gave people experience of witnessing a battle to death between many people, but since then experience economy evolved to theaters, theme parks and all other kind of places where people can experience something new and memorable. Today to market experience means to give additional value to a product or a service, to personalize it and to make it memorable because between millions of similar products and services companies need a way to stand out and for their customers to recognize them by associating them with positive experience (https://medium.com/@IGGalaxy/the-evolution-of-entertainment-ddc85987eecc#:~:text=pleasure%20or%20delight.-,The%20Evolution,pleasure%20or%20delight%20has%20changed.&text=Due%20to%20social%20conventions%2C%20this,to%20provide%20pleasure%20or%20delight.).

2.2.   Experience marketing definition

In term of text book definitions many authors give different opinions of what is experience marketing, but before defining what is marketing experience first there must be a definition of what is experience. Experience in most basic term according to Merriam-Webster dictionary is "direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge, the fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation, practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in a particular activity, something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through, the conscious events that make up an individual life, the act or process of directly perceiving events or reality" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/experience).

Experience marketing association (2019) gives a valued definition of what experience marketing is by defining what experience is:

> *"Experiences form the basis of all types of human relationships. They can be overt life-changing incidents or subliminal everyday moments and they can be negative, positive and indifferent. Experience marketing is a convergence of elements specifically designed to make each and every consumer brand touch point a positive one, and it is these micro experiences that ultimately drive brand satisfaction, loyalty and emotional attachment. To do this well, brands need to be fully cognizant of every moment of interaction with their consumers regardless of size or context, especially where brands can have a direct impact on their consumers at a one-to-one level"*(https://www.experiencemarketingassociation.org/what_is_experience_marketing.php).

Basically what Experience marketing associations says in their definition is that by doing the small things for customers like smiling, being nice and helping them with small acts of kindness it is possible to build the experience that leads to great satisfaction and loyalty. This definitions isn't the only one, other authors such as Pine and Gilmore (1998, this definition changed by year 2020) who give a definition that focuses on emotional side of human beings and they say that "experience marketing can create emotions by making entertainment for customers, by allowing them to escape from the reality, by educating them and giving them aesthetic objects or places to see" and Same and Larimo (citing Baron (2009)) define it as "the creation of a memorable episode based on a customer's direct personal participation or observation".

These three definitions are different in ways authors define and observe what is experience marketing by defining what actual customer experience is. While Pine and Gilmore talk about emotions, Baron focuses on memorable moments in life and Experience marketing association defines it as a combination of all elements that customer experiences during any moment in their life. As such it can be conclude that Experience marketing association gives the most complete and complex definition from academic point of view, as it doesn't explain marketing experience as only emotion, a moment in our lives, a sound we hear, a touch or something that we just see, they define it as all those elements as one. By utilizing all the elements above marketers slowly build better customer experience.

Today not only professors and academics try to define experience marketing or how to market the experience but also many practitioners, business owners and marketers give advices to other marketers on how to profit from experience, how to get the clients to remember you and how to make companies stand out from a forest of other companies. Some of those also defined marketing experience in their own way. Layne Braunstein (2018) defines experience marketing as "experiential marketing and says it's the only agile way of advertising that can create lifelong memorable experience with the ability to change the world". For him experiential marketing will be successful by following the 3 key points. It has to have active not passive engagement, it has to be live and it has to be multi-sensory. Gary Vaynerchuck (2019) doesn't only talk about B2C experience but he often talks about B2B marketing experience. Even though he doesn't talk about experience or experiential marketing directly he has defined it in its own way many times during his podcast videos. Gary often talks about doing impactful stuff, to get close to your customer and personalize products and services according to them not what you want but what makes them "move". He also talks a lot about being unique and standing out by stimulating all so customers can recognize you, in that way he has defined experience marketing many times and he practices it in all his business endeavors.

2.3.   Experience marketing key points

As a rather "new" field in marketing theory experience marketing is being defined all the time. Many researchers and experts are trying to define how to be successful at experience marketing. The main problem in defining it and acting upon it is that experience is different for everyone. It is not measurable and it's hard to put a price on it as most experiences only remain in our memories but there are few methods that combined give better view in customers experience like Net promoter score, Customer effort score and Customer Satisfaction score (Nikki Gilliland, 2018.). Bernd Schmitt (1999) in his book gives a better view and new perspective on how to act and how to communicate in this field of marketing. He gives four key characteristics on how experience or experiential marketing differs from traditional marketing (Schmitt, 1999):

1. *„Customer experiences - In contrast to traditional marketing's narrow focus on functional features and benefits, experiential marketing focuses on customer experiences, which makes for a much wider view. Experiences occur as a result of encountering, undergoing, or living through certain situations. As I will demonstrate, experiences provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values that replace functional values.*

2. *Consumption as holistic experience - Experiential marketers do not think "shampoo, shaving cream, blow dryer, and perfume." Instead, they consider the holistic consumption experience of "grooming in the bathroom." They ask what products fit into this consumption situation, how to design such products, and how packaging and communications can enhance the experience of using the products. Examining the consumption situation and sketching the fuzzy boundaries of categories and competition accordingly amounts to a radical shift in thinking about market opportunities—a shift that moves marketing thinking "over" and "up." This type of thinking broadens the concept of a category (moving over) and examines the meaning of the specific consumption situation in its broader sociocultural context (moving up). In sum, we are moving away from thinking about an isolated product and, instead, following along a sociocultural consumption vector to arrive at a broader space of meaning for the customer. The holistic basis of experiential marketing broadens the concept of a category (moving over) and examines the meaning of a specific consumption situation in its broader sociocultural context (moving up). For example, if you are marketing McDonald's hamburgers, you consider yourself to be competing against all other forms of fast food, whether they are competing hamburger chains or fried-chicken shops. At the same time, experiential marketing examines the macro*

picture: How does your product fit into the cultural bias toward healthy foods? How should McDonald's be positioned and communicate in this world?

3. ***Customer as rational and emotional animal*** *- To an experiential marketer, customers are emotionally, as well as rationally, driven. That is, although customers may frequently engage in rational choice, they are just as frequently driven by emotions because consumption experiences are often "directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun." Moreover, it is useful to think of customers as animals whose physical and mental apparatus for generating sensations, thoughts, and feelings evolved by natural selection to solve the problems faced by their evolutionary ancestors.*

4. ***Methods and tools are eclectic*** *- In contrast to the analytical, quantitative, and verbal methodologies of traditional marketing, the methods and tools of an experiential marketer are diverse and multifaceted. In a word, experiential marketing is not bound to one methodological ideology; it is eclectic. Some methods and tools may be highly analytical and quantitative (such as eye-movement methodologies for measuring the sensory impact of communications). Or they may be more intuitive and qualitative (for example, brain focusing techniques used for understanding creative thinking). They may be verbal, taking the traditional format of a focus group, in-depth interview, or questionnaire. Or they may be visual. They may occur in an artificial lab environment or in a bar, where consumers watch TV and drink beer."* (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1362/026725799784870496)

This 4 key points where developed in early 1997 and as such they might not be enough to grasp the full plate of experiences sensed by customers. Because of that marketers developed a more comprehensive framework for understanding experience in marketing. Darrel Rhea (2015) gives his revised framework based on the research done by Schmitt. In his framework Rhea focuses on two main key points which are experiences (SEMs – strategic experiential modules) and experience providers (ExPros). First part of the framework are experiences or SEMs. SEMs are strategic experiential modules that managers can use to create different types of customer experiences for their customers. SMES (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1948-7169.1999.tb00247.x):

*„**SENSE**: The SENSE module or SENSE marketing appeals to the senses, with the objective of creating sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. SENSE marketing may be used to differentiate companies and products, to motivate customers, and to add value to products through, for example, aesthetics or excitement. One of the key principles of SENSE is "cognitive consistency/sensory variety": that is, the ideal SENSE approach provides an underlying concept that is consistent but always*

fresh and new. The long-lasting campaign for Absolut vodka is a good example of SENSE marketing. The bottle design provides the resting point and cognitive consistency, yet it can be executed in continually new designs with sensory appeal.

FEEL: FEEL marketing appeals to customers' inner feelings, with the objective of creating affective experiences that range from mildly positive moods linked to a brand (for example, for a noninvolving, nondurable grocery brand or service or industrial product) to strong emotions of joy and pride (for example, for a consumer durable, technology, or social marketing campaign). What is needed to make FEEL marketing work is a close understanding of stimuli that can trigger certain emotions. Standard emotional communications lack both because they do not target feelings during consumption. It is difficult to create successful FEEL campaigns on an international scale because both the emotion-inducing stimuli and the willingness to empathize in a given situation often differ from culture to culture. An example of a FEEL marketer is Hallmark. From the design of its greeting cards and the various sections in its Creations stores to its website, Hallmark is all FEEL.

THINK: THINK marketing appeals to the intellect, with the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage customers creatively. THINK appeals engage customers' convergent and divergent thinking through surprise, intrigue, and provocation. THINK campaigns are common for new-technology products. A good example is Microsoft's "Where Do You Want to Go Today?" campaign. But THINK marketing is not restricted to high-tech. THINK marketing has also been used in product design, retailing, and communications in many other industries.

ACT: ACT marketing enriches customers' lives by targeting their physical experiences, showing them alternate ways of doing things (for example, in business-to-business and industrial markets), as well as alternate lifestyles and interactions. Rational approaches to behavior change (that is, theories of reasoned actions) are only one of many behavioral change options. Changes in lifestyles and behaviors are often motivational, inspirational, and emotional in nature and frequently involve role models (such as movie stars or athletes). Nike's Just Do It has become a classic of ACT marketing.

RELATE: RELATE marketing contains aspects of SENSE, FEEL, THINK, and ACT marketing. However, RELATE marketing expands beyond the individual's personal, private feelings, thus relating the individual to something outside his or her private state. RELATE campaigns appeal to the individual's desire for self-improvement (a future ideal self that he or she wants to relate to). They appeal to the need to be perceived positively by other individuals (peers, girl- or boyfriends, spouses, or colleagues). They

relate the person to a broader social system (a subculture, a country). America's Harley-Davidson motorcycle is a RELATE brand par excellence. Harley is a way of life. From the bikes themselves to Harleyrelated merchandise to Harley-Davidson tattoos on the bodies of enthusiasts (who come from all social groups), consumers see Harley as a part of their identity. Not surprisingly, HarleyDavidson users form strong bonds in the form of brand communities."

The SEMs or strategic experiential modules are a good way to comprehend experiences. They provide us with a good insight of what our potential customer is feeling in what way, how he relates and what will he do. To get influence on customers and to give them memorable experience we need to use combination of more SEMs in creating our marketing strategy and marketing campaigns. Using only one type of experience will not create much of an impact on a person since they will not be able to relate to the brand based on only one sense, but by using 3, 4 or 5 modules we can create an experience that will last a lifetime. To create such experience, we need experience providers or how Rhea calls them ExPros. Based on Darrel Rhea (2015) ExPros are essentially communication, visual and verbal identity, signage, product presence, co-branding, spatial environments, electronic media, and people. These 9 elements seem very familiar because they are not in any way different from what traditional marketers use when creating marketing strategies, but it's not about what they are it is about how they use them. For creating appropriate marketing experience Rhea gives a guide in how ExPros must be managed:

1. coherently (that is, in an integrated fashion)
2. consistently over time
3. by paying attention to detail and using each ExPro to its fullest potential for creating the experience

These guidelines can help marketing managers, marketers and marketing agencies create marketing strategies that work not only on paper but in practice as well. From my personal experience working in marketing I think that consistency and using the full potential of a tool, medium or marketing campaign is the best way to reach out to customers and increase their loyalty towards your brand. Take Coca-Cola company for example. Some would advocate that Coca-Cola is the expert in marketing especially in creating campaigns that people remember and associate with. Essentially Coca-Cola is great at experience marketing since they are managing to create some wonderful experiences even though they are only a beverage company. By using their brand that is recognized all over the world they have created some of the best marketing campaigns. One of them is campaign where they allowed people to send messages to random strangers across the world. In this campaign they capitalized on feelings

of connecting with other people aka using FEELS, they appealed to people by utilizing sense of taste and smell so they used SENSE, they got people to ACT participate by recording and sending massages and they also got people to RELATE to the brand as it connected them to total strangers across the globe. What we can conclude here is that Coca-Cola managed to utilize all the SEMs mentioned before to create experience that most of the people that participated won't forget in a lifetime.

A lot of marketing managers can learn about creating strategies based on these principles and examples. The hardest thing for them is probably going to be to let go of old mindset where they create generic strategies that later on produce a copy paste content based on their competition. By doing that it will be hard for them to fully grasp the experience marketing principles. For example, if a customer had to pick between a Coca-Cola and some Coca-Cola competitor after participating in their campaign and connecting with people from across the globe, with all other conditions similar, pricing, taste, quantity of a product they would probably pick Coca-Cola. As most marketing experts have proven and they keep advocating that advertisement today is dying, because companies keep creating same kind of content over and over again, they are failing to differentiate from one another. Basically they are not using the experiences that most people want to experience. When they manage to discard the old way of advertising and start to market their products and services based on experiences they will increase not only their brand recognition and customer loyalty but also the satisfaction their customers get by choosing them as a brand.

2.4.   Marketing experience pros and cons

As marketers try to gain their way into customer's life and gain recognition it has become harder than ever to send your brand massage across all existing channels. It doesn't matter if it is traditional media like newspapers, billboards, TV, radio, emails or social media there is so much advertisement that most consumers don't even notice it anymore. Most people will forget a brand massage as soon as they hear it or see it, a better perspective on who should use experience marketing and when they should use it is needed. Nicholas (2016) in an article called The Ins and Outs of Experiential Marketing gives an intro to basic advantages and some disadvantages of experience marketing. According to him using experiential marketing makes your brand relatable, it holds contextual importance, it creates emotional relevance, it gives people something to talk about, and it's social (Nicholas, 2016). To summarize it to be relatable means that customers will connect more easily with your brand, contextualize means that experience campaigns need to be interconnected with social media and content marketing updates so people will keep being engaged and interested, emotional relevance means that people will create emotional connection with the brand and see it as their personal brand and also experience marketing campaigns are fun so people often talk

about them especially if they can socialize around other people. In his article Nicholas (2016) also gives some disadvantages for using marketing experience in campaigns. The disadvantages he mentions are that you shouldn't use it as only marketing campaign and it's not fit for every brand and every product. One other disadvantage that Nicholas (2016) doesn't mention is that experience marketing campaigns can be considerably more expensive, especially if they are not done right. Experiential marketing campaigns sometime need more time than others to gain recognition since they often relay on technology people are not used to, but once they do they will generically spread around communities and they will become talk of the day.

Some other publishers and specialized websites also give their own opinion on benefits that companies can have from experience marketing. Factory360.com gives 10 examples of benefits from experience marketing and they are (https://factory360.com/top-10-benefits-of-experiential-marketing/):

- **"*Experiential marketing is effective*** - *One of the reasons experiential marketing is so popular is that it's quite effective. The 2015 EventTrack survey, the largest annual survey of the experiential marketing industry, shows that 79 percent of brands expected to increase their spending on experiential marketing. On average, those firms planned to bump spending by over six percent. Why the big increase in investment in experiential marketing? Nearly 80 percent saw a return on investment of 3:1 or more for each event. Sixteen percent realized an ROI of 20:1 or more. Eighty-one percent of brands who used experiential marketing created brand awareness or saw their brand awareness increase; 62 percent said consumers gained greater product knowledge as a result of their event; and 57 percent developed deeper consumer involvement. Brands see results from experiential marketing. That's why so many of them are investing more money in it every year.*

- ***Experiential marketing generates sales and leads -*** *EventTrack also shows that experiential marketing can lead directly to sales and leads. Seventy-nine percent of companies surveyed said experiential marketing events helped them increase sales. Seventy-four percent of consumers surveyed said they were more likely to purchase a company's products or services after an experiential marketing event. Experiential marketing events are great for generating leads as well. Fifty percent of companies said their goal for experiential marketing events was to gather leads, and 41 percent said they used the events to increase their prospect databases.*

- ***Experiential marketing allows consumers to experience products/services with their senses*** - *Traditionally, one of the reasons to have an experiential marketing event was to allow consumers to feel, touch, taste, hear and smell a product. Shoppers are more likely to buy food and beverages if they can sample them before they make a purchase. Consumers who can smell candles and air fresheners can figure out which ones they like best before they buy. And the list goes on. Note that service companies (not just those selling a product) can provide consumers with opportunities to sample products with their senses. DJs can play music to show off the quality of their equipment. Natural cleaning product companies can allow consumers to smell their products to demonstrate that they don't contain chemicals that make the eyes or nose burn.*

- ***Experiential marketing allows brands to interact directly with consumers*** *- So often these days, consumers interact with brands through email, a website or social media. When consumers interact with a brand by phone, they're typically speaking with a person who is thousands of miles away (and perhaps in another country). There's something to be said from the convenience of being able to access brands through so many channels and at virtually any time of day. But these interactions can also be impersonal and frustrating. Experiential marketing gives consumers the chance to directly interact with people at their favorite brands (either employees or, more likely, well-trained brand ambassadors).*

- ***Experiential marketing helps brands convey their values and mission*** *- Research shows that consumers are more likely to feel loyal to a brand when they have shared values. But values, mission statements, goals and similar messages are hard to convey through traditional advertising methods. Social media, videos and other types of digital media make it easier to tell your brand's story, but attracting consumers and holding their attention long enough to get them to consume that media can be challenging.*

- ***Experiential marketing makes social media even more powerful*** *- Social media is a powerful tool on its own. But when you combine it with experiential marketing, it becomes a more potent and effective way to share your message. Consumers love to take and share pictures of themselves on social media. When you invite them to a fun and memorable experience, they're highly likely to capture their favorite moments on film and share them with people they know. That gives your brand free grassroots advertising that's hard to come by any other way.*

- ***Good experiential marketing events attract earned media, influencers, etc. -*** *Television, newspaper, influencers and others who can share your message widely are unlikely to cover your new products or services if you hold a press conference. But if you build an engaging and meaningful experiential marketing activation… well, they will come. Use experiential marketing to gain attention from the people who can help you share your brand story.*

- ***Experiential marketing events provide useful analytics -*** *Since experiential marketing allows you to interact with consumers at a live event, it's fairly easy to track several key analytics. EventTrack respondents said their top measures for events were total attendance/participation, Facebook likes or other social media interactions, and product sales leads. Other common quantitative measures include how many samples were given away, e-newsletter signups, views of a website page or digital site set up specifically to support the event, and how many sales leads were generated.*

- ***Experiential marketing allows you to micro-target specific audiences -*** *Is your biggest marketing goal to educate millennials about your products? Go to the places they hang out and talk to them. Are you hoping to get retirees to buy your company's services? Talk to them in the places they frequent.*

- ***Experiential marketing is fun! -*** *Everyone likes events – especially events where you get to have meaningful experiences or received substantial samples of products or services. Experiential marketing campaigns are fun for the companies that host them, and fun for the consumers who partake in them. Combine the fun factor with the high return on investment of experiential marketing campaigns, and it's hard to see how anyone can lose."*

Since experience marketing campaigns can be rather expensive it's important to develop a good marketing plan and budget beforehand. Benefits of marketing experience not only the ones mentioned above but others mostly depend on how a brand communicates it. With good communication and clear massage experience marketing campaigns become fun after they are conducted in a right way. The biggest and most important benefit of all those mentioned above is that it allows company to micro target and customize products and services based on what customers want and need. Building a house will fulfill the basic need for home, shelter, roof atop of your head, and protection but building a house that your customer dreams of based on all those little thing he wants like glass walls or an open space kitchen, a company connects with that customer as he will remember everyday he enters his house that it was that

company that build it. Customizing according to customer preferences and satisfying their feelings will make that customer not only loyal but also become the best spokesperson for the company.

While talking about key benefits of marketing experience in this paper there were also a couple of disadvantages that come with experience marketing. Some of these are the costs of experience marketing, bad planning will lead to failure, bad communication won't manage to provide the key experiences that customers should feel from campaign. The main reason for this disadvantages is because most experience marketing campaigns try to connect with feelings of their customers, by making them feel proud, excited, connected, unique, appreciated and providing them opportunity to experience any other type of experience, and that feelings and experiences is what can make a campaign fail. In article on entreprenuer.com Shankar Vasundhara (2017) lists the biggest roadblocks for experience marketing are:

- High time to shift from traditional marketing methods
- Limitation of budget
- Spontaneity of action
- Adversity of execution
- Uncertainty of outcome
- Lack of good talent

High time to shift from traditional marketing methods is pointed in the direction of marketing managers and their rigidness of the corporate systems of some companies. The shift from traditional ads to campaign that leaves an impact on individual is sometimes too hard for some companies as they have to change not only the rules, budget, planning and strategy but also the mindset of their employees, so that experience campaigns can show success. As it has been mentioned before, budget and cost of experiential campaigns can be really disadvantageous for companies. Experiential campaigns often require flexible budget since they are delivered via new technologies, non-standard mediums and need a lot more manpower. What Shankar wants to say with spontaneity of action is that campaigns need to be easy to understand and participate in, and that is because people are not computers and some people will react differently than others when exposed to something they have not experienced before which can lead to negative experience. Adversity of execution is a follow up on spontaneity of actions because it also revolves around people. Because some people may not understand the campaign at all and it will be meaningless for them. Uncertainty of outcome is one of the biggest disadvantages for marketing managers and agencies, and probably what makes most of them avoid that kind of campaigns. The fear of the unknown especially in business is a big roadblock, and when it comes to marketing experience it is even

bigger since it is a new field in marketing. According to MC² agency in their article Experiential Marketing Metrics: How to Measure Success (https://www.mc-2.com/knowledge/experiential-marketing-metrics-how-to-measure-success/) states that there are no methods and tools that can help marketers predict what the outcome of campaign will be and that is what makes them quit before they even started. Last but not least is lack of good talent. Not everyone is fit enough to work on experience marketing campaigns. What marketing teams need when they work on marketing experience campaigns is people who understand human behavior, who don't have a problem interacting in different situation and who have a flexible mindset that is ready to react when something unexpected occurs. People feelings are complicated and without experts and right planning a marketing campaign could have the opposite effect or even worse no effect at all.

2.5.   Examples of successful and unsuccessful marketing experience campaigns

The previous part of the paper was talking about what is marketing experience, how it came to be and who started talking about it first, who is researching it, what are benefits and what are the downsides, but that all can be meaningless without proper examples.

Hubspot has been doing some incredible research about best marketing campaigns for a while, and in an article 11 of the Coolest Experiential Marketing Examples We've Ever Seen, published by Becker Braden (2018) they have listed some of the best marketing experience campaigns so far (https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/best-experiential-marketing-campaigns) :

1. **Refinery29: 29Rooms –** it's a campaign done by a lifestyle brand called Refinery29. As the name implies it's consisted of 29 interactive rooms filled with branded stuff from Refinery29 partners. Each room is interactive and people can do various stuff with branded things inside them, Paint the Cadillac, decorate donuts etc. This campaign is active for 4 years and they visit most of the Americas biggest cities. With the combination of art, fashion, technology and branded stuff from partners they create unforgettable experiences for their visitors.

Picture 1 Wonderland room (Refinery29), Retrieved 17.9.2019 from http://austin.culturemap.com/news/entertainment/07-26-19-refinery29-29rooms-expand-your-reality-tour-dallas/

Picture 2 Disco room (Refinery29); Retrieved 17.9.2019. From https://localemagazine.com/take-a-look-and-take-your-pics-refinery-29s-29rooms-returns-to-los-angeles-for-five-days/

2. **Red Bull: Stratos –** as most marketers already know it, Red Bull has been cooperating with almost every type of sport team or athlete that does extreme sports. In campaign launched in 2012. they partnered with Felix Baumgartner to try and break a world record for highest jump. They put Felix in a capsule tied to a helium balloon and took him 39 km above Earth's surface. By jumping out of the capsule he has set a new world record for highest jump. The campaign had such an impact that it is still talked about today and the video posted on YouTube has 8 million views.

Picture 3 Red Bull Stratos; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://airandspace.si.edu/events/red-bull-stratos-mission-edge-space-0

3. **Lean Cuisine: #WeighThis -** is a campaign that Lean Cuisine has done in Central station in New York City. With all the massages that force women to

lose weight they let women choose what they wanted to be weighted about. Women could write on scales what they wanted to be weighted for. Some wrote that they are single mothers, some that they are back in college at age of 55. The best thing about this is no one asked those women anything or had to interact with them to make them participate, they did it by themselves. One of the massages we can learn from this is that it is better to let our customers participate on their own, rather than throw million questions in their face and ask them to participate in our campaign, because we will not be able to get 100% honest experience.

Picture 4 WeightThis; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.popsugar.co.uk/gdpr-consent?destination=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.popsugar.co.uk%2Fgdpr%3Futm_medium%3Dredirect%26utm_campaign%3DUS%3AHR%26utm_source%3Dwww.google.com%26gdpr

4. **Volkwagon: Piano Staircase –** is a campaign done by Volkswagen in 2009. In Stockholm Sweden they replaced stairway leading to subway with piano keys. People who walked down or up the stairs would produce a different sound corresponding to each piano key. The goal for campaign was to prove that people would do something if it looks fun. The result of the campaign was that people chose to have fun and work a little bit harder by walking up or down the stairs instead of using the escalator that was right next to it.

Picture 5 Piano Stairs; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.designoftheworld.com/piano-stairs/

5. **Google: "Building a Better Bay Area"-** In 2015. Google donated 5.5 billion dollars to charitable foundation Bay Area, and they let people decide what it will

be used for to make Bay Area a better place. To get the Bay Area community more involved in making decision they have put interactive posters on bus stops, train stations and other public places where locals could vote about changes in their area. This way even people who weren't able to vote online could make a change by giving their vote.

Picture 6 Building a Better Bay Area interactive poster by Google; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.adweek.com/creativity/google-used-clickable-paper-posters-asking-people-which-nonprofits-it-should-fund-167497/

6. **Misereor: Charity Donation Billboard –** is one of the most impactful campaigns on the list in terms of visuals. Misereor a German based NGO made a campaign called SocialSwipe. As part of the campaigns they put billboards in big cities, airports, bus stations, and by swiping their card visitors would donate 2 euros for a good cause. The impactful part of the campaign was when they would swipe their card image showed on the billboard would change. They could cut bread for the poor or free those who were imprisoned. The campaign didn't end only there. After those who swiped their card would get bank statement they would see a "Thank you" note from Misereor and a question if they want to keep donating 2 euros on monthly base.

Picture 7 Interactive billboard for campaign SocialSwipe; Retrieved 17.9.2018. from https://www.kolle-rebbe.de/en/work/the-social-swipe/

7. **Guinness: Guinness Class –** in terms of luxury campaigns Guinness did a really great job with Guinness Class. Guinness actors dressed in Guinness-branded flight attendants entered bars across UK and when someone ordered a glass of Guinness they could participate in a contest to win prizes. Every night people would win Guinness branded stuff but 1 lucky winner per night would win a trip to Dublin with 4 friends in a private Guinness jet.

Picture 8 Screenshot of a YouTube video for Guinness campaign Guinness Class; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IAMPw2IzkQ

8. **GE: Healthymagination –** was a campaign done by GE in collaboration with agencyEA where they created three different movie stages, a clinic in a village in Africa, a modern day clinic and an emergency room. In each setting they asked doctors to talk about how they used GE equipment in different situations and the main goal was to get people thinking and acting about healthcare in different parts of the world. This campaign was a bit different than others because it was a B2B campaign and most of the attendees were representatives of global clinics or healthcare companies.

Picture 9 Screenshot of a YouTube video for campaign Healthymagination; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQQP-NqAQnI

9. **Facebook: Facebook IQ Live –** was a campaign to help people understand how data that Facebook and Instagram collect over time can help them lead to better sales and business decisions. On site they created real life examples of a house, Instagram hashtags and other similar data that showed attendees how their customers make decisions to buy something. The campaign showed great results as 93% out of 1500 attendees said it helped them understand how to do better business on Facebook.
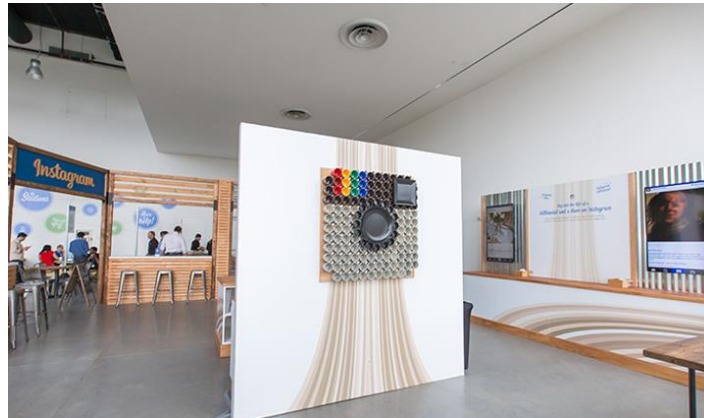
Picture 10 Facebook DATA room for Instagram; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.bizbash.com/production-strategy/experiential-activations-sponsorships/media-gallery/13481139/how-facebook-made-a-datafocused-event-fun

10. **Zappos: "Google Cupcake Ambush"-** In Austin Texas Google made a campaign where people could buy cupcakes by paying with photos they took with their new photo app. People gathered around and everyone had a nice experience by getting free cupcake for a single photo. After some time, Zappos set up a boot next to Google cupcake truck where they wrote "pay with a cupcake" and "be happier". People who paid with a cupcake they got for free from Google in exchange got shoes, bag, sunglasses and other merchandise from Zappos. This proves that brands can cooperate when doing marketing experience campaigns to provide people with even more memorable experience.

11. **Docker: Docker Dash –** In partnership with Jack Morton, Docker used its developer conference, DockerCon 2017, to nurture its core enterprise market with a unique product demo called Docker Dash. Docker Dash was a live video game-style simulation of Docker's application platform, and it recruited 5,000 of its enterprise attendees to create an app together by solving a series of fun challenges inside the game. Each challenge presented in Docker Dash allowed the "players" to engage a feature of Docker's product and ultimately complete their app.

This marketing campaigns are just an example of how to do it in a good way. What is important is that all of them are interactive, they are aimed at human emotions such as excitement, empathy, happiness, connectivity with others. Some of them have even proven that marketing experience is not only about fun and excitement. It can also be about sadness

or pity like it is showed in Misereor and GE campaigns. The most important thing that made this campaigns successful is that they created lifelong experiences for the participants.

Even though marketing campaigns mentioned above have been really successful some campaigns fail to deliver especially when it comes to marketing experience. Main reason for failure is different for each campaign of course, but they have some things in common, like not being careful about their target audience or bad planning. According to marketing agency WILY (2019) five worst experiential marketing campaigns are   (https://www.wilyglobal.com/5-epic-experiential-marketing-fails-and-what-they-can-teach-us/):

1. ***Amazon's "Man in the High Castle" Nazi-themed subway cars –*** *campaign from 2015. that Amazon did to promote its new show called Man in the High Castle. For promotion they covered some of the New York subway stations with Nazi and Imperial Japan symbols from World War 2. Most of the people were offended by posters and they were quickly removed. Biggest reason why this campaign failed is that they offended people instead of getting them to become interested in the series.*

Picture 13 Nazi and Imperial Japan themed subway train; Retrieved 17.9.2019. from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/25/nazi-inspired-ads-for-the-man-in-the-high-castle-pulled-from-new-york-subway

2. ***Jägermeister "Poison" Pool Party –*** *in Leon, Mexico Jägermeister organized an event themed pool party. On the event participants could pour liquid nitrogen into the pool to create smoke on the water theme. By doing that nitrogen combined with chlorine created a deadly gas and several people got hospitalized. Reason for the failure of this campaign is that before the event started agency that planned it didn't consult with chemistry experts which resulted in catastrophe.*

3. **Dr. Pepper's $1 Million Coin Advertising Stunt** – *was a campaign done by Schweppes in 2007. To promote their new drink Dr. Peppers they started a treasure hunt and the main treasure was a gold coin worth 1 million dollars. But at some point they gave a hint that treasure can be found at a Boston's historic Old Granary Burial Ground. After people flocked to the cemetery, government closed it down in a fear of desecration of the site. Results of picking wrong locations led to negative review from targeted audience*
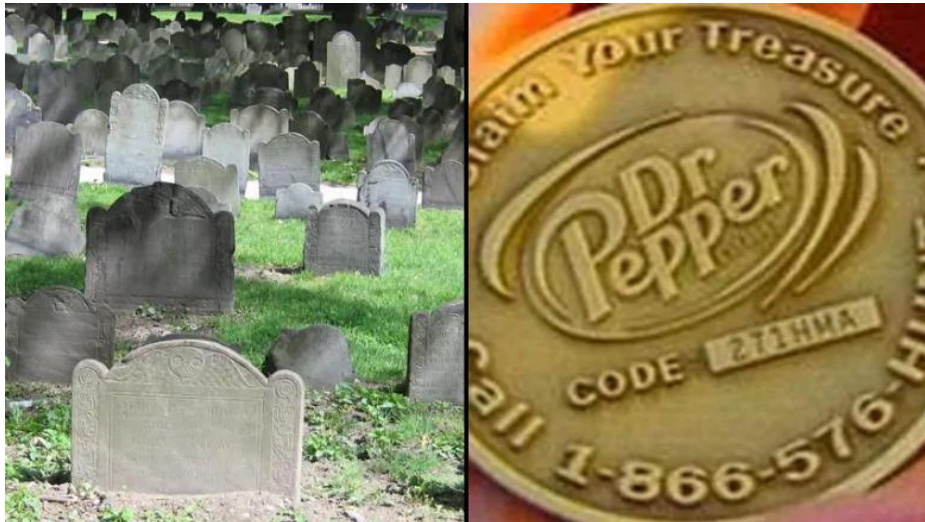
4. **Paramount Pictures' Mission Impossible III "Bomb Scare"** - *to promote new Mission impossible III movie Paramount Pictures placed small red wired devices inside 4,500 LA Times newspaper racks. When newspaper racks were*

opened they played Mission impossible theme and people could see little red box with red vires hanging out if it. Some people reported a bomb and local police department blew up the rack thinking there was a real bomb inside. This campaign failed because they had to remove all the devices after that incidents and they caused a hysteria in the city.
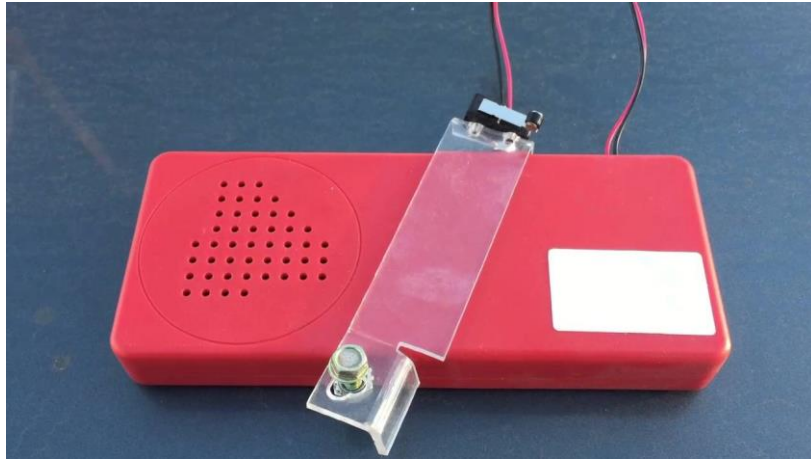
5. ***Ten Cent Beer Night –*** *this campaign is from 1974., when Cleveland Indians ran a promotion for their fans to buy beer at 10 cents for 3,5 dcl with unlimited supply. At that time beer price for 3,5 dcl was around 65 cents and of course people rushed to buy and drink beer. What went wrong was that drunken fans started fights with opposing team and even ran into the field. Because of that they managed to ruin the whole event not only for the teams but for fans and other people who attended.*

Designing experience and setting goals is important for marketing campaign but those goals and the campaign itself should never have a negative effect on people even if they are not

participating in campaign. What can be concluded from these 5 experience campaigns that failed is that they didn't take into account how people would react. In the paragraph about biggest roadblocks for experiential marketing based on article from Shankar Vasundhara (2017) it was explained every roadblock mentioned by her. In these campaigns it is clear that they hit one or more roadblocks mentioned by Shankar. All of the campaigns had trouble with one common disadvantage in experiential marketing campaigns and that is uncertainty of outcome. The people that made plans for these campaigns probably had other outcomes in mind when they were designing them but all the campaigns failed because didn't predict possible negative situations.

3. Marketing experience in gaming industry

Video game industry is the biggest entertainment industry in the world according to HERO Network (2018) and in terms of worth, the video game market is bigger than film and music industry combined and it is continuing to grow every day. According to Shieber Jonathan (2019) video game industry has reached a new peak in 2018 with revenue of 43.8 billion dollars, up 18 percent from the previous years, surpassing the projected total global box office for the film industry. Video game industry and related content are taking the attention of millions of people across the globe no matter the age, gender or occupation. And there is a perfectly good reason for that. While playing video games people can become what they always wanted to be, they can jump from one avatar to another, from a fantasy world filled with swords and magic to futuristic adventure while flying a space ship or driving a racecar. In games people can become what they want whenever they want.

3.1. Evolution of gaming industry

Video game industry is younger than music, film or any other entertainment industry and according to Raghunath Aditya (2019) it all started in 1940 when nuclear physicist Edward Condon designed a computer that allowed people to play the first game, called Nim. What followed was development of other video games and video game consoles. First arcade video game was called Space Computer, and first consoles were released in 1970s. Leading gaming company at that time was Activision and they made games for both computers and consoles. In the mid-1980s EA games and Japan Nintendo entertainment were also founded which broadened the number of available games for the masses. One of the biggest turn ups for video game industry was the release of Sony's PlayStation console system that sold more than 20 million units (https://marketrealist.com/2016/06/the-history-of-the-gaming-industry/).

The video game industry growth didn't stop at Sony's PlayStation. Other companies such as Microsoft and Nintendo released their own gaming consoles and they are releasing new ones every couple of years. One of the biggest boom for computer games was also the ability to implement social aspect in it. With PlayStation whole family could play games together and some PC games could also be played together on the same keyboard and that was what made computer games more fun (https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/history-of-video-games).

With the development and evolution of the internet, more people have chosen to start playing video games since they had easier access to them and they could pick from wider variety of games. With evolution of internet video games also started to evolve. As said by Chikhani Riadi (2015) Faster and more stable internet connection, allowed people to play games together online from the comfort of their home and that is what made video games popularity skyrocket. According Chikhani Riadi (2015) to late 1990s and 2000s were turn over for video games with releases of some of the most popular game series up to day. As written by Wonbo Woo (2010) In the middle of 2004 Blizzard entertainment released a game called World of Warcraft which was based on their previous game series called Warcraft and according to Gallagher M. Jason (2019) World of Warcraft popularity skyrocketed pretty fast for those times and by 2010 the game had around 12 million accounts across the globe. As writen by Gallagher M. Jason (2019) what made the game so popular was not only the fantasy world based on magic and sword fights, it was social aspect of it and experience of working together with other people to get something done. That and the experience of progress and rewards for hard work made the game so addictive that some people had to go to counseling to get their life back in order. Today games have evolved even more and they can be played cross different platforms, like what today's most popular game Fortnite did as it allowed PlayStation players, XBOX players and PC players to play together. From virtual reality to artificial intelligence, these technologies are shaping the future of video games (https://builtin.com/media-gaming/future-of-gaming).

3.2.   Video game industry statistics

American based agency Entertainment software association keeps statistics about all entertainment industries in America. In the report ESA (2019) released statistics and important facts about video game industry in the shape of infographics.
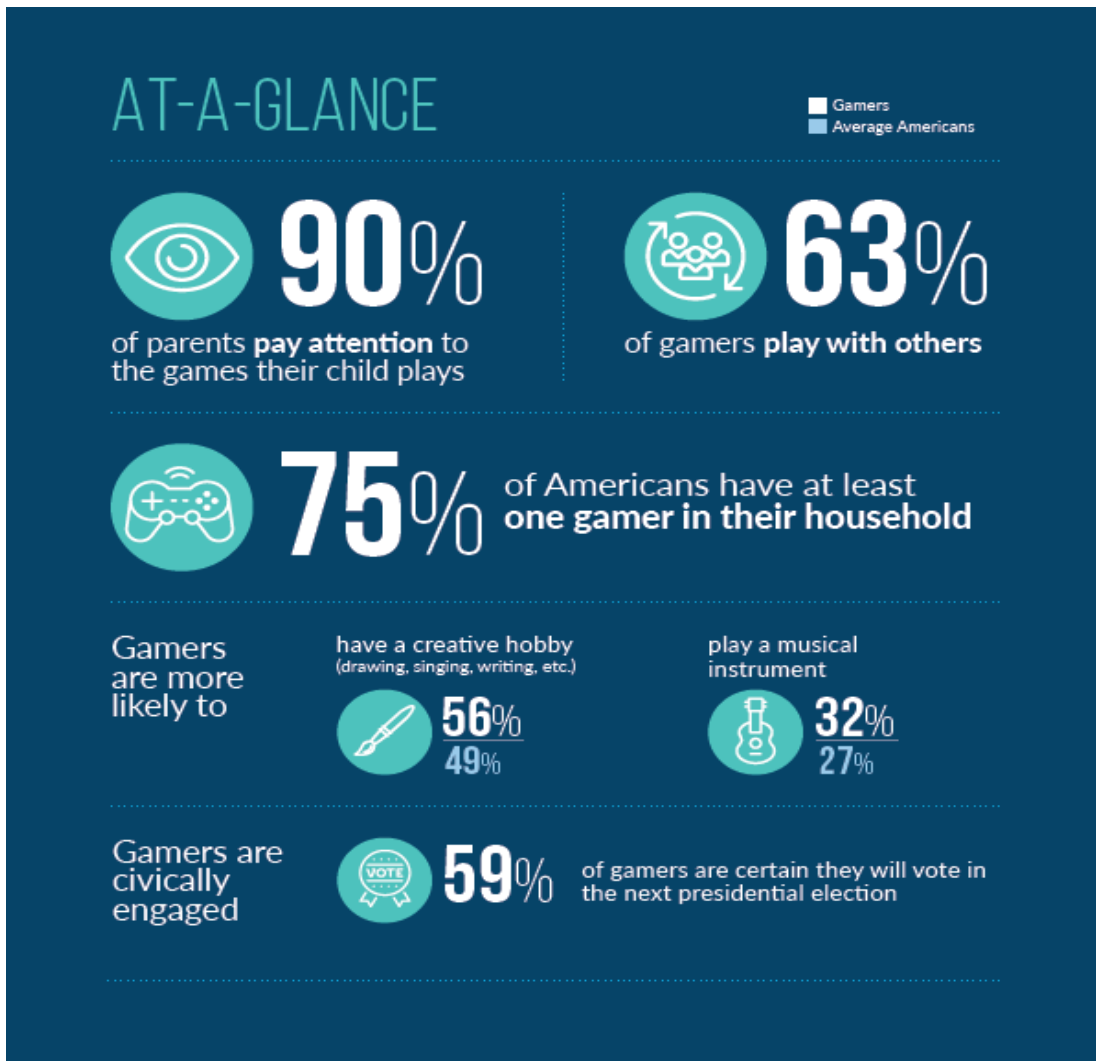
Picture 18 Infographics comparing gamers and average americans; Retrieved 17.9.2019.
fromhttps://www.theesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/At_a_glance_EF19.png

The first graphic called AT-A-GLANCE, ESA shows some basic data about gamers from average American households. According to ESA (2019) as seen in first graphic 90% of parents pay attention to games their children play, this could mean they observe it carefully or they might have tried to play it themselves. Another statistic data shows that 63% of gamers play games with others, here we come to the social part of gaming experience. Since humans are social by nature it is more fun for most gamers to play games with others. Now we come to another statistic data that says that 75% of households have at least one gamer in the house and if we take Statista.com (2019) data that shows there is 127.59 million households in the US we come to the number of 97.2 million households that have at least one gamer in the

house. In the comparison done with average Americans gamers are 7% more likely to have a creative hobby and 5% more likely to play a musical instrument, and 59% of them are sure they will vote in the next presidential elections.

The second infographics is more related to games themselves and it is called AVARAGE GAMER.

AVERAGE GAMER

65% of American adults **play video games**

The most common devices used for video game play among adult gamers

60% Smartphone

52% Personal computer

49% Dedicated game console

Most popular game genres

71% casual

53% action

47% shooter

52% of gamers are college educated

Gamers feel that video game play has a positive impact on their lives

79% of gamers believe games provide mental stimulation

78% of gamers believe games provide relaxation and stress relief

These infographics show that 65% of adult Americans play video games, 60% play on smartphones, 52% on PC and 49% on consoles. Most popular genres for gamers in America are casual games that 71% plays, action with 53% and shooter with 47%. American gamers are more likely to have higher education since 52% are college educated and 79% believe that games provide mental stimulation while for 78% video games provide relaxation and stress relief.

This statistics prove at least for America that video games have positive influence on people and are not cause of aggression and violence according to what some of the media presents and marketers could very easily capitalize on gamers love for video games like in article by Dodgson Lindsay (2018).

3.3.   Marketing in gaming industry

Marketing in gaming industry has been evolving with evolution of video games. Today it is more profitable for some brands to tie their name with a video game than Hollywood celebrities. According Dobrilova Theodora (2019) Gaming marketing industry was worth around 135 billion dollars in 2018. That number shows just how big that market size is and it also shows what opportunities it can have for companies and marketers. One of the most important thing in marketing is to grab customer's attention and keep it over a long period of time. Video game industry does that almost to perfection since some gamers will follow a single game for more than a decade no matter the period of their lives. (https://techjury.net/stats-about/gaming-industry-worth/)

In today fast moving world majority of video games are played on smartphones. One example of a recent game success for smartphones was Pokémon Go as it had more than 43 million users at its peak and around 20 million daily users. This shows just how much mobile phone games are fun for people. When it comes to marketing based on video games. Pokémon Go is a great example of it. When the game itself was at peak, coffee shops, restaurants, bars and shopping malls would make deals with game creator Niantic to put Poke Spots in their locations to attract gamers, some even invested small amount of money to put in game mechanics that lures Pokémon's to Poke Spots called Poke Lures. That way people would sit in bars and restaurants and eat or drink while playing the game. This way small business managed to profit from a single mobile phone game. (https://eleventygroup.com/2016/07/27/pokemon-go-marketing-examples/)

Another reason to invest in marketing in gaming industry is loyalty atleast according to Peterson Steve (2014). According to Peterson Steve (2014) When it comes to loyalty gamers are one of the most loyal customers for their favorite games. Production companies often host events where gamers can experience in game content in real life, they organize theme parities based on games and host conventions that gather millions of gamers every year. Those conventions often provide gamers with unique experiences, they allow them to dress up as favorite avatars from their favorite video games, to assemble guns they used in a shooter games or to make weapons from scratch with a help of a smith. This experiences make gamers even more loyal to the game they are playing and most of them probably collect merchandise related to the game itself.(https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2014-08-29-gamer-loyalty-plays-into-profits)

With Fortnites recent rise to fame among younger generation of gamers, companies have started getting involved in the game itself. One of the most popular feature of the game are avatars dance moves. This got dance studios around the world to let customers experience how to dance like Fortnite avatars. One of the examples of how Fortnite captures its user's attention was done during Super bowl 2018. According to Seb Joseph (2019) they put a livestream video of DJ Marshmallow having a concert in game. This not only provided a unique experience for players that participated in the event but also generated 10 million of views during a single day. One other way for brands to capitalize on video games is by using branded exclusives in game. One exclusive like this was done in one of Fortnite missions called Food Fight, where players used food to fight instead of guns and other weapons. The brand that was present inside of game at that time was Wendy's. This in game event provided players with unique in game experience that was branded from a non-gaming company. Wendy also used opportunity to ask players to fight against frozen burgers, a message meant against Wendy's competition that uses frozen burgers. (https://digiday.com/marketing/brands-wendys-nfl-marketing-fortnite/)

Marketing in gaming industry can be done in a bunch of different ways, but one of the best is to actually cooperate with game developers to create unique experiences for players. Loyalty for the game in that way could easily be moved to the brand that was involved in creating the experience as well.

3.4.   Why experience marketing work in gaming industry

According to Chaos theory games (2019) games are the #1 solution for inspiring and engaging your audience and they are perfect medium for creating branded and personalised user experiences for marketing campaign. As reported by Chaos theory games (2019) gamified marketing and branded games drive repeat engagement, enable personalised experiences, maintain positive brand interactions, are highly shareable and

most of all, they're entertaining and they also stated 5 reasons why games will amplify and transform experiential marketing campaign (https://www.chaostheorygames.com/blog/digital-experiential-marketing-in-2020):

- ***Games are Engagement Engines*** *- Traditional marketing campaigns aim to raise awareness and spread the word, however gamified marketing relies on prolonged engagement, repeat plays, and sharing of user generated content. Ultimately, games are the most compelling way to win the consumers' attention and retain their engagement.*

- ***Games are Highly Immersive, Interactive and Fun*** *- Games offer players a unique immersion and in a world where customer experience is king, games have the ability to empower players through personalised and immersive experiences. According to Funday Factory "An engaging and entertaining game blurs the line between marketing and entertainment creating a more absorbing brand space", so a branded game will not only engage and entertain your users but will subtly and successfully deliver your marketing message and brand story.*

- ***Games are Multiplatform*** *- Thanks to technology and the online space, your branded game can reach and engage your audience from anywhere and throughout every platform through cross-platform play i.e. mobile, web, console, tablet. Games offer a dynamic experience for your users on any chosen channel, there is a higher possibility that you'll not only retain your existing customers but also reach new audiences on more digital platforms.*

- ***Games are Social*** *- Gamification incorporates fun and an element of competition to the marketing strategy, they're easily integrated with social media channels that often encourages social sharing. Incorporating games with social channels builds an engaged community surrounding the game, the level of connection the users feel with your brand and other players results in their motivation to compete with other users, share their experiences and dedicate playtime in order to be rewarded. Brands use social media to establish a connection with their audiences and with branded games you can amplify the engagement and interaction between you and your audience.*

- ***Gamification is Growing*** *- Gamification has extended beyond marketing, it's now ingrained in all aspects of business across different industries. Most businesses recognise the potential and success of gamification, widespread*

use is growing and it has gone on to become the fastest and best ROI for marketing campaigns. According to AP News, the global gamification market was valued at USD 5.5 billion in 2018, and it is estimated to witness a CAGR of 30.31% over the forecast period of (2019- 2024), as you can see the necessity for further investment into gamification applications, research and resources, as demand will only increase going forward.

4. Experience marketing research in gaming industry

For the purpose of creating this thesis a quantitative research has been done via online posted questioner about gaming and experience related to gaming. Main goal of research was to find relation between devices, social aspects of the games and weather it was free to play or they needed to buy the game when choosing games they play and in the end how it impacts overall experience of playing video games. Methodology of collecting data for research was posting the questioner link on gaming social media Discord so sample was non probability sampling. The research consists of some basic questions about age, country of origin, first video game, first device subjects used to play their first video game, who introduced them to the gaming industry and what they prefer to do in their free time. Second set of questions mostly consists of Likert scale types of question about importance of gaming hardware. The last set of question consists about questions regarding video games. The questions are mostly Likert type of question about examinee feeling about games, advertisement for free to play games and relation between games they need to buy and free to play games, about their feelings when it comes to buying the game, about how they feel when they play video games. Video games questions also consist of questions about how video games influenced their lives, memories and how they feel about playing games with friends. All answers on Likert scale go from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

This research was done via gaming social network called Discord and it was sent to Internet cafe in Athens, Greece called GNET Menidi. Discord is a type of social network where gamers can create their own channels and each channel can have up to 30 sub channels. Gamers can post pictures, write posts and they also have a live chat where they can communicate via voice or massages. On Discord this survey was sent to Discord channels called Cursed Crew, Scarce, UseBrain, Smuts and Regression. The survey has 42 answers from different countries but most of them are from Croatia and Greece which will be shown in a graph below.
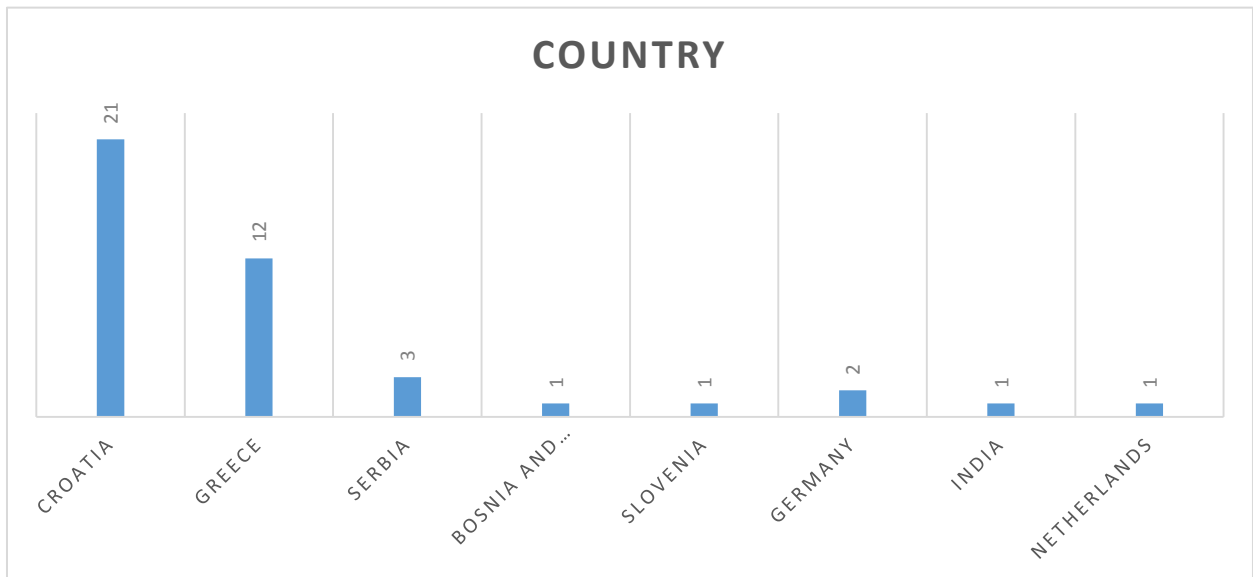
Chart 2 Country of origin; source Authors research

On the graph number one which shows country of origin there is 21 people that come from Croatia, 28,6% (12) come from Greece, and other answers are from Germany, Serbia, Zambia, Slovenia, India and Bosnia and Hercegovina.
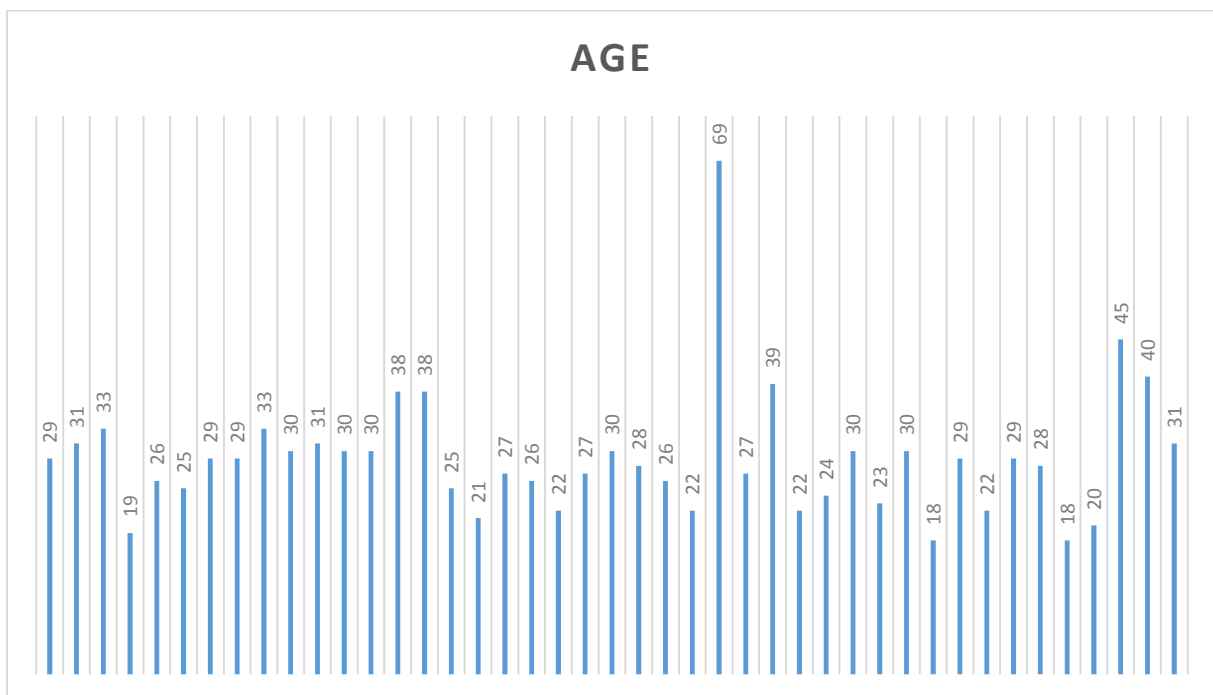
Chart 3 Age of research participants, source: Author's research

Average age of subject in this survey was 29 years old, with average 14 years of gaming experience. Most of the subjects spent around 700 euros on a hardware they are using today and 680 euros on average on games and in game related content so far.

The next graph shows who was first to introduce subjects to video games.

Who introduced you to your first video game

11; 24%

4; 9%

1; 2%

1; 2%

9; 20%

2; 4%

18; 39%

◼ Family ◼ Work collegues ◼ Schoolmates ◼ Friends ◼ I did it myself ◼ pornhub ◼ Teacher
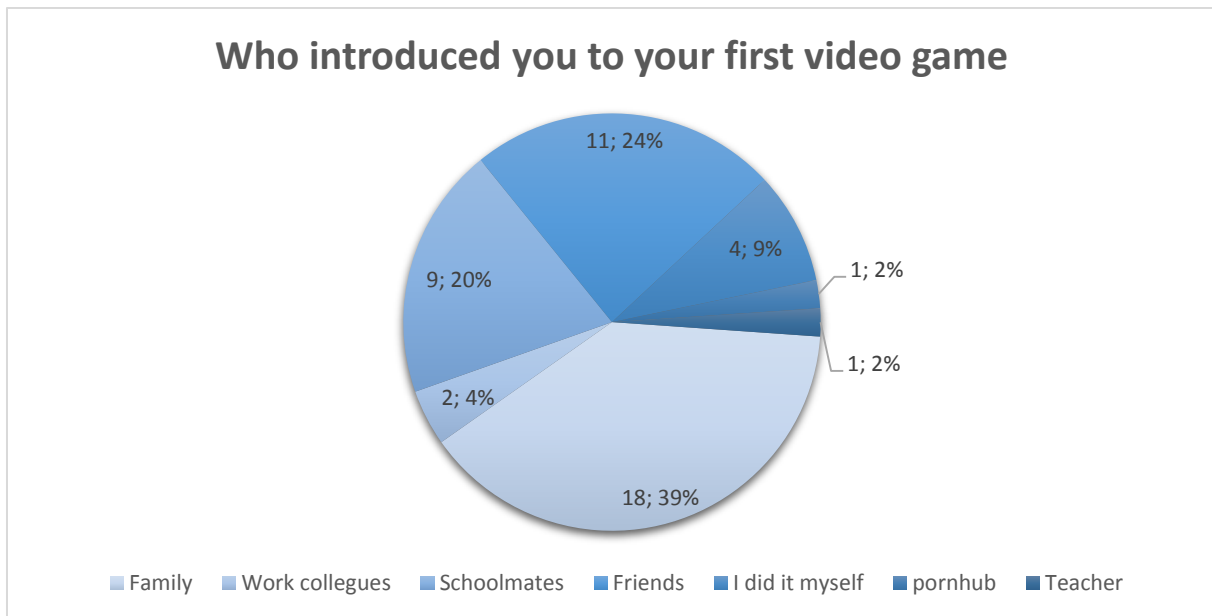
Chart 4 First person to introduce subjects to video games; source: Author's research

On this graph it can be seen that 40% of subjects where introduced to video games by family members and that is probably because parents were the one who bought them the first device to play video games, other subjects were mostly introduced to video games by friends and family.

When asked about what device they are using to play video games, 73,8% answered they are using PC and that can be seen on third graph shown below. Only small amount has chosen consoles, smartphones and handheld consoles.

What kind of device are you using to play video games?

42 responses

PC	31 (73.8%)
Handheld console (Gameboy, Nintendo Swi…	1 (2.4%)
Stationery Consol (Playstation, XBOX, W…	5 (11.9%)
Smarthphone	3 (7.1%)
All of the answers	1 (2.4%)
microwave	1 (2.4%)
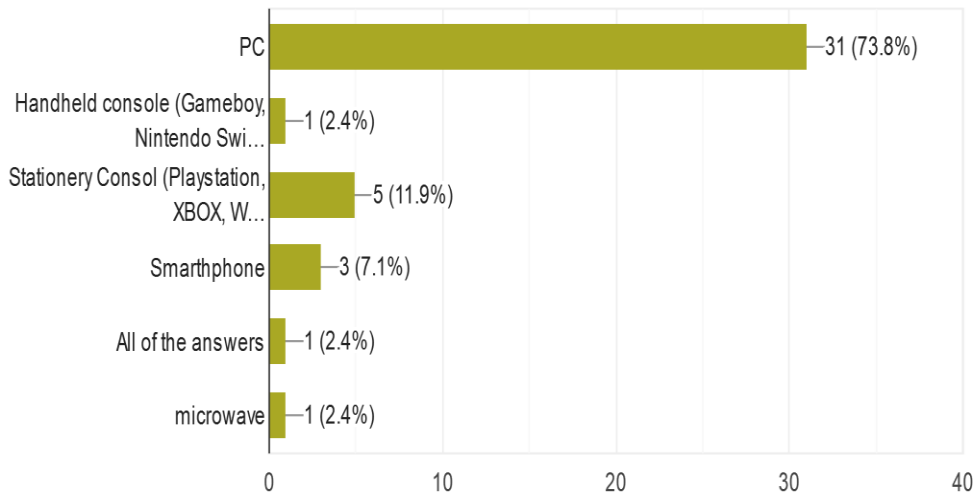
Chart 5 Devices subjects use to play video games on; source: Author's research

When asked how long it takes before upgrading or replacing devices on which they are playing, in 34% of cases the subjects answered 3 to 5 years, in 18,2 cases they answered 1-3 years, 15,9% answered that they constantly upgrade it, 13,6% answered 5-7 years and 13,6% answered more than 7 years. With this data it can be concluded that examinees invest in their devices based on how much disposable income they have. Those with higher income will probably upgrade their hardware sooner than those with lower income. When asked about relations of hardware to video games as shown in sixth, seventh and eighth charts most examinees on average strongly agreed that when buying hardware, it is important that they can play their favorite video games with it. And on average agreed that when buying hardware, it is important that they can play new video games on it. While picking a new hardware for video games examinees on average agreed it has to handle games on high performances.

When buying hardware it is important that you can play your favorite video games with it.

42 responses
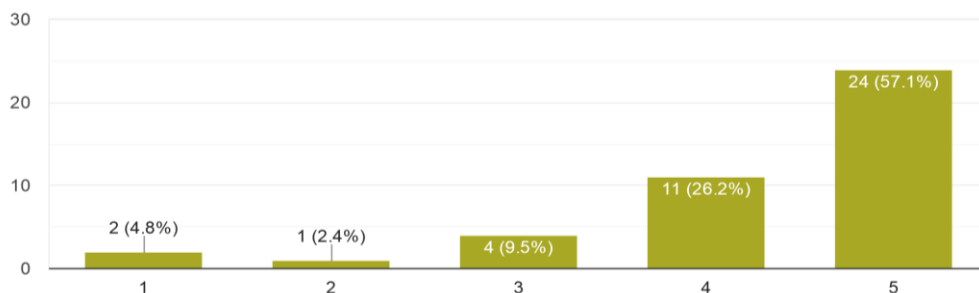
Chart 6 Importance of hardware performance to handle favorite games; source: Author's research

When buying hardware it is important that you can play new video games on it.

41 responses
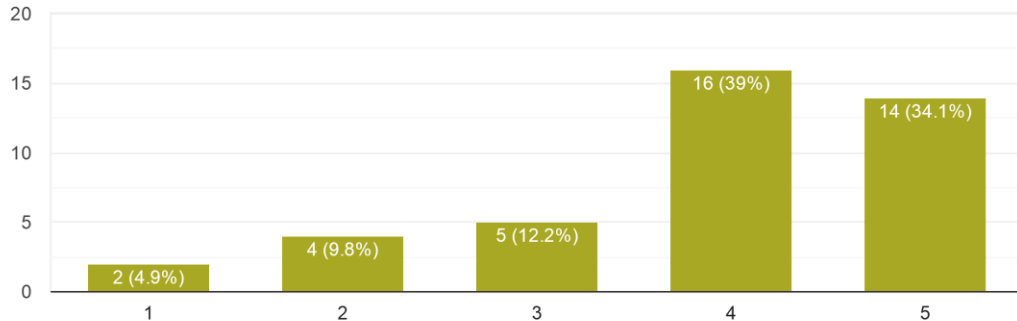
Chart 7 Importance of hardware ability to handle new video games; source: Author's research

When buying hardware it is important that you can play video games on highest settings.

42 responses
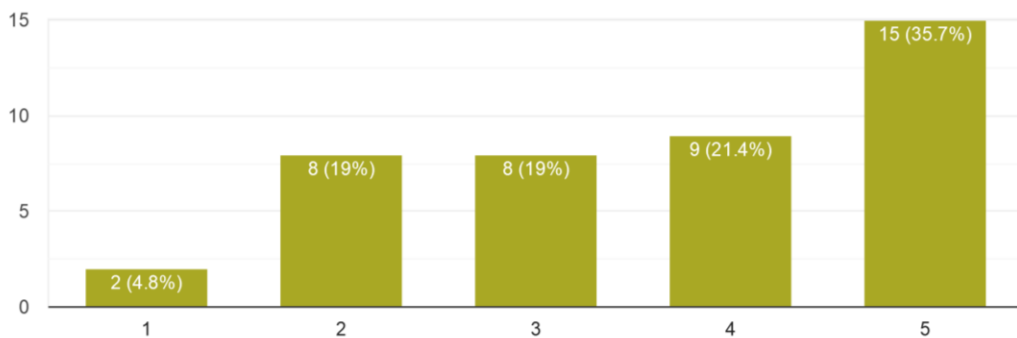
Chart 8 Importance of hardware to run games on highest settings; source: Author's research

Regarding hardware, subjects were also asked does it make them feel excited when they buy new hardware, and on average they agreed feel excited. While when asked if it is more important to buy hardware over other items like shoes, clothes, etc. subjects on average disagreed with this statement. So it can be concluded that buying new equipment makes examinees happy and excited that they are getting new hardware to play video games, but most subjects don't consider it more important than other life necessities.

On the subject of video games when asked what games are they playing now, most of the answers were World of Warcraft, Fortnite, League of legends and Dota 2. All of these games are online multiplayer games and they are in some cases highly addictive. In terms of game time they spend in a single day as show on chart 7. subjects answers are mostly the same but they usually spend between 1 to 5 hours a day on playing video games.

How much time daily do you spend on playing video games?
42 responses

- less than 1 hour
- 1 to 3 hours
- 3 to 5 hours
- 5 to 7 hours
- more then 7 hours
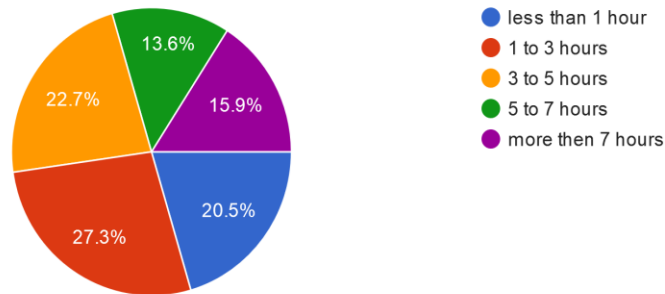
Chart 9 Time spent on playing video games daily

As it was mentioned before, video games have a really strong social aspect to video game players, and that is one of the most important reasons why all the popular games are multiplayer. The research showed that the reason subjects chose a particular game in 50% cases as shown on chart 8. was because "My friends are playing it" and second most voted choice was "I like the genre".

The reason you choose to play some game is?
42 responses
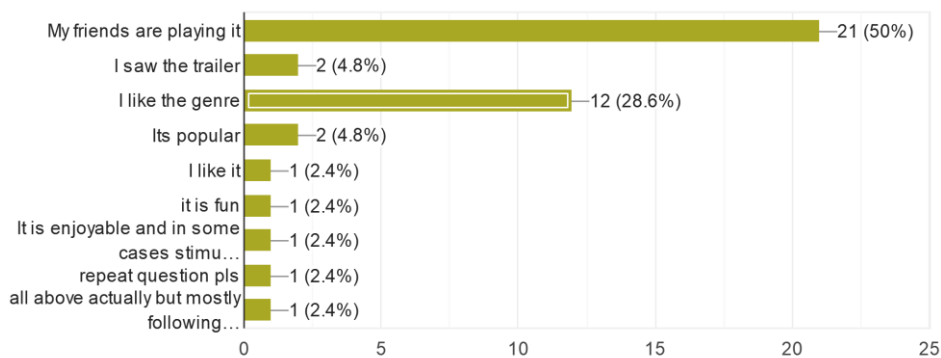
Chart 10 Reason for choosing to play a game

These choices can easily relate with answers they picked for the next question. The social aspect of the game is really important for subjects as 40% strongly agreed that when choosing a video game, it is important that it has a social aspect to it. In average examinees agree that having social aspect of games is important when choosing video games to play. If a game has s social aspect incorporated in it and it aspect allows players to play with friends, the game doesn't only provide fun but also gives the players an opportunity to share and do something together.

When choosing a video game it is important that it has social aspect to it
(aka multiplayer, chat, etc.).

42 responses
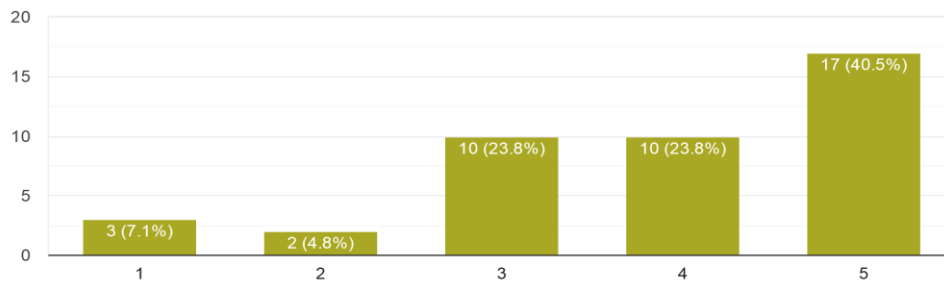
Chart 11 Importance of social aspect when choosing a game

Spending money on games and playing games for some gamers are different categories so in this survey questions about free to play games and games they need to buy were asked. According to Patton M. (n.d.) free to play games are often not so "free" and they made them feel frustrated and in some left a really bad taste after playing, so this research included questions about their opinion on free to play games.

I prefer buying the game with full content instead of playing free to play
version with limited content.

42 responses
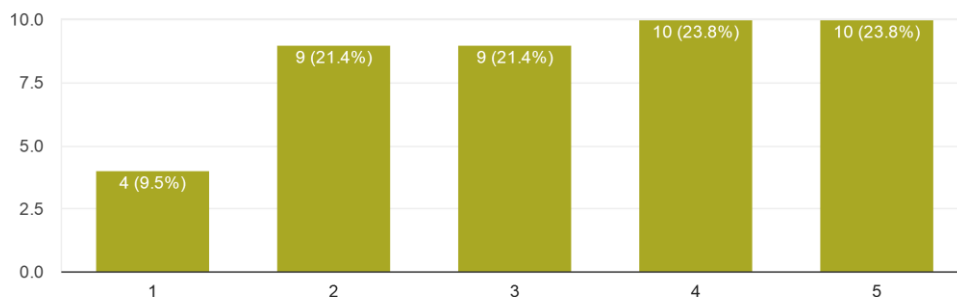
Chart 12 Buying game with full content versus free to play game with limited content

On term of buying full content versus playing for free limited content answers were mostly the same as shown on chart 10. with a favor leaning a bit towards buying full content. On average examinees were undecided if they prefer buying the game with full content instead of playing free to play version with limited content. This variety of answers is probably because some people just can't afford to give 50 euros or more for a video game and there is always the possible feeling of regret if the game doesn't let them experience what they expected. Those kind of people often prefer free to play games and when they were asked if free to play games advertisement is misleading most of answers were neutral with 31%. This doesn't have to show that it is misleading or not, but it can also mean that they don't pay attention to

advertisement or that they don't even notice it. This can correlate to the fact that most people don't notice any kind of advertisement today as they have become immune to it and regard it as a background noise. This opinion can be proven with chart 11. When asked if they ignore advertisement for free to play games. 35% of answers strongly agreed and 28% agreed on that they ignored advertisement for free to play games. On average examinees answered agreed they often ignore advertisement for free to play video games.

I often ignore advertisement for free to play video games.
42 responses
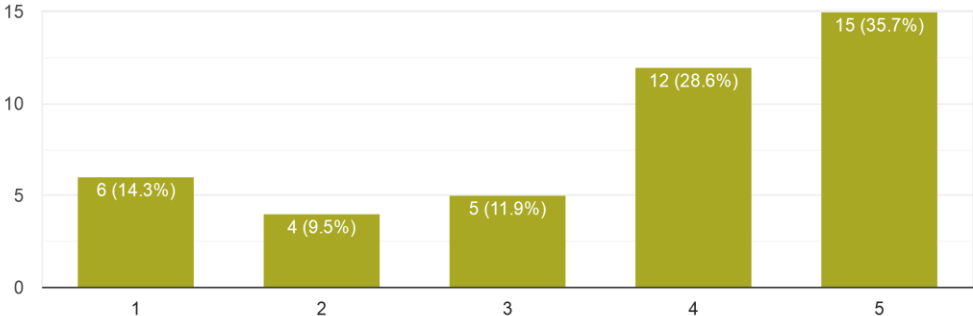
Chart 13 Attention for advertisement for free to play games

As written by Patton M. (n.d.) in most cases free to play games don't end up so much as free to play and some people have bad experience with them, as they feel cheated, misled and angry, because some of those free to play games have in game currencies that help players who opt to buy them with real money. Those players often have greater advantage than players who refused to buy in game currency and as shown in graph 12. subjects agreed in 35,7% cases and strongly agreed in 26,2% cases that those kind of games are disadvantageous to them, and on average they agreed that free to play games are disadvantageous for players that don't use in-game currencies.

Most of the time free to play video games are disadvantageous for players that don't use in-game currencies.
42 responses
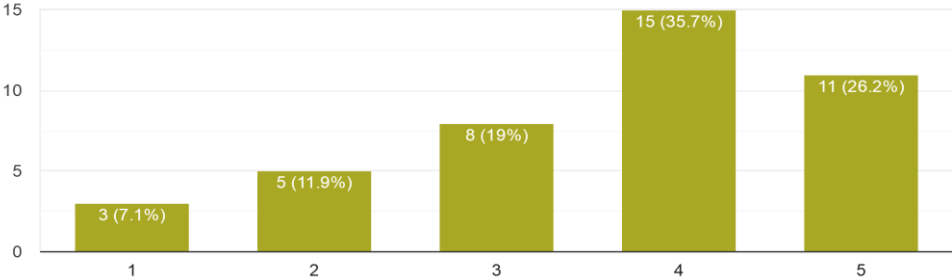
Chart 14 Opinion on advantage for players that don't use in game currencies in free to play games

Buying a game is an act similar to buying anything else and when subject were asked if they consult friends and other players subjects, they strongly agreed in 40% of cases as shown in chart 13, and on average they agreed on consulting friend or other players before buying a game,. When asked if they check online forums and reviews as shown in chart 15, 40% agreed and 31% strongly agreed that they do that before buying a game, and on average they agreed that they check online forums and reviews before making a decision before buying a game.

Before buying a game i consult with friends and other players is it worth it.
42 responses
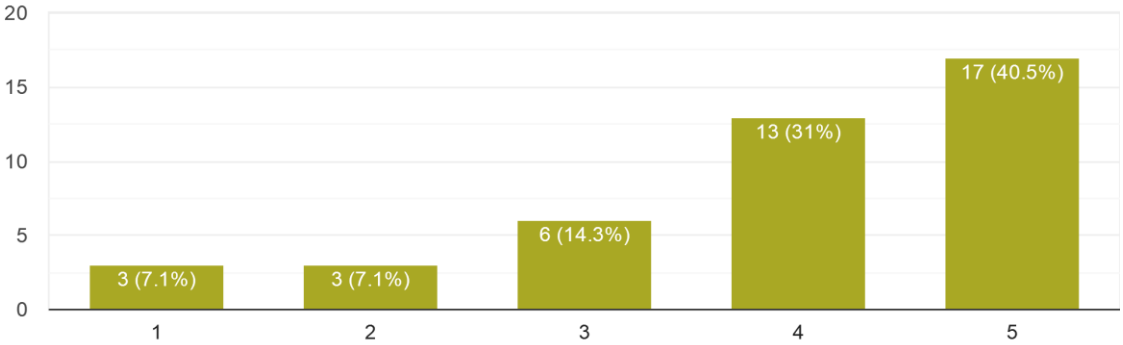
Chart 15 Importance of friends and other player opinion when buying a game

Before buying a game i check online forums and reviews to help me decide.
42 responses
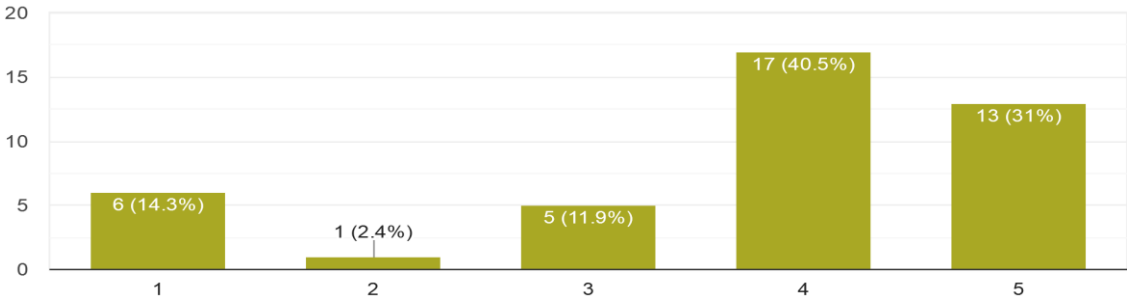
Chart 16 Importance of checking online forums and reviews before buying a game

This shows us that word of mouth is also a very strong marketing medium even in gaming industry, because most gamers consult their friends, online communities and online reviews. A positive experience from other friends about the game or positive reviews can lead to more purchases of a single game but it can also be vice versa if the game reviews end up

bad, because gaming community will rather listen to its peers than game promotors and marketing campaigns as Game Marketing Genie (2018) describes.

In this research subjects were also asked about their feelings for the games they bought. For 50% of subjects as shown in chart 15. buying a game that they can play with other people is more satisfying than buying a single player game, on average they strongly agreed that buying game with multiplayer options is more satisfying than buying single player game.. This again shows the social aspect of the games.

Buying a game that i can play with other people is more satisfying than buying a single player game
42 responses
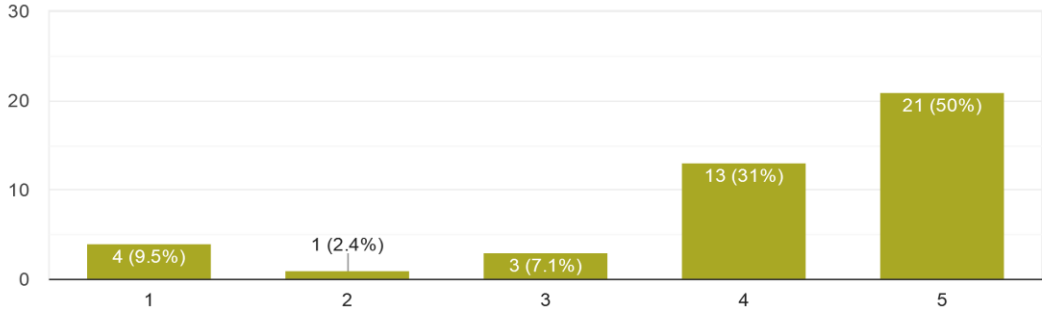
Chart 17 Buying multiplayer games versus single player games

The same can be concluded about people feelings they have when they buy video games, because on average examinees agreed that buying a video game makes them feel excited that can be seen on chart 16. and on average subjects agreed that for most of the time buying a game was a right choice as shown in chart 17.

Buying a game makes me feel exicted.
42 responses
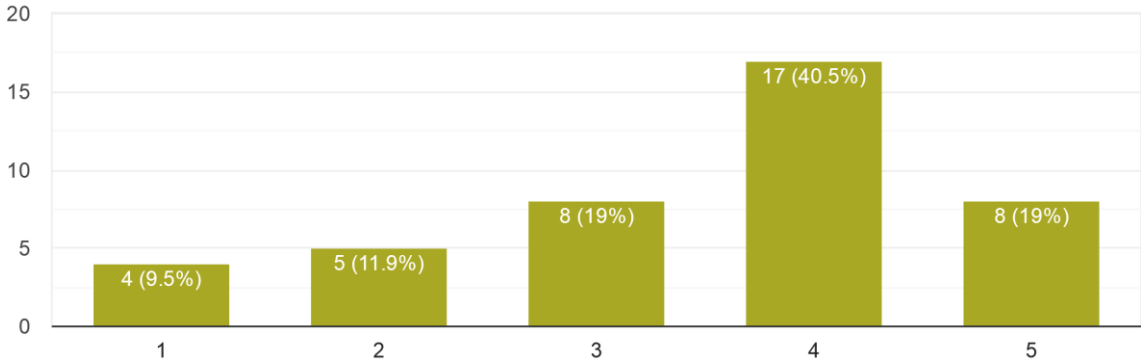
Chart 18 Feelings of excitement when buying a game

I often feel that buying a game was a right choice.
42 responses
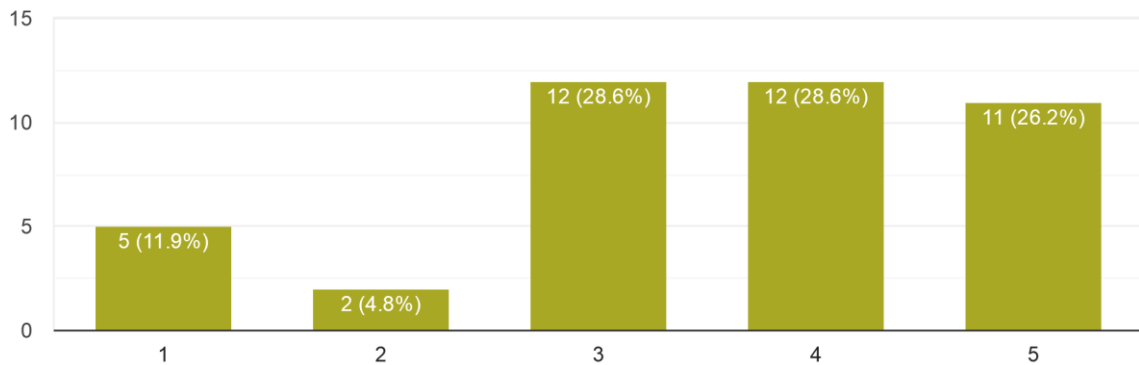
Chart 19 Reviewing decision to buy a game

The feelings of buying a game can also sometimes be negative as negative experience is produced from what people expected before they bought the game and what they got. On the question if they feel regret after buying a game and if it is different from what they expected, on average examinees strongly disagreed with that statement but some still said they regret it, as can be seen on chart 18.

I regret buying most of the games because they are different from what i expected from them
42 responses
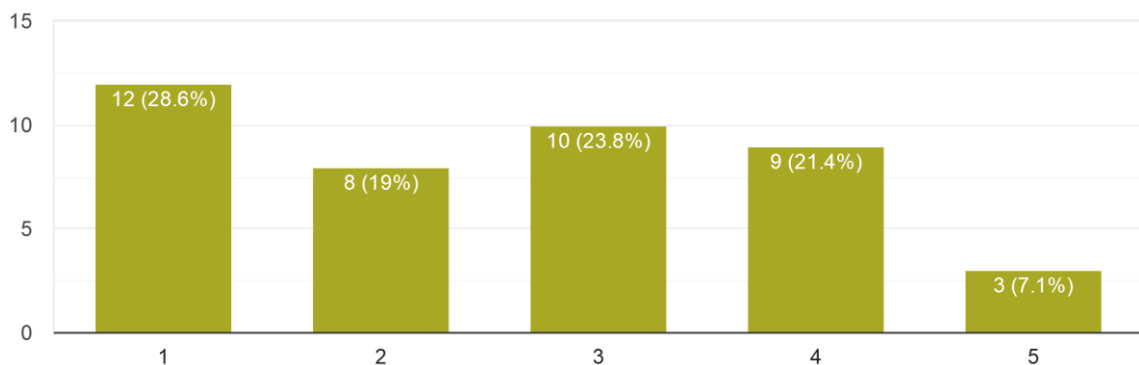
Chart 20 Opinion on games that have been bought but didn't meet the expectations

Loot boxes have gain spotlight in early 2019. when European Union proposed a ban on them because they were regarded as gambling and when subjects were asked if they made them feel excited on average most of them agreed to this statement as shown in chart 19. By using loot boxes marketers, as mentioned before, can create unique content that will provide gamers with unique experience tied to their brand, which can then increase the loyalty to the brand itself.

In-game lootboxes and surprise rewards make me feel excited.
43 responses
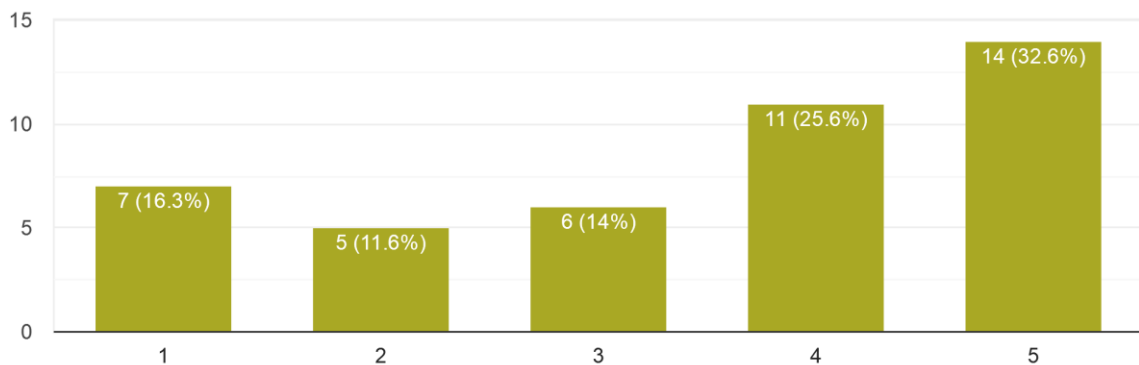
Chart 21 Feelings regarding loot boxes

The last set of questions were about emotions and experiences subjects have while playing video games and how games affect them. On a question if they had bad memories connected to playing video games, 51% strongly disagreed and 23% disagreed with the statement as shown in chart 20, which leads to average answer for most subjects that they disagree with this statement This leads to the conclusion that video games rarely or almost never create bad memories for people that play them.

I have bad memories related to playing video games.
43 responses
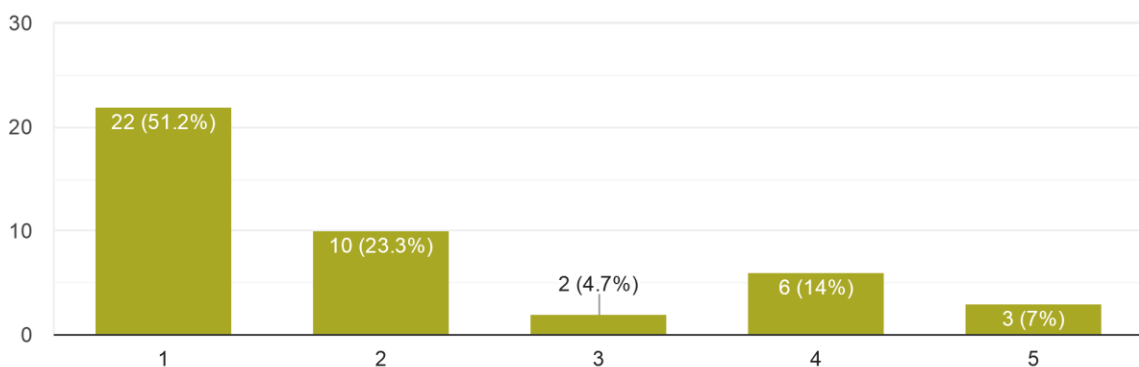
Chart 22 Opinion about relation between video games and bad memories

Negative emotions can affect people in any situation and people have often witnessed family members, friends and fellow players burst into anger and rage while playing video games. In this research it is shown that they equally agree and disagree to that so 50% of players have experienced emotions like anger and rage on a regular base when playing video

games and 50% didn't, and average results for this statement is that examinees neither agree or disagree with this stament

I often feel anger and rage when i play video games.
43 responses
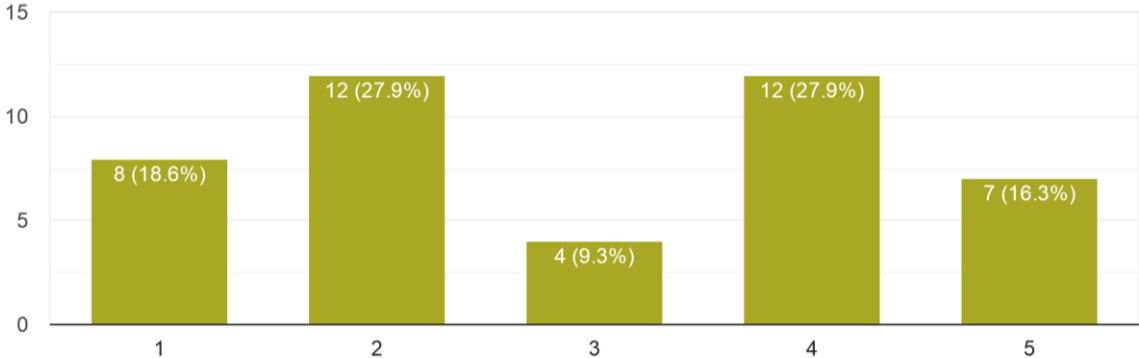
Chart 23 Opinion about anger and rage when playing video games

Every game is different like every situation in life as it has different set of goals. For this reason, the subjects were asked if they have experienced different emotions about different games, and most of them as shown in chart 22. strongly agreed with this statement, in fact almost 70% on average experienced different emotions while playing different games. Reason for this can be because of the game setting, type of the game or if they are playing it with other people. If a player in the game depends on actions of another player it will likely influence him more how he or she feels while playing the game.

I experience different emotions while playing different game.
43 responses
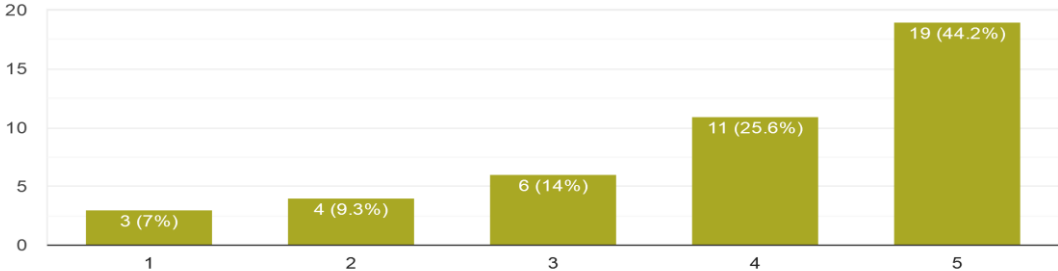
Chart 24 State of emotions for different games

In terms of experience subjects were also asked if they play video games for experiences they can't have in real life such as living in a fantasy world, shooting other people, playing sports, or simply collecting stuff and almost 70% on average agreed that they play video games for those kind of experiences as it can be seen on chart 23. They were also asked

if they play video games to experience what it is like to be a different person and on average most of them agree as shown on chart 24. Reason for this is that even though there are infinite possibilities that people can do in real life some of them will not happen no matter how hard they try that's why people chose to play video games as they can get over that block and be whatever they want and do whatever they want inside a game.

Playing video games allows me to experience how is it like to be a different person.
43 responses
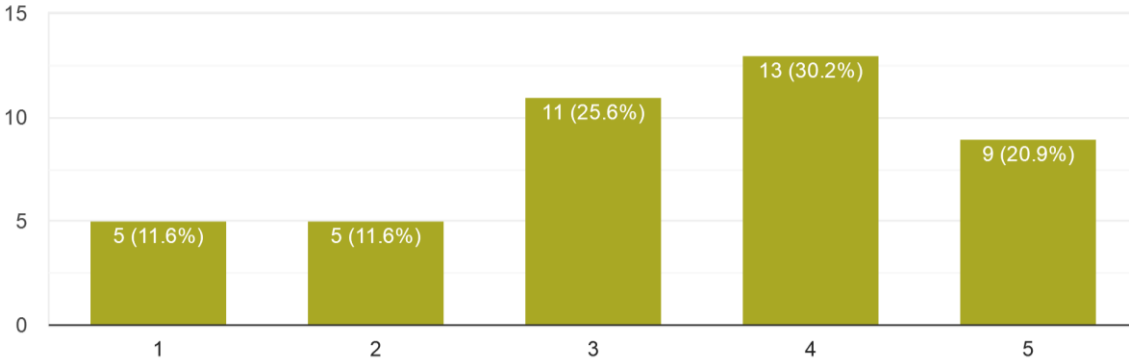
Chart 25 Is being a different person reason for playing video games?

Playing video games allows to experience things that i can't experience in real life.
43 responses
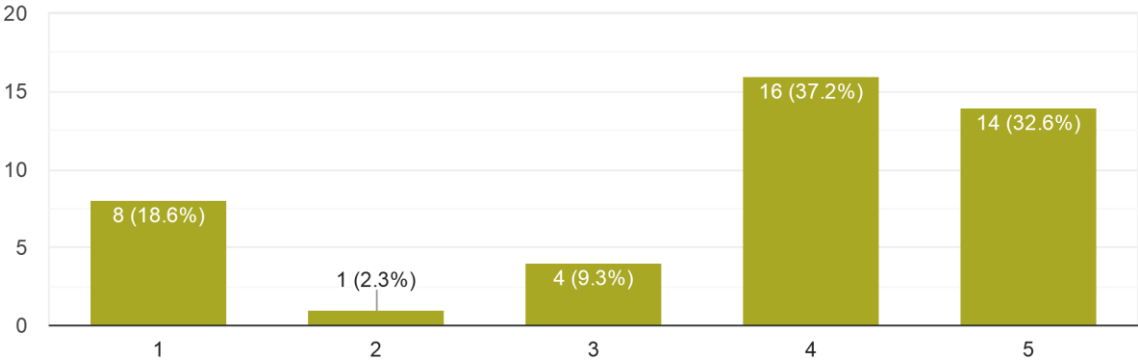
Chart 26 Impact of possible experiences from video games that can't be experienced in real life

For the purpose of their relationship between the game and their social life subjects were asked if they have met any good friends while playing video games. As shown in chart 25., 74,4% on average agreed that they have met some good friends while playing video games, but when it came down to picking spending time with friends while playing video game and spending time with them in real life, on average examinees gave a neutral answer. From

this we can conclude that video games can lead to some great lifelong experiences, but for some people they can't replace real life experiences they have with their friends or family.

I met some good friends by playing video games.
43 responses
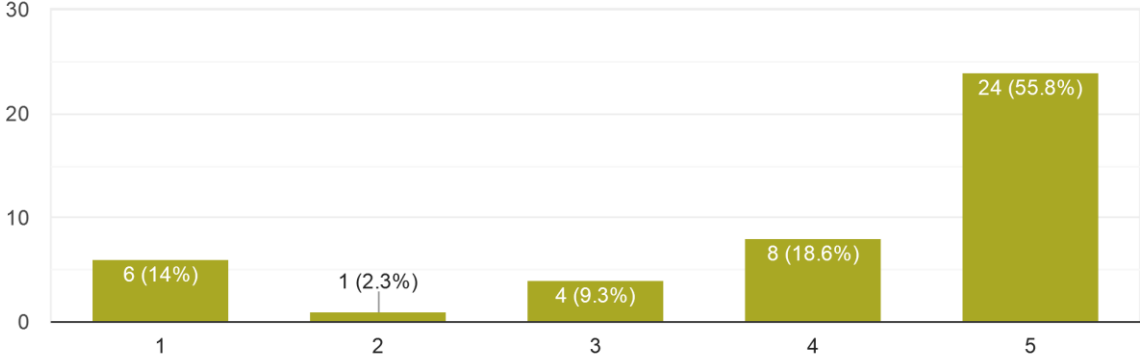
Chart 27 Connection between finding friends and playing video games

The experience of playing video games with friends is more fun than spending time with them in real life.
43 responses
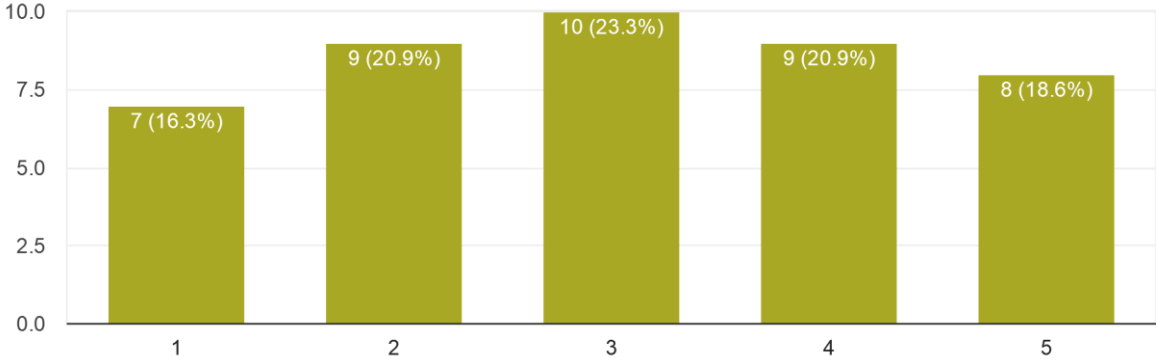
Chart 28 Playing video games with friends versus spending time with them in real life

Some experiences people have in life can greatly influence what kind of people they become, and same goes for video games. Video games can develop creativity, make people interested in things they never imagined before and they can help people make friends. When asked if playing video games has influenced what kind of people they have become today, on average examinees agreed that it did.

Playing video games had influenced what kind of person I am today.

43 responses
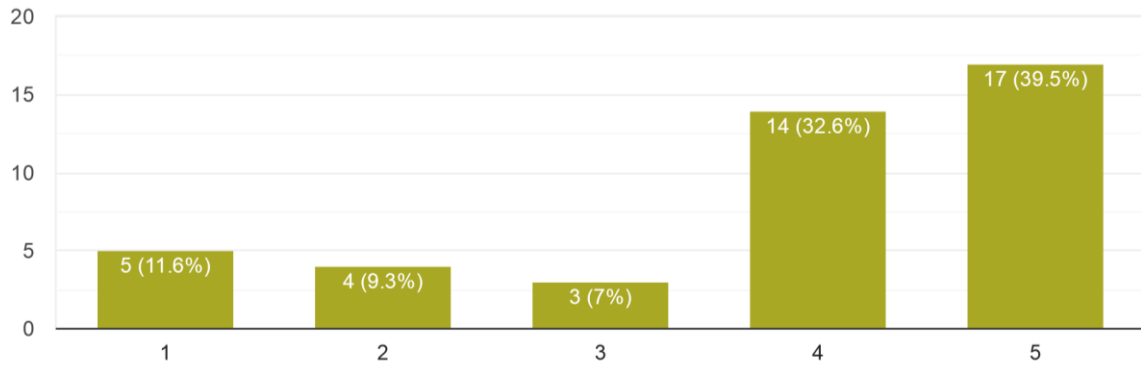
Chart 29 Influence of video games on development of character

And in the end when asked if overall they feel fulfilled, satisfied and happy by playing video games 78% of subject agreed that they do. On average examinees agreed that playing video games overall made them feel fulfilled, satisfied and happy Those kind of feelings are what marketers need to aim when they are designing experiences for gamers, because those kind of feelings influence experiences to a whole new level by making them memorable.

Overall i feel fulfilled, satisfied and happy by playing video games

43 responses
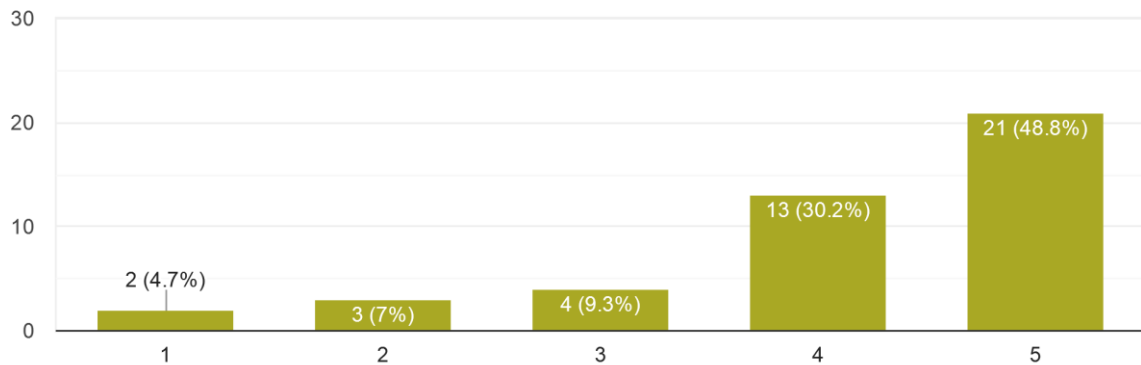
Chart 30 Overall satisfaction with playing video games

5. Conclusion

In this paper experience marketing was mapped from its beginning in 1998. till 2020. Even though it was first mentioned in 1998. by Pine and Gilmore, marketing experience has existed since early human civilizations but in different form from today. Since then it has evolved significantly and today marketing experience is delivered by combining technology, art, music, cooking and all other kind of professions to create the most memorable experience for people and it will continue to evolve in various forms in the future.

In this paper many definitions about experience marketing or how some experts call it experiential marketing were presented. The one that was most complete is definition by Experience marketing association. EMA definition combines all the elements and definitions given by other authors and it covers the term as much as possible.

In the section about key points it has been presented from one of the first pioneers in experiential marketing Schmitt I have talked about his SEMs and ExPros. It is important to understand both of them and to have team of experts who can interpret every SEM used in marketing campaign and a team of experts who can use ExPros effectively to communicate and deliver those same SEMs to customers. And by also paying attention to benefits and downfalls that come with marketing experience marketers and marketing managers are bound to make successful campaigns that can deliver the most memorable experience for their customers.

By following examples of successful marketing campaigns done for different kind of brands and in the gaming industry, other brands and companies can still manage to become pioneers in delivering exceptional experience that will follow their customers for a very long time.

Gaming industry has been in constant boom since it started in early 1970s and it is not stopping even now. By combining the data from the research made by the author of this thesis and data from Entertainment software association it can be concluded that experience marketing has its greatest potential in gaming industry. There are several reasons for that conclusion. First one is that gamers are one of the most loyal customers when it comes to brands they follow and the word brand refers to video games and video game companies. Gamers not only stay loyal to a single game for a long period of time, and in most cases the time period is usually longer than ten years. In that time gamers can be a viable costumer target group, because they represent that part of the public that can easily except new experiences and pioneer marketing campaigns while playing video games.

As shown with the example of Fortnite and its collaboration with Wendy, brands that are not part of a gaming industry can get involved to create more customers and to increase loyalty thanks to the popularity and loyalty that gamers have toward a single game. By following examples like that and creating happy feelings and happy memories for gamers, companies and brands can get lifetime customers who will always remember that single moment where some brand connected with their favorite game and made it more interesting in different ways. Companies that fail to realize that will probably be seen as copy cats in the near future as they will only start capitalizing on marketing experience in gaming industry after most of unique ideas and experiences had already been done.

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Table of Pictures

Table of charts

Attachments

This survey is made for purpose of collaborating data for graduate thesis and all gathered data will be anonymus and only used for this purpose. For all questions and problems you can contact me on ante.saric.foi@gmail.com.

Thank you for participating in this research. Ante Šarić

Research questions from survey Gaming experience :
1. Age
2. Country
3. In your free time what do you prefer to do most?
   a. Read books
   b. Exercise
   c. Spend time outside
   d. Play video games
   e. Hang out with friends or family
   f. Study
   g. Other
4. How long have you been playing video games?
5. What was the first video game you ever played?
6. What device did you use to play your first video game?
7. Who introduced you to your first video game?
   a. Friends
   b. Family
   c. Schoolmates
   d. Work colleagues
   e. I did it myself
   f. Other
8. What kind of device are you using to play video games?
   a. PC
   b. Handheld console (Gameboy, Nintendo Swithc, etc.)
   c. Stationery Consol (Playstation, XBOX, Wii, etc.)
   d. Smarthphone
   e. Other
9. How long do you play on single device before replacing it for a better one?
   a. less than 1 year
   b. 1 to 3 years
   c. to 5 years
   d. 5 to 7 years
   e. more then 7 years
   f. I constantly upgrade it
10. How much did you spend on the hardware you are using to play video games now?
11. When buying hardware it is important that you can play your favorite video games with it.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neither disagree or agree
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly agree
12. When buying hardware it is important that you can play video games on highest settings.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or agree

  d. 4 Agree

  e. 5 Strongly agree

13. Buying new gaming hardware makes you excited.

  a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or a1. gree

  d. 4 Agree

  e. 5 Strongly agree

14. Buying new gaming hardware makes is more important than buying other things for everyday life (shoes, clothes, etc.).

15. What video games are you playing now?

16. How much time daily do you spend on playing video games?

  a. less than 1 hour

  b. 1 to 3 hours

  c. 3 to 5 hours

  d. 5 to 7 hours

  e. more then 7 hours

17. The reason you choose to play some game is?

  a. My friends are playing it

  b. I saw the trailer

  c. I like the genre

  d. Its popular

18. How much did you spend on video games so far (buying the video game, expansions and buying ingame currencies)?

19. When choosing a video game it is important that it has social aspect to it (aka multiplayer, chat, etc.)?

  a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or agree

  d. 4 Agree

  e. 5 Strongly agree

20. I prefer buying the game with full content instead of playing free to play version with limited content.

  a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or agree

  d. 4 Agree

  e. 5 Strongly agree

21. I often feel that free to play video games advertisement is misleading.

  a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or agree

  d. 4 Agree

  e. 5 Strongly agree

22. Most of the time free to play video games are disadvantageous for players that don't use in-game currencies.

  a. 1 Strongly disagree

  b. 2 Disagree

  c. 3 Neither disagree or agree

d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
23. I often ignore advertisement for free to play video games.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
24. Buying a game makes me feel excited.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
25. Buying a game that i can play with other people is more satisfying than buying a single player game.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
26. I often feel that buying a game was a right choice.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
27. I regret buying most of the games because they are different from what i expected from them.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
28. Before buying a game i consult with friends and other players is it worth it.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
29. Before buying a game i check online forums and reviews to help me decide.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree
30. In-game lootboxes and surprise rewards make me feel excited.
        a. 1 Strongly disagree
        b. 2 Disagree
        c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
        d. 4 Agree
        e. 5 Strongly agree

31. I have bad memories related to playing video games.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
32. I often feel anger and rage when i play video games.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
33. I met some good friends by playing video games.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
34. Playing video games had influenced what kind of person I am today.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
35. I experience different emotions while playing different game.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
36. Playing video games allows me to experience how is it like to be a different person.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
37. Playing video games allows to experience things that i can't experience in real life.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
38. The experience of playing video games with friends is more fun than spending time with them in real life.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree
    c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
    d. 4 Agree
    e. 5 Strongly agree
39. Overall i feel fulfilled, satisfied and happy by playing video games.
    a. 1 Strongly disagree
    b. 2 Disagree

c. 3 Neither disagree or agree
d. 4 Agree
e. 5 Strongly agree