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# **CULTURAL ASPECTS OF DESIGNING ROLE PLAYING GAMES**

**A quantitative survey of Elders Scrolls V Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII**

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## ABSTRACT

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Name of thesis CULTURAL ASPECTS OF DESIGNING ROLE PLAYING GAMES A quantitative survey of Elders Scrolls V Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII		
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<p>With more and more games reaching to a global audience, this thesis aimed to find the similarities as well as differences of game design elements in order to help future game developers understand how different cultures prioritize different elements of a role playing game. The research used the Game Flow model as well as Hofstede's model for cultural dimensions to help show how cultural aspects impact the game development process. In this thesis, RPG game design elements and game playing experiences was compared. The study focused on how both the Japanese Role-Playing Game Final Fantasy XIII by Square Enix and the Western Role-Playing Game Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim by Bethesda Softworks differ as well as in which aspects and how game players experienced these two games. Three research questions were proposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How do players consider Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Fantasy XIII game design elements?</li><li>2. What kind of statistical differences can be found in the game design elements?</li><li>3. How do game players address the differences of game design element in Eastern and Western games?</li></ol> <p>The primary source of research data came from a designed electronic questionnaire that focused on various aspects of RPG games, consisting altogether 116 items including likert –scale questions and some qualitative open question. The quantitative survey data was collected through three online discussion forums, two which cater to each of the games and one which is a middle ground that caters to gamers' in general. During the month the questionnaire was running, 155 responses were received. The majority of respondents were North American men between the ages of 20 to 29.</p> <p>The results revealed that those who put in more than 100 hours into either game rated it much higher than those who did not. It also showed that while the games were rated similarly on certain aspects, others varied greatly such as the storyline, characters, visual appearance or sound and music. In the future, it would be useful to include other forms of data gathering alongside the survey, such as interviews and expanding to other game genres such as online RPGs.</p>		
Keywords Video games, Game design, Culture, Cultural dimensions, Game flow, Role-playing game		

## TIIVISTELMÄ

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<p>Kun yhä useammat digitaaliset roolipelit saavuttavat globaalin yleisön, on tärkeä auttaa pelisuunnittelijoita ymmärtämään kuinka eri kulttuurit priorisoivat pelisuunnittelun elementtejä. Nojautuen pelivirtausmalliin ja Hofsteden kulttuurimalliin tämä tutkimus tarkastelee kulttuurin vaikutusta pelikehitysprosessiin. Tutkimuksessa analysoitiin roolipelien pelisuunnitteluelementtejä suhteessa pelaajien pelikokemuksiin. Tutkimuksen kohteena oli analysoida, kuinka itämainen Final Fantasy XIII eroaa suunnittelultaan länsimaisesta Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim pelistä ja kuinka pelaajat kokevat nämä pelit.</p> <p>Tutkimusta ohjasi kolme tutkimuskysymystä:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. kuinka pelaajat arvioivat Elder Scrolls ja Final Fantasy pelisuunnittelu elementtejä</li><li>2. millaisia pelien välisiä tilastollisia eroja esiintyi</li><li>3. kuinka pelaajat käsittelevät itäisten ja läntisten peli suunnitteluelementtien eroja.</li></ol> <p>Tutkimusaineisto perustui verkkokyselyyn, jonka varassa pelaajia pyydettiin arviomaan ko. pelejä. Kysely koostui yhteensä 116 strukturoidusta Likert-tyyppisestä väittämästä ja joistakin avoimista osioista suhteessa kumpaankin peliin (vastaaja saattoi vastata vain yhteen peliin tai molempiin liittyviin identtisiin kysymyksiin). Kyselyaineisto kerättiin kolmelta keskustelufoorumilta, joista kaksi liittyi kyseisiin peleihin ja yksi oli luonteeltaan yleisempi. Kyselyyn vastasi yhteensä 155 pelaajaa.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että kokeneet pelaajat (pelanneet peliä yli 100 tuntia) arvostivat kumpaakin peliä enemmän kuin aloittelevat pelaajat ylitse kaikkien arviointilottuvuuksien (yleisarvio, tarina, pelihahmot, dynaaminen pelattavuus, pelivirtaus). Pelien vertailussa käytettiin niiden vastaajien osajoukkoa (n=77), joka oli vastannut molempia pelejä vastaaviin kysymyksiin. Peliarviointiin liittyvät tulokset osoittivat Elder Scrollin loistavan ulottuvuuksissa, jotka liittyvät pelimaailman tutkimiseen ja valinnan vapauteen. Samalla kuitenkin tähän kuitenkin liittyi alhaisempi koukuttavuus, tarinan yllätyksellisyys tai haasteellisuus. Final Fantasy XIII pelillä oli puolestaan vahvuutena koukuttava tarina, yllättäviä ja hahmoja, joihin oli helppo samastua. Monien peliulottuvuuksien osalta vastaajien arvioinnit vaihtelivat. Tulevaisuudessa olisi hyödyllistä käyttää muitakin tietolähteitä, kuten esimerkiksi haastattelua, ja laajentaa tutkimusta yhteisöllisiin monien pelaajien roolipeleihin.</p>		
Asiasanat Videopelit, pelisuunnittelu, kulttuuri, kulttuuriset ulottuvuudet, pelivirta, roolipelit		

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This topic of why certain role-playing games (there after RPG) are a hit in one region, but a flop in another has always been my interest. As I delved deeper into game design, it came up more and more often, why do games made in Asia – and in particular Japan, differ so much from Western games? Role-playing games are interactive worlds where players adopt the role of fictional character and regulate their own actions based on the character they play (Bostan & Ögut, 2009, 2). These games usually follow a storyline in a fictional world and interact with other player (PCs) or non-player characters (NPCs) to complete missions (Bostan & Ögut, 2009, 2). In this thesis, I compare RPG game design elements and game playing experiences. I examine how both the Japanese Role-Playing Game Final Fantasy XIII by Square Enix and the Western Role-Playing Game Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim by Bethesda Softworks differ as well as in which aspects they are similar and how game players experienced these two games.

I pose the questions how culture influences RPG game design and gameplay as seen in the way both the East and the West design their games. Game Studies as a discipline is applied to analyze gamers' experiences related to these two RPG games. The primary source of research data came from a designed electronic questionnaire focused on various aspects of RPG games and this quantitative survey data is collected through three online discussion forums, two which cater to each of the games and one which is a middle ground that caters to gamers' in general.

Much of the game research has focused on the computational complexity of video games and usability aspects of game playing (Johnston, 2012, 1). However, the research on game design and associated user experiences is not so common, especially in relation to RPG's. In the following, I will provide background of the thesis. Firstly, I will characterize central aspects of fantasy games and RPG game playing in chapter two. Chapter 3 discusses the basic elements of an RPG game, such as designing a story line and protagonists, character formation, game challenges, linearity and visual style. This thesis does not deal with music and computational (the level of data representation and algorithms) aspects of the games (Hunicke, LeBlanc & Zubeck 2004, 2). The chapter will also deal with The Game Flow theory that focuses on the enjoyment of game playing (Sweetser and Wyeth, 2005). The game flow model consists of physiological, affective and cognitive dimensions

of enjoying playing RPG games. Chapter 4 introduces the Hofstede (2011) Model for Dimensionalizing Cultures that have been used to define differences between Eastern and Western RPG game cultures. I will address central differences between Eastern and Western cultures, and describe how they might have influenced their respective game development and game design in the way that they do.

In chapter 5 the research aims and research questions are presented, following the methodological choices and data collection made. In this study I collected survey data from three Internet discussion forums where participants are discussing about some of the main design features of the two selected games, Final Fantasy XIII and Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. The discussion forums were Bethesda's own Skyrim forum and reddit's /r/skyrim sub-community for the Elder Scrolls perspective, Square Enix's Final Fantasy forum and reddit's /r/finalfantasy sub-community for the Final Fantasy perspective and finally, reddit's sub-community of /r/gaming for the middle ground perspective. The elements of the questionnaires were based on the evaluation of game design aspects (RPG stories and protagonists, game challenges, linearity, visual style etc.) and the experiences of game play was measured by using aspects of Game Flow model. Also, the background of the participants and level of their expertise (novice, competent, expert) in RPG game was surveyed. Additionally I attempted to get Japanese responses to the questionnaire by having it translated and posting it on Japanese fan sites such as 5chan and some other Japanese game forums. However, because the Japanese gaming communities do not use online hubs like reddit for discussion like we in the west do, I was unable to get sufficient responses.

Finally, I will provide results of the quantitative study and discuss how these results can be used to benefit game design in the future in particular in the field of marketing and designing games in particular towards foreign markets. Since there is not a lot of research data regarding individual games, I will be compensating for that fact by using my own considerable game knowledge on these games to adequately address their differences.

## 2 DEFINING FEATURES OF FANTASY GAMES AND GAME PLAYING

The notion of fantasy gaming as cultural phenomena is not new, it first emerged in 1970 in the form of table-top fantasy role-playing games and later in single player electronic games. The early games were strongly influenced by the science fiction and fantasy literature. Following the popularity of fantasy literature such as the Hobbit (1937) and Lord of the Rings (1945-55) a new genre of fantasy sub-culture was born (Copier, 2005; Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce & Taylor, 2012, 22; Williams, Hendricks & Winkler, 2006, 2). The first Computer Role-Playing Games or CRPG's were originally developed in the late 1970's and were heavily inspired by Dungeons and Dragons (Williams, Hendricks & Winkler, 2006, 3; Copier, 2005). Although the rise of Internet and fast network connections has made multiplayer RPGs possible, the single player RPGs are still very popular (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce & Taylor, 2012, 23). The key difference between table-top RPGs and computer RPGs is that the game is no longer a collectively produced fantasy and takes place within strictly defined parameters (Apperley, 2006).

There are several types of fantasy game genres from medieval high fantasy (for example Diablo, Final Fantasy, Elder Scrolls), to Steampunk fantasy (e.g., Final Fantasy 6, Grandia) all the way to Science Fiction Fantasy (e.g., Star Ocean, Knights of the old Republic, Mass Effect). High Fantasy is typical fantasy world where the story takes place in an alternative world where the rules of the world are consistent but may differ from our world. A perfect example of high fantasy is J.R.R Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

Steampunk fantasy is a sub-genre of science fantasy that incorporated technology and aesthetic design from 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial steam-powered machine. Examples of steampunk fantasy can be found in the works of H.G Wells or Jules Verne although *The Difference Engine* by Bruce Sterling and William Gibson in the 1990's is considered the foundation for modern steampunk (Higham, 2011). Science fiction and Science fantasy are genres that are easiest to explain with the famous Rod Sterling (McLean, 2007), creator of *The Twilight Zone* quote; "*Fantasy is the impossible made possible and the improbable made possible*". What this means is that what may be possible but not yet achievable falls under the science fiction category, but what we know to be impossible – for example defying the laws of gravity would be science fantasy. A good example of this is *Star Trek*

which is considered science fantasy as opposed to science fiction because it contains semi-futuristic as well as supernatural elements such as the Q. The Q is a race in Star Trek that is unconstrained by and holds an enormous power over normal human notions of time, space and even reality itself. This is a perfect example as notions such as a race is able to defy the laws of the universe is not improbable but impossible.

A fantasy games' hook is the fact that it transports you to a world unlike our own, be it high fantasy, science fiction or even post-apocalyptic. The fantasy role-playing consists of a multitude of rituals which in turn create a game play space, identities and meanings that vary from person to person (Copier, 2005, 3). Moreover, interaction with non-player characters related to the storyline or narrative as well as the game environment including visual and aural elements in places are important part of the RPG.

The concept of gameplay can be loosely defined as the structures of player interaction with the game system and interaction with other players, however, there is no set definition because each game designer has their own idea of what gameplay means to them (Rollings & Adams, 2003). The nature of gameplay is also changing according to technological and software advancement. The D&D Player's handbook (Cook & Tweet, 2000) describes the game in terms of you and your friends creating a unique fictional character that lives in your imagination and the imagination of your friends.

The development of character, gaming challenges and difficulty levels of the RPG are important aspects of game enjoyment. According to the GameFlow model of Sweetser and Wyeth (2005) computer games should provide challenges that match the players' skill levels, different levels of challenge for different players so that the level of challenge increases as the player progresses through the game.



### 3 GAME ANALYSIS: ASPECTS OF GAME DESIGN

Game development involves multi-disciplinary teams from design to programming: themes and narrative structures are specified in scenario writing, characters and backgrounds are part of the graphical designs, sounds and music are composed to complement the overall look and feel, programming makes everything works together by handling all the interactions between the game and the player (Aoyama & Izushi, 2003). There are many books and articles that are focused on game design. According to Björk & Holopainen (2005) developing games requires a shift in focus from studying existing games or players engaging in gameplay to the more abstract area of game design that is focusing on the characteristic features of games. For example in *Patterns in Game Design*, Björk and Holopainen (2005) provide for professional game designers practical design examples that are possible to apply to all types of games. Björk and Holopainen (2005) have defined gameplay as “the structures of player interaction with the game system and with the other players in the game”. These patterns can be used to illustrate the varying types of gameplay. By applying these elements of gameplay into practical patterns, designers have access to a common set of concepts that can be used to game designing (Björk & Holopainen, 2005). These patterns or elements can be also used to analyze different features of RPG games.

Hunicke, LeBlanc & Zubek (2004, 2) have also suggested a comprehensive framework that breaks down the parts of a game into *Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics* (MDA- framework). In their model the mechanics refers to the particular components of the game, at the level of data representation and algorithms. *Dynamics* defines the run-time behavior of the mechanics acting on player inputs and player choices whereas the *aesthetics* illustrate the desirable emotional responses evoked in the player (i.e., fun, tension). Fundamental to this MDA framework is the idea that games are considered as artifacts and that both the developers and consumers view these elements with different priorities. A player would prioritize aesthetics for example the style, while developers focus on the mechanical aspects (Hunicke, LeBlanc & Zubek, 2004, 2). Thus, MDA can be used as a formal approach to understand game design, game criticism, and technical aspects of game (Hunicke & al., 2004). However, I will not deal with computational or mechanical level of data representation and algorithms or dynamics (the run-time behavior of the mechanics) aspects of the

RPG games. In this study the main aspects to be considered while designing a game are the following: *RPG storyline and protagonists*, *character formation*, *challenges*, *gameplay linearity* (player freedom versus telling a story) and *visual style*. Each of these aspects are shortly described by comparing and contrasting Eastern and Western RPG games. The comparison is mainly based on my own game playing experiences.

### ***RPG storyline and protagonists***

RPG storyline and protagonists play an important part in determining many key aspects of the game. This is because a lot of the key elements are intertwined and what kind of protagonist or game world all depend on one another. Having a named protagonist with a backstory tends to lean towards a linear story with a more focused game world as opposed to an unnamed protagonist which leaves the world open to explore. While this does not mean you cannot have a named protagonist with an open world – such as in CD Project Red's *Witcher 3: The Wild Hunt* or Square Enix's *Final Fantasy XV* but should instead be seen as a general guideline instead of a hard rule.

Storyline and protagonists is where the East and West truly clash, as both have the same end goal of telling a compelling story but go about it in different ways (Harder, 2010, p- 1). In the West designers tend to give the player an unnamed protagonist whom you can make into whatever you want, the idea behind this is to allow the player to really immerse him or herself into the game, becoming that person. In the East, however, the idea is to give the player control of a small group of well-crafted individuals, each with their own motivations and backstory. The benefit of this is that you can become more emotionally connected to the characters but at the same time, you realize they are just characters, they are not you and as such there is always a certain disconnect between what is happening to the characters. For example *Elder Scroll V: Skyrim* focuses on the main protagonist who at most has only one companion at his side. *Final Fantasy XIII* is a party-driven game which means that you control a party of six named characters all with their own backstories.

### ***Character formation***

Characterization in RPG games primarily depends on where it was developed. Generally Japanese made games tend to give you a named protagonist(s) and while it is not unheard of in the west (*The Witcher* for example). In most Western RPGs you create your own character through a character creation process where you decide on your character's race, class and other attributes. In Eastern

RPGs you generally follow the story of a single or a group of protagonists who are predefined almost like an interactive movie. There are benefits to both: with a predefined protagonist you can tell a more compelling story and where the designers know how the protagonist would act at each problem. However, in most Western RPGs, the ability to create your own character and story will allow you to immerse yourself in the world and create your own story. This is aided by the fact that it is common practice for game developers in the West to allow game modification and while story modification is not too common, giving the player more options to immerse themselves such as starting in several starting locations with different backgrounds or amplifying immersion by adding tools like camping or being injured by not wearing adequate cold protection helps players feel like they are really living in the world.

The first principal difference between Japanese and Western RPGs is the level of customizing characters. Gameplay based on a preset character is likely to differ substantially from creating one's own characters. One of RPG's main high selling points is the ability to have an in-depth character customization and allowing various paths towards success. This allows you to tailor your character according to your preferences (Williams, Hendricks & Winkler, 2006, 7). Creating own character in RPGs offers players strong identities: in the game the player learn to view the virtual world through the eyes and values of distinctive identity or one they themselves have built from the ground up (Gee & Morgridge, 2007).

Final Fantasy and Elder Scrolls do side characters pretty much the same way, you talk to them or talk to people who know them to learn about the character – however they differ wildly on main character characterization. This is because Skyrim has no characterization whatsoever for the protagonist. He is simply a shell you inhabit. All you know about the world or character's when you start the game is that you were arrested crossing the border and everything else you make up as you wish or learn through interacting with non-player characters. This can be seen as a positive or a negative but most people consider it a positive because it helps greatly in the role-playing aspect. As the Elder Scrolls games are widely known for their openness with little need to follow the main story if you wish. This is enhanced by player-created modifications that add realism elements such as hunger and thirst.

Despite these differences, it is clear both East and West enjoy similar stories but each culture tends to react to it in a different way. Micromanagement is seen as a good thing in Japanese culture (Monster Hunter) but that very same micromanagement that made a game a hit in Japan would cause it to be a failure in the West where players prefer a convenience and a clean user interface (Harder, 2010, 1). Western audiences tend to prefer having objectives in the form of quests to get everything they want rather than the east where they don't mind killing the same enemies over and over again – this is known as grinding in order to get the best gear. Dragon Age: Origins is an excellent example of this in the West, it is considered hardcore due to its difficulty but has no grinding, instead it uses optional objectives and missions to deliver the content and gear the player craves (Harder, 2010, 2).

### ***Challenges***

Like any story, a challenge is required to get the player hooked and it is related to game flow (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005, 1). However, unlike a book, a video game's challenge can vary greatly from game to game and each player may find certain challenges more enjoyable than others (Crawford, 2003, 7). Games must have a challenge that matches a player's skill level, keep an appropriate pace and a variable difficulty level (Johnson & Wiles, 2003; Sharafi et al. 2004). Satisfaction in games tend to come from accomplishing difficult feats, testing and mastering skills (Lazzaro and Keeker, 2004; Lazzaro 2004) and reaching a goal (Federoff, 2002). Gameplay challenges come in a variety of forms, logic, intelligence or knowledge challenges and lateral thinking challenges as well as pattern-recognition challenges, moral challenges and reflex/coordination challenges. Out of all of these challenge types moral challenges are the most applicable to role-playing games. Do I play the good guy and help this shopkeeper? Or do I ignore the shopkeepers' plight and pocket the money instead? These moral challenges are the most common occurrence in story-driven role playing games.

Dark Souls is a perfect example as it is known for its hard difficulty, with you losing items, experience upon death but in that, shines its brilliance. Because it is so unforgiving, every time you die – you do not get frustrated. Why? Because every mistake can be squarely be blamed on your personal failings, did you dodge too soon? Too late? Perhaps the enemy had a counter mechanic? Unlike a lot of games Dark Souls has no feeling of the game being unfair but instead it gives the impression of “I messed up but next time I won't make the same mistake again!” On the polar

opposite of violence driven conflict of Dark Souls are games like Myst which contain almost exclusively puzzle related conflicts – how do I open this door that leads to the next room?

Games contain designed goals that provide players opportunities to commit to striving toward a certain game state. However, this is a case of players submitting to the intentions of the designer and can fail because the offered goal is, for some reason, not appealing. Thus, RPG games should provide different levels of challenges for different types of players that match their skill levels.

### ***Gameplay linearity***

Gameplay linearity refers to designing your game in such a fashion that the player is led from one area to another and while exploration of the areas is allowed, the player cannot choose where to go. A good example of this is where you do one area and then progress to the next and so on. In a nonlinear game you could choose to take the areas in any order you wish. Final Fantasy XIII is said to be influenced by the popular western Call of Duty franchise which, in turn, is perceived to have caused the games quality to drop as the developers tried to sell the game to both the East and West. While they succeeded in increasing sales the quality of the game was pretty much universally panned, with the biggest complaints being the linearity – what's known as a corridor shooter where it feels like you're going from one corridor to the next, a bland story and no real difficulty (Harder, 2010, 3). On the other hand, Demon Souls is the polar opposite – a very Japanese game, with clunky inventory, very little story, and a lot of grinding was a major success – even in the West. Part of this success was that it thrived on the feeling of, even if you died you know why you died and it was not due to some unfair element but something you, yourself did, for example dodging in the wrong direction, or avoiding the enemies attack too slowly (Harder, 2010, 3).

### ***Style of visual design***

Visual style refers to the art direction and graphics, there are generally four major styles of visual design; cell-shaded, photo-realism, exaggerated or abstract.

Cell-shaded or toon shading is a type of non-photo-realistic rendering that is mostly used in comics, or manga type of games such as Naruto or Dragon Ball to make it look as if it was hand-drawn. For

example, Japan is known for heavy use of comic characters and cell-shading visual style is very popular in Japanese game design. In Japanese culture, banks, insurance companies and other serious businesses may have their own mascot that can be used in advertising and to represent the company (Makkonen, 2012, 23). The custom is spreading throughout Asia to places such as South Korea where using drawn characters is acceptable. For example in many European cultures drawn characters are considered to be childish and would never be used by companies that are marketing their products for adults (Makkonen, 2012, 23). Also colors tend to differ depending on culture. A good example is pastel colors, pink and baby blue for instance. In the western world, pastel colors are commonly connected with babies and kids, but in Japan and South Korea it is common to use pastel colors in products that are in fact directed for adults. (Edmondson, 2005). There are also cultural differences in using images in designs. This holds true to many other designs as well as user interfaces.

In general three different main visual style can be distinguished: Photo-realistic visual style, Exaggerated visual style and Abstract style. A Photo-realistic art style is what is mostly used in the Western games such as Battlefield or Call of Duty. Photo-realism is a genre of art that encompasses painting, drawing and other graphic media, where designer attempts to reproduce the image as realistically as possible.



FIGURE 1. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is using the photo-realistic visual style.

Exaggerated visual style is based on a realistic look but exaggerated to give impact. Exaggerated visual style is loosely based on a photo-realism but is overdone. Exaggerated and cell-shaded are the two primary visual styles used in Eastern games. In other words, it presents something in an excessive manner and emphasizes certain aspects by magnification or maximization. Japanese games also tend to use this style a lot, for example, in the Tekken franchise. Abstract is the most distinct style and tends to use geometric shapes, but that style is not very common in RPG games. A primary example of this would be Geometry Wars or Tetris.



FIGURE 2. Final Fantasy XIII using the exaggerated visual style.

### 3.1 Game players' enjoyment of games

Although player enjoyment is one of the central cores of gameplay, there are currently no accepted models on what makes a game fun (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005, 1). The GameFlow model which consists of eight elements; concentration, challenge, skills, control, clear goals, feedback, immersion and social interaction is probably the closest model that can be used for analyzing is a game fun (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005, 1). Most literature of the games focuses on usability rather than enjoyment. In other words, does the game have good controls? Is the interface clean and easy to understand and are the mechanics interesting? (Federoff, 2002).

The game flow theory is based on the premise of generalized enjoyment and focuses on aspects everyone would enjoy rather than a specific sub-genre such as science fiction games (Sweetser & Wyeth, 2005, 2). Csikszentmihalyi (1990), who has developed the theory of flow experiences, found that regardless of whether you were in Europe, North America or Asia that enjoyment was the same regardless of your background, be it social class, age or gender. He also noted that an important precursor is a match between a person's skills and the challenge associated with a task. Most flow experiences tended to occur with goal-orientated activities, bound by rules and requiring mental energy and skills to accomplish (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

To get into the flow – and for a game to be enjoyable the player must be able to concentrate on it – regardless of the length of time, be it 10 minutes, or 100 hours (Pagulayan et al. 2003; Lazarro, 2004). There are many ways to accomplish this, a detailed game world that draws the player in (Johnson & Wiles, 2003) like that of *Skyrim* or requiring constant focus to avoid enemy attacks like in *Dark Souls*. Pace is an important factor as well, the rate at which the player experiences new challenges (Pagulayan et al., 2003). The appropriate pace is one that applies pressure but does not cause frustration through a feeling of the challenge being too difficult (Federoff, 2002; Desurvire et al., 2004). An important element of pacing is varying activities so that the player does not feel like he is in a mind-numbing loop of doing the same thing over and over again (Desurvire et al., 2004).

For games to be enjoyable, they need to quickly develop the players' skills to rise up to the challenge. This is done through interesting and absorbing tutorials (Federoff, 2002) that allow the players to become invested and interested quickly and easily (Desurvire et al., 2004). Key components to this are that the players should be easily able to delve into the game without requiring to read a manual or lengthy blocks of text (Desurvire et al., 2004; Federoff, 2002; Gee, 2004; Pagulayan et al., 2003). Players instead react better to short hints and context-sensitive help while playing (Federoff, 2002; Desurvire et al. 2004). However, these tips would be breaking the fourth wall which in turn breaks immersion (Adams. 2004). This, however, is a situation that does more good than harm as the alternative is to have lengthy manual sections that describe basic mechanics.

Identifying game players' motivations is one of the important considerations for designing and evaluating computer game. A good games allow players to customize the game to fit their playing styles and skills. The freedom to develop characters skills and the character's persona as well as to



solve challenging puzzles in multiple ways provide players the feel a real sense of agency, ownership, and control: reaching the flow state. I believe, due to the stricter social structure of the Japanese culture, they tend to develop games in a rigid manner, telling a very specific story following a lead protagonist rather than giving the player the choice on how to tackle the world.

In the following subchapter I will introduce both RPGs: Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII and I will provide summary of game design differences between Elder Scrolls V and Final Fantasy XIII.

### **3.2 Comparison of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII game design elements**

For this thesis, I am primarily comparing the Japanese Role-Playing Game (RPG) Final Fantasy XIII by Square Enix and Bethesda's Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Final Fantasy XIII which is science fantasy and Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim which is high fantasy are both very popular games, both are part of successful and long-running franchises and both of them have their own enthusiastic fans. According to the [GameRankings.com](http://GameRankings.com), Elder Scrolls V and Final Fantasy XIII are still highly rated among role-playing games. Elder Scrolls V is rated as the second best RPG with an average score of 95% while Final Fantasy XIII is the 192<sup>nd</sup> with an average score of 84%.

According to [VGChartz.com](http://VGChartz.com), Final Fantasy XIII has sold a total of 7.52 million copies on the Playstation 3 and Xbox 360 (as of 22.04.2017) with a split of 40.5% (3.04m) for North America, 25% (1.88m) for Europe and 25% (1.88m) for Japan and 9.5% (0.72m) from other regions. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim has sold a total of 23.29 million copies as of 22.04.2017) with a split of 45.9% (10.69m) for North America, 39.4% (9.17m) for Europe, 1.85% (0.43m) for Japan and 12.9% (3.01m) from other regions. Both games have two or more predecessors that have been released earlier such as Final Fantasy XI, Final Fantasy XII, Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind and Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion. The reason I chose two of these RPG games is that they are both part of popular RPG franchises on both sides of the spectrum (Eastern and Western games) and were both released around 2011, yet both show the differences in what eastern and western audiences enjoy.

It is important, however, to notice that 6 years from release is a very long period in the computer gaming world. Both games have very different theme, narration and visual style. Final Fantasy XIII is the 13<sup>th</sup> installment in the long running Japanese RPG saga all of which share certain elements or characters but otherwise are not linked. Final Fantasy games are each in their own universes but contain some shared elements such as the character Cid – a genius inventor, Chocobo's a chicken-like mount and crystals which are the source of magic.

Final Fantasy XIII takes place in the fictional floating city of Cocoon, whose government – called the Sanctum has taken a hardline stance of purging any and all civilians who have supposedly come into contact with Pulse. While Cocoon is a floating city, Pulse is the world below. The main protagonist is Lightning who has been branded by a god and thus feared by everyone else. The story starts with her trying to save her sister from the same fate.

Elder Scroll V: Skyrim is the 5<sup>th</sup> installment in a series of western RPG's that features a unknown protagonist who starts out jailed and is most known for its elaborate and detailed open worlds and its focus on Free-Form gameplay. Each of the Elder Scrolls games takes place in a separate country on the continent Tamriel in the world of Nirn such as Skyrim or Morrowind. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim takes place in the fictional nation of Skyrim in the continent of Tamriel where the 433 year reign of the Septim dynasty has recently failed (Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion). Elder Scroll V: Skyrim tells the story of you, the protagonist whom is caught crossing the border and who later finds out he is the last dragon-born and your quest to defeat Alduin the World-Eater, a dragon prophesied to destroy the world.

Skyrim focuses heavily on free-roaming exploration and the ability to explore where you want and when you want. The story starts as you are about to be executed for crossing the border at the wrong time; during the height of the Skyrim civil war. Once you escape, you find out that you are the last dragon born – a being who possess the power of thu'um – or dragon speak and that as the last dragon born it's been prophesied that you will save the world from a dragon called Alduin the World-Eater.

Both games are interactive worlds where players assume the roles of fictional characters, follow the story line and solve various challenges and achieve various goals. During the game play, the player

interacts with other player or non-player characters (NPCs) in order to complete quests and overcome battles. These interactions with other players and non-player characters might affect the game and can shape the storyline accordingly. During the game, the character advances in different levels (Bostan & Ögut, 2009, 2). The choice of games was based upon meeting the requirements that players in both games need to make plans or define their own goals. However, there is big differences between the linearity of the games: Final Fantasy XIII is considered a linear and more controlled story-driven narrative experience than western Elder Scrolls V.

In a traditional pen and paper RPG such as Dungeons and Dragons, one person is the Dungeon Master (DM) who controls everything except for the other player characters as well as forms the narrative experience (Copier, 2005, 3). Character creation in Computer Role-Playing Games (CRPG) usually goes down two avenues, one where at the start of the game you determine what kind of character you will be – your starting ability scores, class or vocation, appearance or you select none of this and instead are given a premade character with a personality already set in stone and a specific play-style in mind. A class is a profession or vocation with certain skills that fit that role such as a mage class might have access to magic and perhaps alchemy or enchanting. Final Fantasy XIII and Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim do side characters in a similar fashion, you talk to an NPC or just listen to them if they're in the middle of a conversation to learn about the character, area or events.

The games vary on a multitude of aspects, from how they deal with NPC interaction, NPC density, how their main character is presented and created as well as how much impact you as a player have on how the game progresses. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim has no characterization as you are a blank slate knowing only that you were arrested for crossing the border and everything else is up to you. Final Fantasy XIII on the other hand, you are given a set group of protagonists with a background story as well as role in the party already developed. This shows a key difference between Eastern and Western RPG's. Most Western RPG's give you a blank slate to make your character is while eastern RPG's tend to have a set persona and look and you can only customize your character within the boundary of that character.

The second major difference between Eastern and Western games is that Western RPG's tend to be open-ended in nature with a start and end, and how you go about getting to the ending is completely

up to you – even if you decide to skip large sections of the game. Eastern RPG's, on the other hand, follow a more cinematic approach – with the game being far more of a linear experience handcrafted by the developers. Final Fantasy XIII is often lauded for its' excellent visual animation, however, it is strongly criticized about being extremely story-driven narrative that emphasizes linear sequences of events and restrict the freedom of the player (Johansen Quijano-Cruz, 2011).

According to Johansen Quijano-Cruz (2011), in Final Fantasy, the story-driven narrative limits the development of characters and thus suffers character design and interaction. Each section of the game has a predetermined level cap that does not allow player to develop characters' skills and technique past a certain point. Based on the non-interactive or non-adjustable nature of Final Fantasy, it has been argued that Final Fantasy appears to have been originally planned to be a form of non-interactive medium (Johansen Quijano-Cruz, 2011). Table 1 presents a summary of differences between both RPG game design aspects.

TABLE 1. A summary of game design differences between Elder Scrolls V and Final Fantasy XIII

<b>Design Aspects</b>	<b>Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</b>	<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>
<b>Nature of storyline</b>	Main quest storyline, optional quest chains, optional kill quests, main quest can be ignored.	Main quest storyline, optional quest chains, optional kill quests.
<b>Character formation</b>	Single main character. Character race, appearance decided at start, skills obtained through use. Character is a blank slate.	Multiple main characters. Character's, their personality and affinities are predefined with only some leeway allowing each character to choose one of three roles out of a total of six roles.
<b>Character interaction</b>	You can converse with every NPC, most will only inform you of local tidbits, rumors etc. NPC's are split into two categories, named NPC's - followers, essential and protected which cannot be killed and generic NPC's – randomly generated friendly or hostile NPC's whose name takes the form of a title rather than a name (eg. Courier).	You can overhear a lot of Non-Player Character conversation but cannot interact with them. Lack of NPC's making the game world feel empty is a common complaint.
<b>Dynamic playability</b>	Allows you to tackle problems when you see fit and has some branching storyline arches.	You tackle problems in a mostly linear fashion with set goals in mind but little in the way of player freedom.
<b>Visual Style</b>	Photo-realism. Sticking to a realistic art direction.	Exaggerated. Based on a realistic look but exaggerated to give impact.
<b>Shared Community interaction</b>	Heavy community interaction through discussion boards and player-made modifications. A lot of shared experiences through YouTube and Twitch.	Some community interaction through discussion boards. Most shared experiences are let's play videos on YouTube.
<b>User Interface</b>	Overall a good user interface, gives you easy access to all the elements you could require. The biggest flaw would be the large text used, which makes limits the amount of items displayed while playing on a PC. Any issues can be solved with player-made modifications.	To the Western player, the user interface could be considered obtrusive as it takes most of the screen space regardless of if in a menu or in combat. This makes it harder to enjoy the combat as your always looking at meters. This kind of use of screen space is common in Eastern RPGs, so this issue is most likely an issue only for Western audiences.
<b>Technological Platform</b> * = Released later on this platform	Playstation 3, Xbox 360, PC, Playstation 4*, Xbox 1*	Playstation 3, Xbox 360, PC*

## 4 CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND HOW IT AFFECTS GAME DESIGN

Culture is defined in many ways, but unlike a set of natural laws, culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social interaction and values of a group of people. Hofstede (2011, 3) who has studied cultural differences for decades, has defined culture as the following, "*Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others*". A shared set of values that influence societal attitudes, responses and preferences can be defined as culture. According to Hofstede (2011, 3) societal, national, and gender cultures are much more deeply rooted in the human mind than, for example, occupational or organizational cultures that are acquired thorough education and professional working context. Thus, culture differences among nations are real, but in each culture there are many different kind of sub-cultures (gender, age, professions) that should not be ignored or generalized. Furthermore, there are growing cultural differences among young and elderly people as well as gender issues that are related to use of information technology (ICT) and social media.

In the same vein, Nancy Hoft (1995, 59) has presented the iceberg metaphor: seeing a culture as an iceberg that consist of different layers. It is difficult to see all the nuances of culture that consist of the traditions, models and characteristics from the outside of the culture. There are significant variations in the way societies organize themselves, in their shared conception of morality, and in the ways they interact with their environment. Only a small part of the cultural aspects are visible like language, traditions and customs, and underneath there are the unspoken rules such as etiquette and humor. Hidden are unconscious rules such as unspoken gestures, sense of time or experience of personal space (Hoft 1995, 59). A good example of this is handshakes and bows. While western individuals would fine with a greeting handshake, Japanese individuals would not be, but would find a bow the appropriate greeting.

One of the prominent frameworks for understanding cultural differences is Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions theory for cross-cultural psychology. According to Hofstede's (2011, 6) the main difficulty in cross-cultural research was distinguishing the difference between analysis at the societal level and at the individual level. The cultural dimensions model was first presented in 1980 in a book called *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. The

Hofstede model (2011, 8) consists of six dimensions of national cultures along which cultural values could be analyzed: 1) *Power Distance*, 2) *Uncertainty Avoidance*, 3) *Individualism/Collectivism*, 4) *Masculinity/Femininity*, 5) *Long/Short Term Orientation*, and 6) *Indulgence/Restraint*. The model reveals the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values are related to humans' behavior. Hofstede (2011) studies can be broadly applied to the game design to understand general cultural differences between different countries.

Hofstede's six dimension model is a widely used framework in cross-cultural fields and it has inspired many cross-cultural studies of values and social beliefs. There is, as you would expect, also critics presented such as that the model assumes that each country has only one dominant culture. The model is originally based on a world-wide survey of IBM employee's values from 1970 and derived structure of four dimension from factor analysis (Hofstede, 2011, 6). The model has been refined a couple of times together in conjunction with his colleagues, adding a fifth dimension i.e. long term orientation and sixth dimension i.e. indulgence versus self-restraint in 2010 (Hofstede, 2011, 7-8). Emmi Makkonen (2012) has applied Hofstede's model when she studied cultural differences in user interfaces. In the present study, I will use Hofstede's (2011) six dimension model in order to describe the differences in cultural values between Eastern and Western RPG games design. Next, the Hofstede dimensions will be introduced and, the features of the dimensions when applicable will be reflected into RPG games.

According to Hofstede (2011, 9), one important aspect that distinguishes different cultural values is hierarchical settings between people i.e. power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 46). *Power Distance Index (PDI)* scores are listed for 76 countries (Hofstede, 2011, 10). Power Distance is related to human inequality and it describe to what extend member of organizations within a country accept that power is distributed unequally (see also Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 46). The high power distance means that it is fully acceptable that the authority in the society is dedicated at a certain level of social hierarchy. It highlights also traditional society where the father is the head of the family and the roles of genres are very clear. In business organizations the hierarchies are high. Older generations are valued and authorities such as teachers and supervisors have to be respected. Low PDI countries, on the other hand, democracy is appreciated. The low power distance countries tend to value equality between genders and authorities and the power is usually given to specialists and experts. These countries also emphasizes that inequalities among people

should be diminished. Children are taught to be independent, make their own decision and express their opinions (see also Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 57-59).

According to Hofstede (2011, 10) East European, Latin, Asian and African tend to have higher PDI and lower for Germanic and English-speaking Western countries. For example Japan is considered to present more high distance country than for example Finland or Austria. Since Japan has high power distance value and the highest uncertainty avoidance indexes. This might indicate why Japanese online community embraces anonymity. Makkonen's (2012) interface study found that in high Power Distance countries University websites emphasized authorities (for example rector of the university) and official logos whereas lower power country such as Netherlands emphasized student life in their web pages. In terms of game design this may entail that high power distance cultures may encourage to follow rules and anchor gameplay on given scenarios and quests. Low power distance culture may be associated with setting up own rules (within constraints to the game), orienting towards setting up personal goals and quests differing from expected ones.

According to Hofstede (2011, 10-11), the second factor which is considered to make distinction between cultural values is *Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)*. It is related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future. That is not the same as risk avoidance, instead, it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity and indicates to what extent a culture encourages its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are considered as novel, surprising, and different from usual. Cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance index want to maintain strict rules and behavioral guidelines (Hofstede 2011, 11). The unexpected situations are considered a threat and there is intolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is dangerous. Furthermore, often cultures of strong UAI experience high stress and anxiety in family life and they have an inner urge to work hard and emotional need to be busy because time is money.

On the other hand, societies with a low or week UAI are more relaxed towards societal rules and in return are less prone to suffer from stress and anxiety. (Hofstede, 2011, 11; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 176-189.). Uncertainty Avoidance Index scores tended to be higher in East and Central European countries, in Latin countries, in Japan and in German speaking countries, lower in English



speaking, Nordic and Chinese culture countries (Hofstede, (2011, 11). For example Sweden has a lower UAI whereas Finland and Japan was much higher values of Uncertainty Avoidance Index.

Features of uncertainty avoidance in game design may be seen to connect the simplicity and limited choices of RPG game provides. Further, this can be also linked with opportunities to character formation and linear controlled story-driven narratives: how much players choices are controlled, how the player is able to wander around, make mistakes, and try different routes and scenes. Or does the RPG game have open-ended story, so that there is maximal number of choices for character formation and many possibilities to define player own goals.

*Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)* index is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups (Hofstede 2011, 12). In individualist cultures, the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to take care of him/herself and his/her immediate family. In the collectivist cultures people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. People are born into extended families (with grandparents, uncles and aunts) which protect them in exchange for loyalty. Individual society emphasizes "I" – consciousness whereas collectivist society stresses "We" – consciousness. According to (Hofstede 2011, 12) this issue addressed by Individualism versus Collectivism dimension is one of the most fundamental one regarding all societies in the world. Individualism tends to prevail in developed and Western countries for example USA and Australia are both one of the most individualist cultures. Finland is also considered to emphasizing individual society. The collectivism is stressed in less developed and Eastern countries. Japanese culture has somewhat a middle position on this dimension whereas Taiwan is more collective society.

Also Nisbett's book (2003), *Geography of Thought* addresses individualist and collective culture. Uniqueness and encouragement and tolerance of extreme are signs of individualistic culture. Western way of creating characters and quests appear to be close to individualist cultures where as Japanese way of relying on given characters and storyline represent collective one. For example RPG that have a large selection of options for how to create their characters and that a variety of side quests supporting a wide range of character types might be important for individualistic cultures. Also setting up own goals, pursuing own quest as well as possibilities for independently explore game world might emphasize individualistic culture. Further, in RPG game design the

characteristics of individualism vs. collectivism may be seen as maximized motivation on personal achievement in individualistic cultures, whereas the favoring the group achievement in collectivistic cultures is more prominent.

According to Hofstede (2011; 12; see also Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 136-147), another important element of cultural difference is related to gender issue: that is related to the division of emotional roles between women and men. In other words, is the culture in question a masculine or a feminine culture? This is measured by *Masculinity versus femininity (MAS) index* (Hofstede, 2011, 12; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, 136-147). In a masculine culture emotional gender roles are distinct: women are supposed to be modest and tender whereas men tough and confident. This masculinity pole is assertive and competitive: positions at work should provide challenges and chances for promotions and honor.

A society with a high masculinity value favors achievement, heroism and self-confidence (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 136-147). Material values and money are also important. Meanwhile, in a feminine culture the society value cooperation, caring and quality of life (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 136-147). Gender roles are dissolved and men and women both share household responsibilities. Feminine cultures typically have higher share of women working in professional jobs than masculine cultures and careers are optional for both genders (Hofstede, 2011, 12; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, 136-147). Masculinity is high in Japan, in German speaking countries, and in some Latin countries like Italy and Mexico. It is moderately high in English speaking Western countries and it is low in Nordic countries and in the Netherlands.

High masculinity is associated with Japanese culture and high femininity is Western ones. Possibilities of creating one's own characters, including selection of gender, may make RPG more attractive to women. Also open-ended RPGs allow pursuing one's own quests according the gender preferences. Relations between game design and gender are, however, complex, as indicated by Hayes (2005). Each player may have distinctive preferences and orientations not directly related to gender. RPG scene involves many active female participators. Shared cultural narratives and compelling stories, on which Final Fantasy is anchored on, may engage both genders. Thus, expanding from general cultural issues to game design, when designing a user interface, high masculinity cultures would concentrate on traditional distinctions of gender, family or age and

navigation would be based on control and exploration while feminine cultures the blurring of the gender roles, mutual co-operation and support would be emphasized (Marcus & Gould, 2000, 39).

As stated earlier, Hofstede (2011) has provided two additional dimensions; that is the *Long-term versus Short-term orientation (LTO)* and *Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR) index* in order to make distinction between cultural values in different countries. These dimensions, Hofstede created later, after complementary studies from several colleagues. Long-term versus short-term orientation is about persistence, thrift, respecting traditions and committing to social duties. The dimension is associated with hard work. The dimension turned out to be strongly correlated with recent economic growth. It was primarily found because many Asian cultures, conflicted by the Confucian philosophy, have very special characteristics that many western cultures lack (Hofstede, 2011, 13). Long-term oriented cultures are oriented towards future rewards and as such work values include honesty, learning, the ability to adapt and self-discipline. The importance of profit is seen on the long run instead of concentrating on the short term profit. Long-term oriented cultures pay little importance for leisure time. In short-term oriented cultures work values are freedom, achievement and thinking oneself. Usually the focus is on achieving quick results. (Hofstede, 2011, 14). Long-term oriented countries are East Asian countries, followed by Eastern- and Central Europe. Short-term oriented countries are USA and Australia whereas a medium term orientation is found in South- and North-European and South Asian countries. Japan has much higher Long-Term Orientation values than Finland or United States.

In RPG design, this relates to the challenges of the game, how easy it is to learn and how much practices it is required to become a master as well as long-term and short-term rewards such as achievements. A sign of short-term oriented culture is related on the desire to achieve quick results i.e., pass or solve challenges quickly whereas long term orientation emphasizes importance of profit is seen on the long run. A good example of this is gaining an achievement for killing a boss for short-term results or being awarded an achievement for getting one hundred percent completion in a game for a long-term reward. Getting one hundred percent in a game refers to doing everything there is in a game, this usually consists of getting all the collectibles, getting all the achievements and getting all the skills. This is called being a completionist. Unique to RPG completion is the fact that this usually requires multiple playthroughs as story branches tend to give separate achievements and are blocked off when you make a choice. Rewards for quest are completely

within the dietetic construct (money, equipment, experience and social status) and character improvement depends solely on skill use, which minimizes the pressure of players to play a certain way to follow a scripted experience.

*Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR)* was the newest cultural dimension in Hofstede's (2011, 15) model. IVR index describes the allowance of hedonistic ways of life in the society (Hofstede 2011, 16). It is related to the gratification versus control of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. In other words, this dimension is strongly known from literature on "happiness research". In indulgent society, higher percentage of people declare themselves very happy. Restraint stands for a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede 2011, 15). Indulgence tends to prevail in South and North America, in Western Europe and in parts of Sub-Sahara Africa. Mediterranean Europe takes a middle position on this dimension and restraint prevails in Eastern Europe and in Asia.

When designing RPGs for international use and for different cultures, the understanding cultural context and values are important. Designing culturally aware interfaces consist of various aspects like narrative structures, storyline, visual style of environment and characters. However, it also consists of many small technical details such as time and date since they play very important role for smooth communication and error prevention. On the Internet, everything spreads fast and designers all over the world are affected with the same styles and trends. There are even signs of decreasing cultural differences in web designs (Robbins & Stylianou, 2008) and as such, when designing for foreign cultures, it is hard to know what is important. There is no perfect guidebook or tutorial on how to create culturally aware interfaces (Makkonen, 2012, 34). Since game development is a broad-ranging discipline it also requires knowledge in game development, as well as human behaviors and cultural sensitivity. The game designs have been driven by technological advancement over the years, and are often being evaluated and described based heavily on their technical aspects, such as visual graphics and game mechanics, while ignoring the importance of game content (Falstein, 2002; Bittanti, 2004).

## **5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS, RESEARCH DATA AND METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

In this study, I compared two RPG games: Japanese Role-Playing Game Final Fantasy XIII and the Western Role-Playing Game Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. The study was focused on analyzing RPG design elements and experiences of playing these games. I analyzed players' experiences related to these two RPG games by using quantitative survey data. I posed the research questions related to players' experiences related game design elements and gameplay: How do the designs of Final Fantasy XIII and Elders Scrolls V: Skyrim differ from one another. I am aiming to reveal how these differences might be explained by using the Hofstede's cultural dimension (2011) model. The research questions were the following:

1. How do players consider Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Fantasy XIII game design elements?
2. What kind of statistical differences can be found in the game design elements?
3. How do game players address the differences of game design element in Eastern and Western games?

### **5.1 Quantitative survey as data collection method**

The present study utilized the quantitative survey research method that focused on RPG design elements and experiences of playing two games: Japanese Role-Playing Game Final Fantasy XIII by Square Enix and the Western Role-Playing Game Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim by Bethesda Softworks. The selected games that were compared are very popular and they are created in big companies. Both Square Enix and Bethesda are large corporations with Bethesda at current estimates puts it at 160 employees but is owned by Zenimax Media In which has 1,500 employees and owns a number of other game studios such as Arkane Studios and Id Software and has a net equity of 2 billion euros. Square Enix on the other hand has almost 4,000 employees as of March 2016 and has a net income of 146 million euros. I chose these two games because they both were released around the same time (2009-2011) and are both popular game franchises that show off western (Skyrim) and eastern (Final Fantasy) game design choices and their differences.

The quantitative survey was considered as ideal and effective research method to collect a large numbers of respondents with structured electronic questionnaire (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 129). The quantitative survey provides rich data and generalizable findings from a sample of the population of interest (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 129). Thus the purpose of the study was to develop a large questionnaire to measure respondents' opinions on two RPG games and their views on playing these games. The sampling method in the present study can be considered as a non probability sample and in the present case as purposive sample (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 228). In purposive sample respondents are thought to be most relevant to the issue studied, that is representing RPG game players of two different games: Elder Scrolls, Final Fantasy or both.

In the present study, the survey consisted of an electronic questionnaire (i.e., Google Forms) with 116 items in order to measure the frequency of various views and opinions related to RPG design elements and game playing. The questionnaire consists of series of structured Likert-type questions for assessing importance of various aspects of game design. In addition, there were some multiple choice questions for characterizing the participants' background and gaming practices. The data was collected through three online discussion forums, two of which cater to each of the games and one which is a middle ground that caters to gamers in general. I named the questionnaire the Gaming Assessment Survey [GAS].

The GAS questionnaire consisted of four main sets of questions regarding design of both of the selected games as well as general gameplay preference questions. After playing digital games several hours a day since I was 5 years old, I put great deal of effort to anchor the study to authentic gamer experiences while designing the questionnaire. The background of the participants (age, gender, country of living, game preferences etc.), level of respondents' expertise (novice, competent, expert and hours of game playing) and general gaming profile of playing (RPGs) games was surveyed. The game design elements of the questionnaires were based on the evaluation of game design aspects (RPG stories and protagonists, game challenges, linearity, style etc.) and the experiences of game play was measured by using GameFlow model (Sweetser and Wyeth, 2005)). The creation of the series of the questions in the electronic survey is explained in the following chapter in more detail level.

People who play games are usually split into two sections, gamers and players. Players can be considered as a subgroup of gamers, who do not delve too deeply, they enjoy the experience and move on, gamers, on the other hand, delve deep and they like the characters, the lore of the world – and crave more. In general, gaming communities usually form based on a number of criteria but the primary one is the desire to discuss a game with people who feel the same way. They usually want to discuss their experiences or trade tips. This can evolve all the way to sub-communities that focus on a single aspect such as fan fiction. Thus, gamers form communities with other like-minded gamers and discussing favorite game is a great groundwork for conversation and further developing conversation with one's peers (Hecht, 1993; Wimmer, 2013). The most common and largest of gaming communities tend to exist in online multiplayer games such as Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, World of Warcraft or Guild Wars 2 in which you can form sub-communities in the form of a clan. As a personal example, I can easily attribute most of my adult friendships due to one game or another being the common thread.

Thus, the survey data was collected via three Internet discussion forums where participants are discussing about some of the main design features of the two selected games. The discussion forums were Bethesda's own *Skyrim forum* and *reddit's /r/skyrim sub-community* for the Elder Scrolls perspective, *Square Enix's Final Fantasy forum* and *reddit's /r/finalfantasy sub-community* for the Final Fantasy perspective and finally, *reddit's sub-community of /r/gaming* for the middle ground perspective. Final Fantasy forums focus on their specific games while reddit contain a more generalized gamers' view. I selected these as the official forums. The link for the survey questionnaire as well as introduction of the present study was put on the discussion forums on 10.11.2017 and every two weeks the remainders was sent, and the query was closed 15.12.2017. Additionally, I also attempted to get Japanese responses: I have several Japanese friends and some researchers that provided important hints about Japanese game forums and fun sites. Thus, the questionnaire was translated to Japanese language and I posted it on Japanese fan sites such as 5chan and some other Japanese game forums. However, because the Japanese gaming communities do not use the online hub like reddit for discussion like we in the west do, I was unfortunately unable to get sufficient responses. The GAS questionnaire is in the Appendix 1 and Japanese version in the Appendix 2.

## 5.2 Gaming Assessment Survey

As stated earlier, the data was collected by using electronic questionnaire, named the Gaming Assessment Survey (GAS). The participants were asked to respond to questions regarding either one of RPGs or both if they are playing both of the games. The data was collected anonymously and analyzed statistically. The questionnaire involved four main parts: 1) background questions, 2) general gaming preference questions 3) a set of questions regarding Elder Scroll V and/or a set of questions regarding Final Fantasy XIII, and 4) game flow items. The survey consisted on 116 items or variables altogether.

The main themes of the Gaming Assessment Survey were related to the topics of this thesis introduction and the questionnaire separated different game design elements such as storyline, characters, and challenges. The game design elements of the GAS questionnaire were based on the evaluation of game design aspects (RPG storyline and protagonists, game challenges, linearity, style etc.). Each sub-category had several structured items where respondents were asked to choose or rate among the best fit alternatives (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 131). The structured items were based on the rating of aspects using 10-point Likert scale. In general, Likert scales include statements that are clearly favorable or clearly unfavorable and statement that are neutral are usually eliminated. In addition, the GAS questionnaire had multiple-choice (closed) items for collect data about the participants' background and gaming practices (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 131). The questionnaire was pretested by several times with my game player friends so that the items' vocabulary was clear and meaningful (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 134). Some of the items were reformulated based on the pilot testing's comments on wording and clarity.

Table 2 provides a general overview of the Gaming Assessment Survey: Both games had same questions and players were able to select do they want to answer, one game or both games. Table 2 consists of four main themes of the GAS questionnaire, variable names and type of questions (nominal, rating, scale, open questions). Then the respondent were ask to select answering RPG related questions: 1) Both; 2) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 3) Final Fantasy XIII. The final GAS questionnaire is found in the Appendix 1.



TABLE 2. Gaming Assessment Survey: main themes, variable name and question type.

<b>Themes of the survey</b>	<b>Variable names and question type</b>
<b>I. Background</b>	1) <i>Age</i> (in year groups, number); 2) <i>Gender</i> (nominal, three options); 3) <i>Country of birth</i> (nominal; select from the list); 4) <i>Current country of residence</i> (nominal; select from the list)
<b>II. General gaming profile of playing (RPGs) games</b>	1) <i>Gaming intensity</i> (How many hours you play in a day; number); 2) <i>Characterizing gaming orientation</i> (Playing games as hobby; I modify games; Organizing game-related community events (disagreeing versus agreeing with statements); 3) <i>Preferred gaming genres</i> (list of game types; select all that apply) 4) Preferred games: What are your top three digital games?
<i>Selection of answering RPG related questions:</i> 1) Both; 2) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 3) Final Fantasy XIII	
<b>Elder Scrolls V Skyrim/ Final Fantasy XIII gaming profile</b>	1) <i>Experience of playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim/ Final Fantasy XIII:</i> 2 Which computing platform (select platform); How many hours played (select options); How skilled of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim/ Final Fantasy XIII player (novice-competent-master: scale 1-4); 2) <i>Participation in the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim/ Final Fantasy XIII gaming community.</i>
<b>III. Overall assessment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim / Final Fantasy XIII</b>  <b>Assessing specific game design aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's/ Final Fantasy XIII</b>	1) <i>Overall assessment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim:</i> How would you rate Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim overall (scale 1-10); I enjoyed being able to modify Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (scale 1-10)  2) <i>General ratings of various aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i> 1) Gaming environment; 2) Main storyline; 3) Characters of Elder Scrolls, 4) Gameplay experience of; 5) Gameplay and character progression; 6) Visual appearance of; 7) Sound and music; 8) User interface of; 9) Technical performance of and 10) I enjoyed the ability to modify (Likert scale 1-10)  3) <i>Assessing specific aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's/ Final Fantasy XIII storyline</i> (fully disagree – fully agree 1-10 scale): 1) The main storyline in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was engaging; 2) I would of prefer Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to have had a less linear storyline. 3) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim successfully immersed me in the game world; 4) I liked the way the story of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 5) I feel the storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was hard to understand; 6) The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim story involved sufficient amounts of surprise twists; 7) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I would have wanted more side content; 8) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I felt like I was participating in creating the story; 9) How I would have liked to change the story of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim / Final Fantasy XIII (Open Question)
<b>IV Experiences of game play by using GameFlow items</b>	1) Did you enjoy Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 2) Did you feel skillful while playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 3) I was interested in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's story; 4) I felt completely absorbed into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 5) I felt like i could explore the world of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 6) I felt challenged in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim; 7) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim frustrated me; 8) I had to put a lot of effort into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (Scale not at all – extremely 1-10)

When selecting which game respondent want to answer, the experiences of playing particular game and gaming profile were inquired. Respondents were first asked to indicate overall how they felt while playing the particular game. By answering both games or either Elder Scrolls V or Final Fantasy XIII the respondents were first rating generally various aspects game design elements using Likert scale (all questions on a scale of 1-10) such as 1) Gaming environment; 2) Main storyline; 3) Characters of Elder Scrolls, 4) Gameplay experience of; 5) Gameplay and character progression; 6) Visual appearance of; 7) Sound and music; 8) User interface of; 9) Technical performance of particular game. Then they were further asked to assess specific design aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's/ Final Fantasy XIII such as storyline, characters, and gameplay experiences etc. The final theme, (IV) was related the assessment of the game flow experiences of playing of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's/ Final Fantasy XIII, and these items were selected from the Game Experience Questionnaire (IJsselsteijn, de Kort, & Poels, 2013).

Further, when evaluating each games' design elements, there were also open questions to get the respondents' explicate their opinions. The questions inquired how the respondents would like to change the story, characters and game dynamic: *"How I would have liked to change the story of Elder Scrolls/Final Fantasy XIII?"* and *"How I would like to change game characters of Elder Scrolls/Final Fantasy XIII?"* Many of the respondents' wanted to explain their opinions and this rich qualitative data will be used to clarify respondents' point of view when comparing both games game design elements.

### **5.3 Method of data analysis**

155 people responded to the Gaming Assessment Survey. The questionnaire raw data was in Excel –format and this data was first transferred into the statistical analysis program SPSS. Since the respondents as well as questionnaire items were considerable large, the computer program such as SPSS is desirable in order to make various comparisons among game players (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 176). First, the descriptive statistics, missing data as well as mean, mode and standard deviation were computed. There were no missing data and all respondents were accepted. Descriptive statistics provided information about respondents' frequency distribution of both games, mean as the arithmetic average and median as midpoint of distribution. The measures of

variability (i.e., range and standard deviation) indicated how the data is spread within the distribution of scores (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 242).

In order to examine the player's experiences of playing Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy, sum variables of regarding 1) general rating of the games, 2) rating of storyline, 3) rating of characters, 4) dynamic playability and 5) game flow were calculated. I examined each sum variable by SCALE/RELIABILITY ANALYSIS command of SPSS and eliminated items that did not correlate with the scale. The analyses were, further, carried out separately for Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy so that the same variables were included in each scale. The Cronbach Alphas indicated that the reliability of the scales was relatively good (0.85-0.93) (see Table 3). Sum variables were calculated by TRANSFORM/COMPUTE VARIABLE command of SPSS. The sum variable was calculated by summing variables together and dividing them with their number, for example: (variable A + variable B + variable C)/3.

To analyze statistical differences between respondents the *independent sample t test* was used for comparing two groups (ANALYZE/COMPARE MEANS/INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST). *T-test* assesses the significance of the differences between means of the two group scores. The distribution of scores should follow normal curve, then the *t-test* is applicable. Since the respondents were asked to select which game they would like to evaluate: 1) both, 2) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim or 3) Final Fantasy XIII, I first started to analyze the data individually. Altogether 140 respondents evaluated Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and 92 respondents assessed of Final Fantasy XIII. From the 155 respondents 49.7% (n=77) decided to assess both games and for these respondents were used to compare both games. Thus, the statistical differences in scoring various aspects of the games were analyzed by the *Paired Sample t-test* (ANALYZE/COMPARE MEANS/PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST). The paired sample t-test compares two means that are from the same individual. In this case the two means represents a player's assessment of certain gaming feature across Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy.

The Gaming Assessment Survey also included open-ended question for tracing players' opinions regarding various aspects of the games. The question were directly linked with the main themes of the questionnaire so that quotations from the players' responses can straightforwardly be used to support arguments. The open-ended questions enable me to use the respondents' authentic voice

when describing various game features of both games. Selection of the quotations relied on a simple application of qualitative analysis of content.

TABLE 3. Composition of sum variables regarding Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy and their reliability

	<b>Elder Scroll</b>	<b>Final Fantasy</b>
<b>General rating of game</b>	9.1) Gaming environment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.2) Main storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.3) Characters of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.4) Gameplay experience of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim? 9.5) Gameplay and character progression in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.6) Visual appearance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.7) Sound and music of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.8) User interface of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 9.9) Technical performance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,91</b>	17.1) Gaming environment of Final Fantasy XIII 17.2) Main storyline of Final Fantasy XIII 17.3) Characters of Final Fantasy XIII 17.4) Gameplay experience of Final Fantasy XIII 17.5) Gameplay and character progression in Final Fantasy XIII 17.6) Visual appearance of Final Fantasy XIII 17.7) Sound and music of Final Fantasy XIII 17.8) User interface of Final Fantasy XIII 17.9) Technical performance of Final Fantasy XIII <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,93</b>
<b>Storyline</b>	10.1) The main storyline in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was engaging. 10.3) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim successfully immersed me in the game world. 10.4) I liked the way the story of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim progressed. 10.6) The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim story involved sufficient amounts of surprise twists. 10.8) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I felt like I was participating in creating the story <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,85</b>	18.1) The main storyline in Final Fantasy XIII was engaging. 18.3) Final Fantasy XIII successfully immersed me in the game world. 18.4) I liked the way the story of Final Fantasy XIII progressed. 18.6) The Final Fantasy XIII story involved sufficient amounts of surprise twists. 18.8) When playing Final Fantasy XIII, I felt like I was participating in creating the story <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,89</b>
<b>Gaming characters</b>	11.1) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim characters are easy to identify with 11.2) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I felt like i was the character 11.4) The way characters were developing in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, inspired my gameplay 11.5) Interactions with inhabitants in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim world (non-player characters) supported my gameplay <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,86</b>	19.1) Final Fantasy XIII characters are easy to identify with 19.2) When playing Final Fantasy XIII, I felt like I identified with one of the characters 19.4) The way characters were developing in Final Fantasy XIII, inspired my gameplay 19.5) I appreciate the way player characters of Final Fantasy XIII interacted with one another <b>Cronbach Alpha=0,91</b>
<b>Gameplay loop</b>	12.2) The gameplay loop of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is entertaining and fun 12.3) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim maintains my excitement and interest during the course of gameplay 12.5) I experience the game battle system of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to be engaging 12.6) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim encourages independent exploration of the game world 12.7) I appreciate the computer control of side	20.2) The gameplay loop of Final Fantasy XIII is entertaining and fun 20.3) Final Fantasy XIII maintains my excitement and interest during the course of gameplay 20.5) I experience the game battle system of Final Fantasy XIII to be engaging 20.6) Final Fantasy XIII encourages independent exploration of the game world 20.7) I appreciate the computer control of side

	characters and enemies in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 12.8) Playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim provides constant challenges <b>Cronbach Alpha=87,0</b>	characters and enemies 20.8) Playing Final Fantasy XIII provides constant challenges <b>Cronbach Alpha=91,9</b>
<b>Gameflow</b>	13.1) Did you enjoy Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 13.2) Did you feel skillful while playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 13.3) I was interested in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's story 13.4) I felt completely absorbed into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 13.5) I felt like i could explore the world of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 13.6) I felt challenged in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 13.8) I had to put a lot of effort into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim <b>Cronbach Alpha=89,6</b>	21.1) Did you enjoy Final Fantasy XIII? 21.2) Did you feel skillful while playing Final Fantasy XIII 22.3) I was interested in Final Fantasy XIII's story? 23.4) I felt completely absorbed into Final Fantasy XIII? 24.5) I felt like I could explore the world of Final Fantasy XIII 25.6) I felt challenged in Final Fantasy XIII 27.8) I had to put a lot of effort into Final Fantasy XIII <b>Cronbach Alpha=91,4</b>

In the following, I will first provide background information of respondents and their general gaming profile. By answering the first research question: *How players consider Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Fantasy XIII game design elements?* I will report game specific evaluation of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim in chapter 6.2 and Final Fantasy XIII in chapter 6.3. I highlight how experience of playing these games affected the players' rating. In chapter 6.4, I will provide statistical differences between both games based on the results where respondents evaluated both games (n=77) and I attempt to answer the third research question: *How game players addressed on the differences of game design element in Eastern and Western games?*

## 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 Background and general gaming profile of respondents

155 people responded to the Gaming Experience Survey: 141 of them were male (91%) and only 11 (7%) were female; three respondents preferred not to say their gender. 63% (n=98) of the respondents were between 20-29 year old, 19, 4% (n=30) were between 30-39 years old and only 13% (n=20) were under 20. Over 40 up to 60 years old were approximately 4% (n=7). In other words, the query reached mainly young male adults as was expected.

The respondents were from different parts of the world. There were only minimal differences between the country of birth and the current country of residence. The main part of the respondents (50.3%, n=78) came from North America (United States of America and Canada), Europe 37% (n=57) including all Scandinavian countries, United Kingdom (UK) and East and South Europe and Israel. Thirteen respondents (8.4%,) came from Pacific area (Australia and New Zealand) and only 3 respondents were from Asia (1.9%). Two respondents were from Africa and another two from Latin America.

The second set of questions focused on analyzing the general gaming profile of playing role playing games (RPGs). I was interested how intensively the respondents played computer games in general i.e., how many hours they played in a day and how they characterized their gaming orientation and how actively they participated various game related activities for example modifying games or organizing game-related community events. Also preferred gaming genres were inquired.

From the 155 respondents, most of them (n=69; 44.5%) reported that they played computer games an average of three to four hours a day whereas 25% (n=39) played about one or two hours a day (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. How many hours do you play games on average in a regular day?

Value	n	%
Less than 1 hour	10	6,5
1-2 hours	39	25,2
3-4 hours	69	44,5
5-6 hours	20	12,9
6+ hours	17	11,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Almost 13% (n=20) of the respondents stated that they played five to six hours a day and 11% (n=17) of respondents described that they play more than 6 hours a day (see Table 4). Thus, the people who answered the survey appeared to be quite active game players on the daily basis.

Furthermore, most of 155 respondents agreed (Mean= 8.83; SD= 1.552) that the playing games was an important hobby for them. 50% of the respondents (n=78) emphasized that they extremely strongly agreed with this statement (minimum 3 and maximum 10). This result confirm, in general, that the GAS query reached respondents that were very committed to computer gaming. However, the statement related to characterizing gaming orientation i.e., as an active participation of gaming community or modifying games divided these respondents. Only 15.5% (n=24) reported that they extremely strongly agreed with the statement *“I modify games, such as creating my own characters or levels”* whereas 51% (n=79) disagreed or somewhat agreed with the statement. Altogether, 35% of the respondents were to a certain degree modifying games or characters (Mean= 5.43; SD= 3.009). Furthermore, almost 91% of the respondents stated that they totally disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the statement that they are actively involved in organizing game-related community events (Mean =2.56; SD=2,225) and only 9% were actively organizing game-related community events. These results highlight the fact that participants of the present study were very active gamers but did not involve actively in any special participatory activities – only less than 10% represented more active participation on gamer culture.

The video game genres were primarily dominated by Role Playing Games with them being chosen 146 times as one of their favorite genres followed by Action/Adventure (99 times) and Action Role Playing games (68 times). This is to be expected as I was asking question about role playing games and as such it is to be expected that among this survey group RPGs would be the most popular (see

Figure 3). When asked which consoles they owned the games for, the majority owned it only on one console. 73% (n=139) played Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim or Final Fantasy XIII (n=67) on a singular console and with 27% (n=37) playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim or Final Fantasy XIII (n=25) it on multiple consoles.

In regard to the actual games, 63% of respondents played Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim on the PC (n=118) with the other consoles taking up a minority of players between 4% and 13%. In Final Fantasy XIII's case, 60% of respondents chose to play on the Playstation 3 (n=122), followed by the Xbox 360 with 20% of respondents (n=42) and the remaining 18% playing on the PC (n=38).

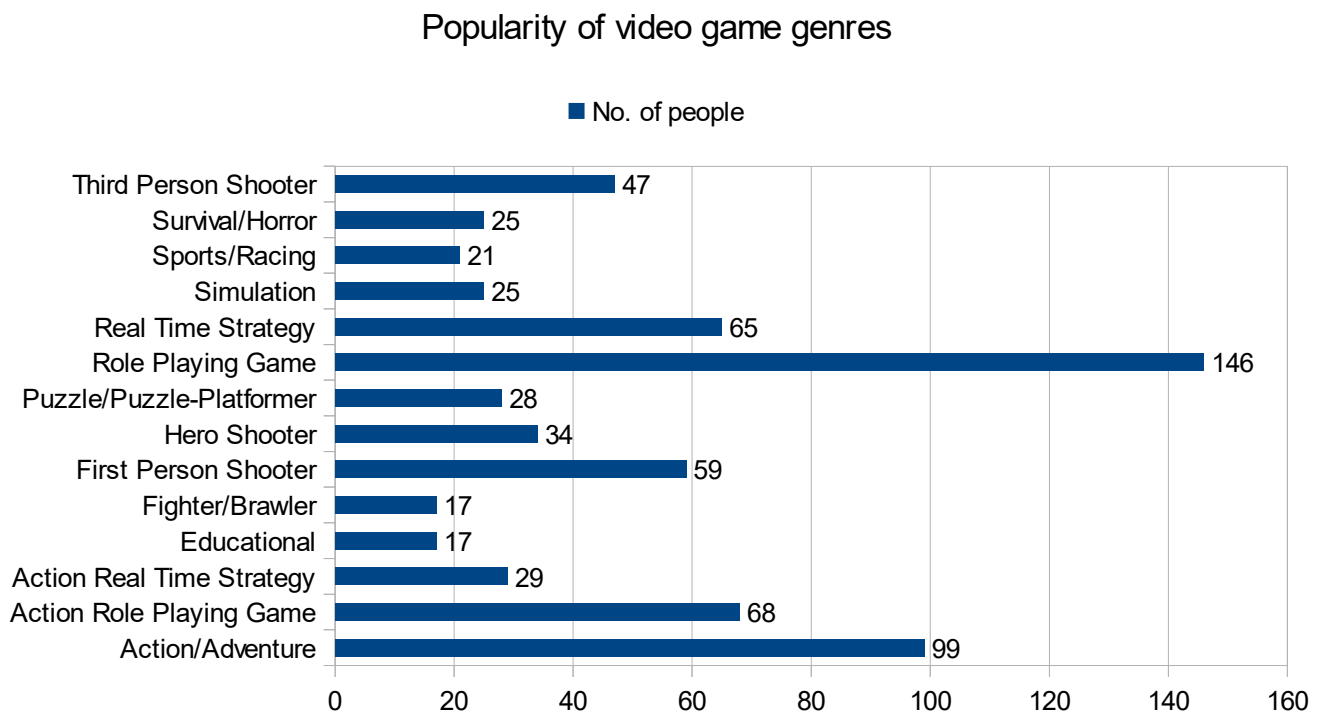


FIGURE 3. Popularity of video game genres (n=155 participants who responded).

It is important to note that these questions allowed respondents to choose more than one console and as such the results may be slightly skewed in regard to game ownership. It also shows that around 27% of respondents enjoyed the game enough to warrant a repurchase on a newer console. (See Figures 13 and 14, in Appendix 3).



The respondents were asked to select which game they would like to evaluate: 1) both, 2) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim or 3) Final Fantasy XIII. From the 155 respondents 49.7% (n=77) decided to assess both games; 40.6% (n=63) answered only one game that was Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and about 10% (n= 15) assessed the Final Fantasy XIII. In the following, the evaluations will be based on 140 respondents' answers related to Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and 92 respondents' assessments of Final Fantasy XIII.

First, I will introduce the general gaming profile of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim players. The survey questions revealed the experience of playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Then I will continue with the assessment of various general and specific aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and following that I will report the experience of playing Final Fantasy XIII and the evaluation of Final Fantasy XIII. Finally, I will compare statistical differences between these two games.

## **6.2 Experience of playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim**

From the 140 players, most of them (n=91, 65%) reported that they have played more than 100 hours of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and 18.6% (n=26) stated that they have played more than 50 but less than 100 hours. The rest of the respondents (n=23) reported that they had played less than 50 hours. When asked "*How skilled of an Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim player do you consider yourself to be?*" almost half of the respondents (n= 58, 41%) classified themselves as masters (post-game mastery) or proficient (n= 59, 42%). There were only three novice participants (2%) and 20 experienced novices (14.3%).

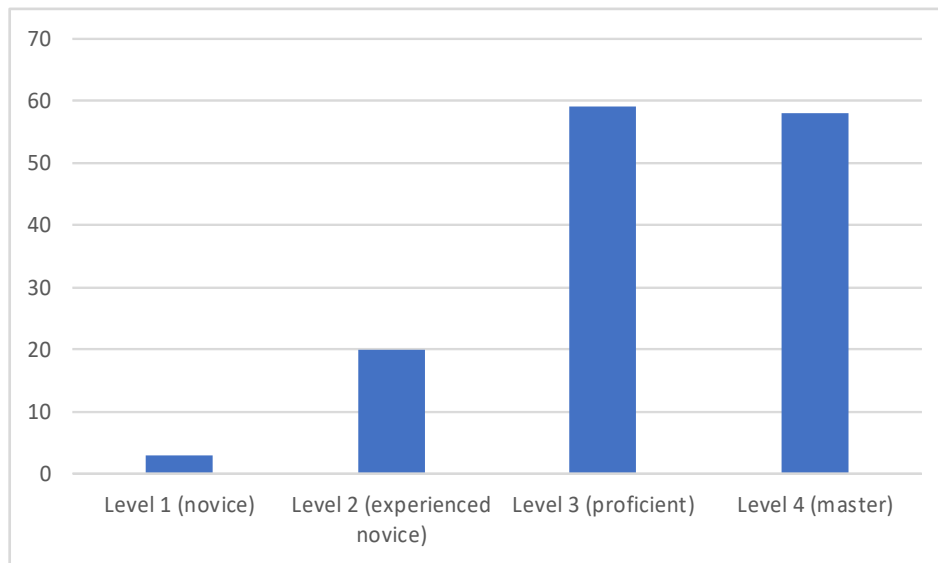


FIGURE 4. Self-rated expertise of playing Elder Scroll V

The activities related to Elders Scrolls V: Skyrim discussion websites (posting questions and answers) were identified. However, 72% (n=101) reported that they are never active in that way in the discussion website whereas 15% (n=21) said that they post questions and answers couple time a year or couple times a month (n=11; 8%). Less than 5% said that they are somewhat active on weekly or daily basis. However, when asked how often the players visit Elders Scrolls V: Skyrim discussion websites the results were slightly different: 40% (n=56) never visited the discussion websites whereas 31% (n=44) of the respondents visited couple times a year or a couple times a month (n=19; 13.6%). More active visitors on the discussion website were approximately 15% (n=21).

First, the players were asked to evaluate Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim in general (question 8.1, *How would you rate Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim overall*) and the game was regarded quite highly (M=7,29; SD= 1,98). Similarly, the statement 8.2, *I enjoyed being able to modify Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* was valued even higher (M=7,9; SD=2,7) although there appeared to be respondent variation in this regard.

Table 5, below, highlights the general assessment of Elder Scrolls. The participants were asked to evaluate various aspect of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim at a general level using scale from 1 (worst) to

10 (best). The Gaming environment was highly regarded ( $M=7,9$ ;  $SD=1,8$ ) as well as sound and music ( $M=8,2$ ;  $SD=1,9$ ). Gameplay experiences slightly divided respondents ( $M=7,4$ ;  $SD=2,2$ ) and the main storyline ( $M=5,3$ ;  $SD=2,2$ ) as well as characters ( $M=5,6$ ;  $SD=2,2$ ) of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim were not so highly appraised. As Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim has an emphasis on exploration and immersion over storytelling, this is not surprising. The user interface ( $M=6,0$ ;  $SD=2,3$ ) as well as technical performance ( $M=6,6$ ;  $SD=2,2$ ) were evaluated as moderate.

TABLE 5. Descriptive statistics regarding general assessment of Elder Scrolls (n=140)

Key variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
8.1) How would you rate Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim overall?	7,3	2,0
8.2) I enjoyed being able to modify Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	7,9	2,7
9.1) Gaming environment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	7,9	1,8
9.2) Main storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	5,3	2,2
9.3) Characters of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	5,6	2,2
9.4) Gameplay experience of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim?	7,4	2,2
9.5) Gameplay and character progression in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	7,0	2,2
9.6) Visual appearance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	7,4	1,9
9.7) Sound and music of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	8,2	1,9
9.8) User interface of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	6,0	2,3
9.9) Technical performance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	6,6	2,2

The reason for the variation in the different aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim comes done to player choice. This is shown by the fact that the storyline and character scores suffer due to the game offering the player such a huge margin for choice, from character creation to how the player approaches the game.

Furthermore, I examined how experience of playing Elder Scrolls affected the players' rating of the game (see Figure 5, below and Table 6 in Appendix 4). Toward that end, the respondents were divided to two groups; 1) those who have played the game less or equal than 100 hours ( $n=49$ ) and 2) those who have played the game more than 100 hours ( $n=91$ ). The analysis revealed statistically significant differences ( $p<0.0001$ ) across all the sum variables.

### How time spent playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim affected player's rating of the game

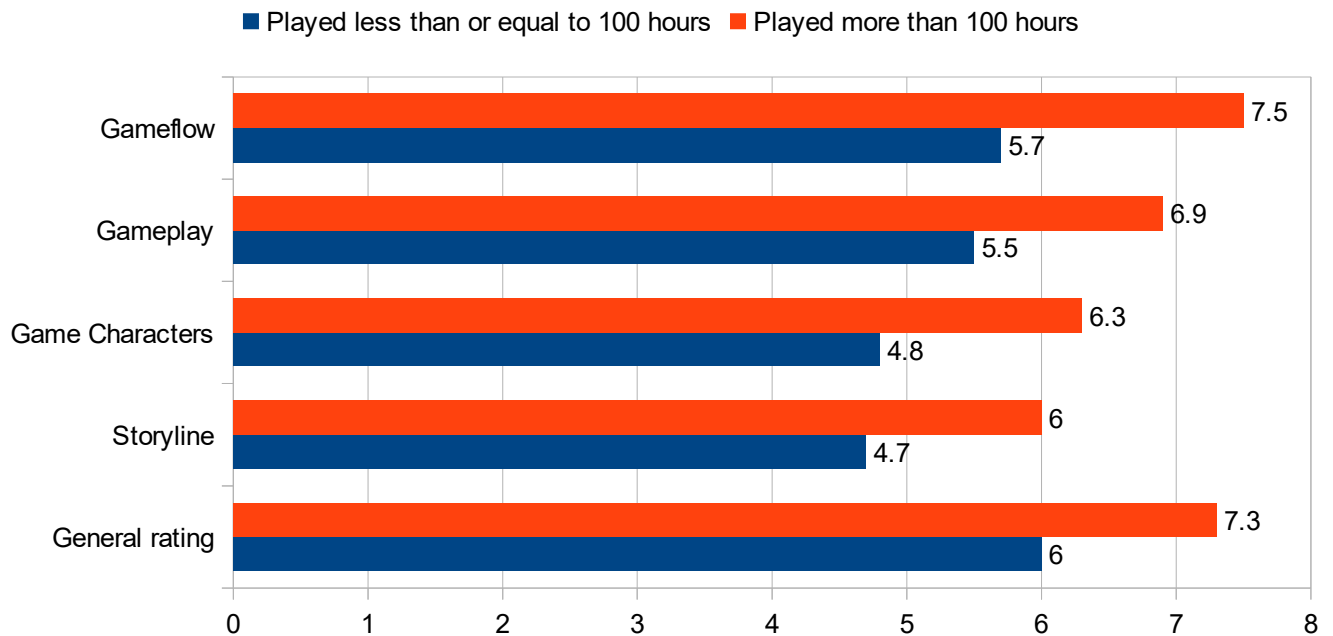


FIGURE 5. How time spent playing Elder Scrolls affected player's rating of the game? (n=140 participants who responded to Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim)

Those players who had played the game more than 100 hours appreciated all aspects of the game while those who had a lower level of experience enjoyed only a few aspects. When interpreting the results, it is important to take into consideration that player who enjoyed the game could have been motivated to play the game and, therefore, invest many hours for its play. On the other hand, it could be that strengths of the game become apparent after certain initial investment in playing and immersing oneself in the game environment.

### 6.3 Experience of playing Final Fantasy XIII

From the 92 players of Final Fantasy XIII, 26 (28%) reported that they have played more than 100 hours of Final Fantasy, 23 (25%) stated that they have played more than 50 but less than 100 hours. The rest of the respondents (n=43; 46,7%) reported that they have played less than 50 hours of Final Fantasy. When asked “*How skilled of Final Fantasy XIII player do you consider yourself to be?*” almost half of responded (n=39; 42,4%) classified themselves as proficient while 33,7% considered themselves as masters (n=31). Only nine participants (about 10%) considered themselves as novices and 14% (n=13) as experienced novices. The level of self-rated expertise in playing Final Fantasy appeared to be at lower level that that of playing Elder Scrolls (Figure 6).

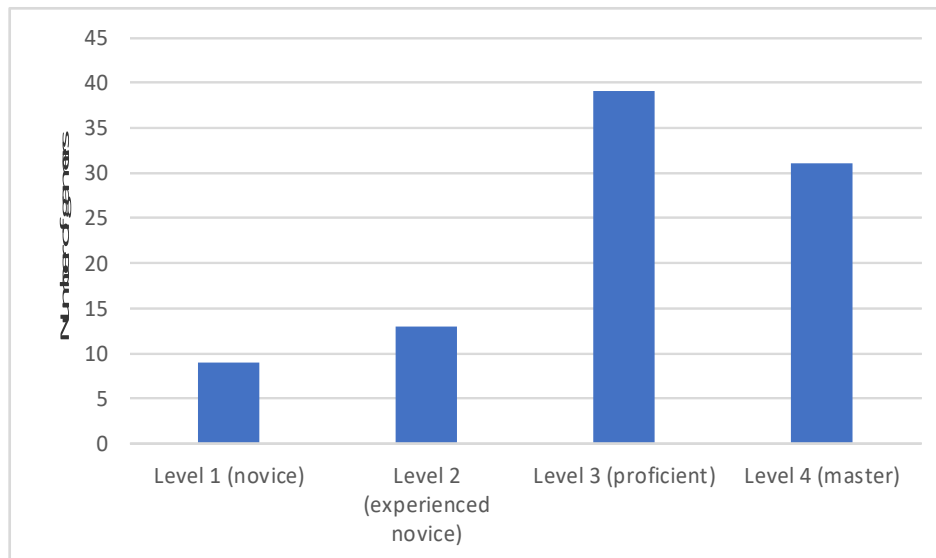


FIGURE 6. Self-rated expertise in playing Final Fantasy XIII

The activities related to Final Fantasy XIII discussion websites (posting questions and answers) were examined. However, 63% (n=58) reported that they are never active in that way in the discussion websites whereas 32% (n=30) said that they post questions and answers couple time a year or couple times a month. Less than 5% (n=4) said that they are somewhat active on weekly or daily basis. However, when asked how often the players visit Final Fantasy XIII discussion websites the results were slightly different: 39% (n=36) never visited on the discussion website whereas 46.75% (n=30) of the respondents visited couple times a year or couple times a month and only 13 (14%) participants visited the discussion websites daily or weekly.

Further, the players were asked to evaluate Final Fantasy in general (question 16.1 *How would you rate Final Fantasy XIII overall*) and it was rather highly regarded ( $M=6,9$ ;  $SD=2,2$ ). In addition, the respondents were asked to assess the following statement: 16.2) *How interested would you be in the option of modifying Final Fantasy XIII*; however, as explained above this game cannot be modified as the game is a heavily story-driven experience. Thus, the statement received only moderate scores and there appeared to be rather high group variance regarding the issues ( $M=5,7$ ;  $SD=3,4$ ).

Then the various game design aspect of Final Fantasy XIII were asked to be evaluated in general level. Final Fantasy XIII's Visual appearance ( $M=9,1$ ;  $SD=1,4$ ) and it's sound and music ( $M=9,0$ ;  $SD=1,5$ ) were the mostly highly rated as well as the questions with the least variance. The main storyline ( $M=6,9$ ;  $SD= 2,5$ ) and characters ( $M=6,9$ ;  $2,7$ ) were the questions that got the lowest score and had a high variance in answers. However they still were not ranked too poorly. Final Fantasy XIII's gaming environment ( $M=7,4$ ;  $SD=2,3$ ), gameplay experience ( $M=7,1$ ;  $SD=2,4$ ), gameplay progression ( $M=7,1$ ;  $SD=2,6$ ), user interface ( $M=7,5$ ;  $SD=1,9$ ) and the game's technical performance ( $M=7,9$ ;  $SD=2,0$ ) were all rated pretty highly, however, with gaming environment, gameplay and progression having quite a lot of variance.

TABLE 6. Descriptive statistics regarding general assessment of Final Fantasy (n=92)

Key variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
16.1) How would you rate Final Fantasy XIII overall?	6,9	2,2
16.2) How interested would you be in the option of modifying Final Fantasy XIII	5,7	3,4
17.1) Gaming environment of Final Fantasy XIII	7,4	2,3
17.2) Main storyline of Final Fantasy XIII	6,7	2,5
17.3) Characters of Final Fantasy XIII	6,9	2,7
17.4) Gameplay experience of Final Fantasy XIII	7,1	2,4
17.5) Gameplay and character progression in Final Fantasy XIII	7,2	2,6
17.6) Visual appearance of Final Fantasy XIII	9,1	1,4
17.7) Sound and music of Final Fantasy XIII	9,0	1,5
17.8) User interface of Final Fantasy XIII	7,5	1,9
17.9) Technical performance of Final Fantasy XII	7,9	2,0

What the data shows, is that despite being given the option the respondents do not want to change the game despite its' flaws. Since Final Fantasy is a series that has been around for roughly 30 years as such it has very recognizable elements such as certain characters as well as the sound and music – which the present data also shows.

I also examined how experience of playing Final Fantasy affected the players' rating of the game (see Figure 7 and Table 8, in Appendix 3). Toward that end, the respondents were divided to two groups; 1) those who have played the game less or equal than 100 hours (n=66) and 2) those who have played the game more than 100 hours (n=26). The analysis revealed statistically significant differences ( $p= 0.000$ ) across almost all the sum variables. Apparently, those players who had played the game more than 100 hours appreciated all aspects of the game more than those who had a lower level of experience. When interpreting these results, it is important to take into consideration that player who enjoyed the game could have been motivated to play the game and, therefore, invest many hours for its play. On the other hand, it could be that strengths of the game become apparent after certain initial investment in playing and immersing oneself in the game environment.

#### How time spent playing Final Fantasy XIII affected player's rating of the game

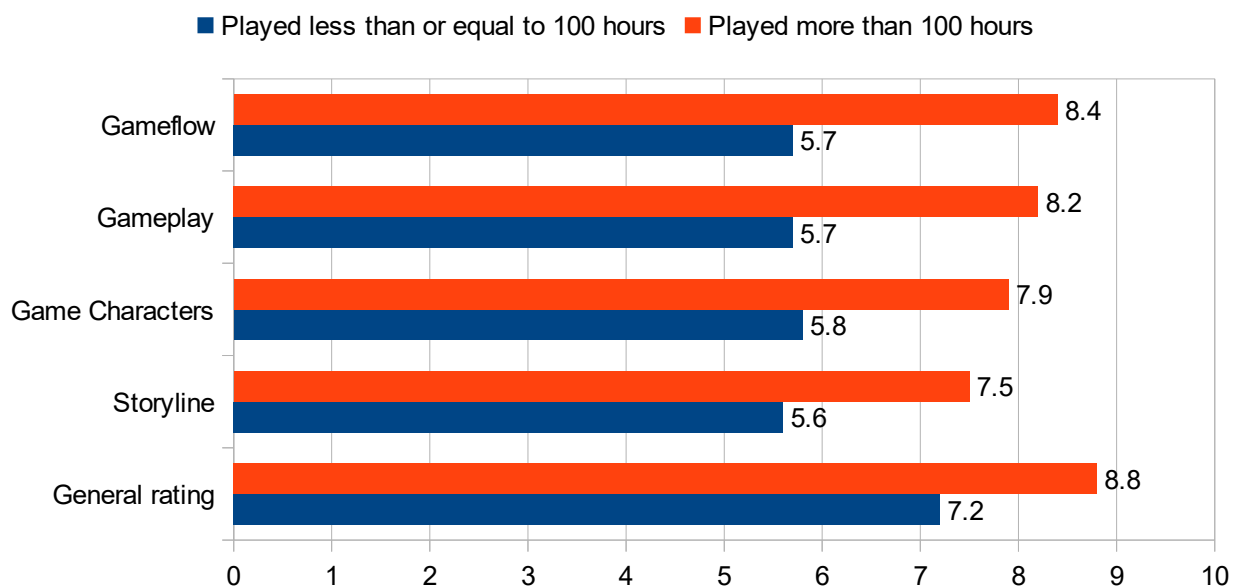


FIGURE 7. How time spent playing Final Fantasy XIII affected player's rating of the game? (n=92 participants who responded to Final Fantasy XIII)

In the next chapter, I will provide more detailed analysis how the design of Final Fantasy and Elder's Scroll differ from one another and how the gamers' explained or commented on the different game design features of these games.

#### **6. 4 How do the design of Final Fantasy and Elder's Scroll differ from one another?**

The above examination revealed general experiences of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy players of their respective games. In order to compare user experiences of the two games, the following analysis focused on those respondents ( $n=77$ ) who responded to the both Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII. Statistical differences in scoring various aspects of the games were analyzed by the *Paired Sample t-test*. The paired sample t-test compares two means that are from the same individual. In this case, the two means represents a player's assessment of certain gaming feature across Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy. The purpose of the test was to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the mean difference between paired gaming variables was significantly different from zero.

In order to examine how the players' valued Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy, I calculated a sum variable for the general rating of the respective games (assuming Elder Scroll variables 9.1-9.10 together and dividing by their number, doing the same thing for Final Fantasy). The analysis indicated that the players valued Final Fantasy ( $M=7.6$ ;  $SD=1.8$ ) over Elder Scroll ( $M=6.7$ ,  $SD=1.7$ ) ( $t(76)=-3.25$ ,  $P<0.002$ ). The other sum variables did not reveal statistically significant differences so that the subsequent analyses addressed individual items rather than sum variables.

A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare general rating regarding various aspects of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (Figure 8, table 9 in Appendix 3). The graph reveals that the participants valued many features of Final Fantasy over those of Elder Scroll. Statistically significant differences were found for main story line ( $M=6.8$ ,  $SD=2.6$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=5.1$ ,  $SD=2.4$  for Elder Scroll), gaming characters ( $M=6.7$ ,  $SD=2.7$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=5.4$ ,  $SD=2.4$ ) for Elder Scroll, visual appearance ( $M=9.0$ ,  $SD=1.5$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=7.1$ ,  $SD=2.0$  for Elder Scroll), Sound and music ( $M=9.0$ ,  $SD=1.5$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=8.0$ ,  $SD=2.0$  for Elder Scroll), User interface ( $M=7.4$ ,  $SD=2.0$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=6.0$ ,  $SD=2.4$  for Elder Scroll) and Technical performance ( $M=7.8$ ,  $SD=2.1$  for Final Fantasy and  $M=6.5$ ,  $SD=2.5$  for Elder Scroll). Overall, the players primarily appreciate Final Fantasy for its high quality visual appearance, sound and music and well as story line and gaming characteristics.



### Comparing general ratings of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

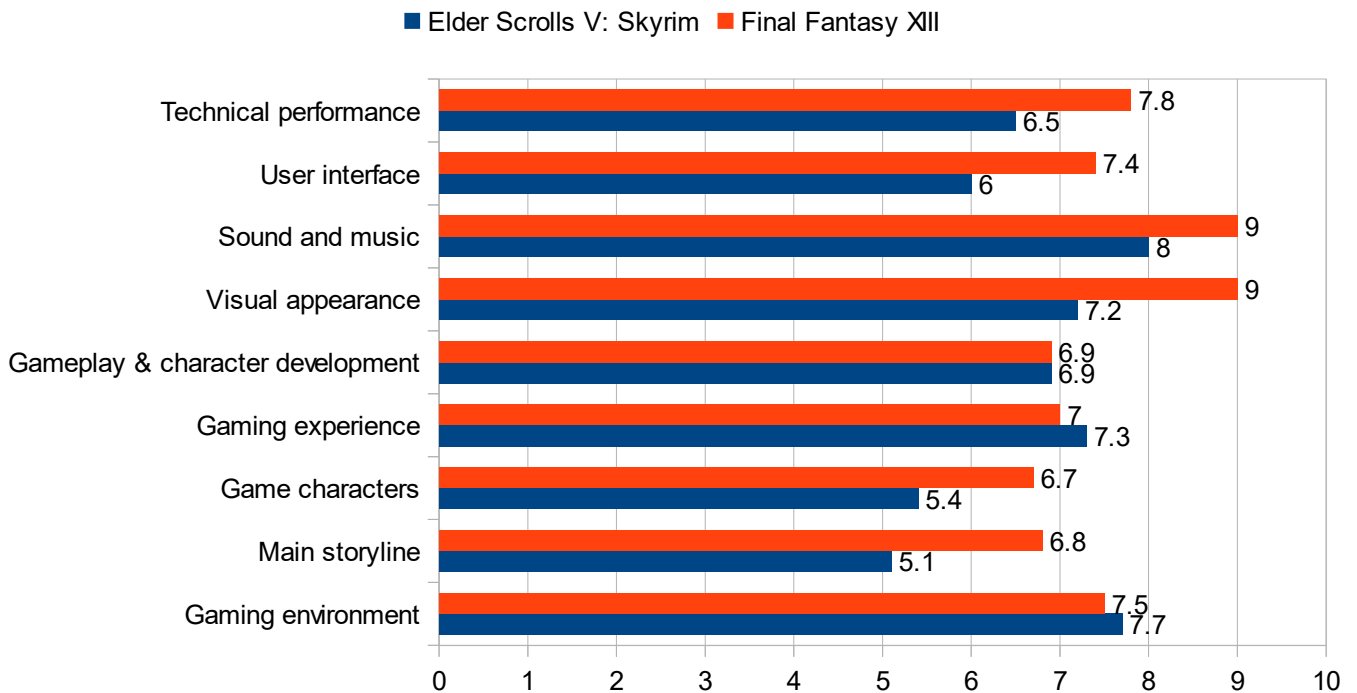


FIGURE 8. General rating of Elder Scroll V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games).

In the following I will report the main differences related to some of the main features of both games. I will also report how the gamers described or commented those features.

#### *Storyline*

When examining closer relation between the two games across various aspects of gaming experience and environment, a more complex picture emerged. I examined, the player's views regarding the storyline and found several statistically significant differences (see Figure 9 and Table 10 in Appendix 4). The player's considered the storyline of Final Fantasy ( $M=7.0$ ,  $SD=2.7$ ) to be more engaging than that of Elder Scroll ( $M=5.1$ ,  $SD=2.7$ ). Simultaneously, however, the players appeared to prefer a less linear storyline more in the context of Final Fantasy ( $M=5.7$ ,  $SD=3.4$ ) than

Elder Scroll (M=4.7, SD=3.0). When playing Elder Scroll (M=5.9, SD=2.9), the participants felt more like participating in creating the story than in the context of the Final Fantasy (M=3.7, SD=2.9).

The data I gathered matches the knowledge I had previously on the two games. Since Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is more of an exploration focused game when compared to Final Fantasy XIII's story focus, the two major differences in "*I feel the story was hard to understand*" and "*I would have liked more side content*" make sense. Since Final Fantasy is more story-driven it makes sense that its' story would be easier to understand as well as that it may lack side content which makes up the majority of content in exploration focused games like Elder Scrolls.

### Comparing the storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

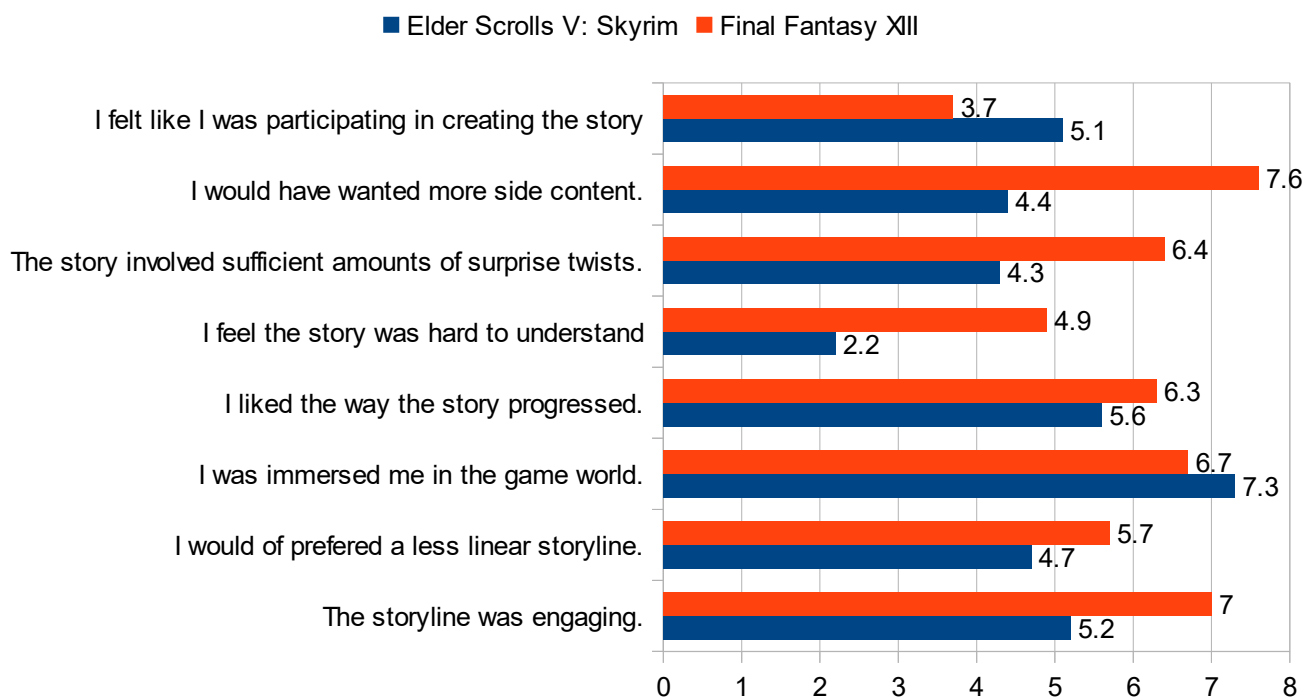


FIGURE 9. Comparing Storyline of Elder Scroll V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games)

Many of the respondents wanted to comment on both games' storyline and characters. According to respondent #20, he would have liked to have more options to control the outcome of the world he was inhabiting in Elder Scrolls.

*Have more options that control the outcome of the world and the player characters in it (R20).*

In regard to Final Fantasy, respondent #20 felt that the story was very linear and he felt rather annoyed that once you cleared an area that they were locked off for good and that this was a mistake as he would have wanted to go back to area's he's already completed.

*The story was very linear and many of the areas that you progressed through became unavailable. I would have liked these areas to be accessible again. (R20).*

Common issues with the story of Elder Scrolls were that the civil war storyline did not relate to the main quest and they believed it should have:

*Integrating the civil war into the main story and making it more dynamic based on which side you were helping (R7).*

Or that it was really generic and the primary source of fun came from exploring the world rather than following the story like Respondent #29 puts it:

*All the Elder Scrolls games have pretty generic storylines. It's mostly the feeling of living in a fantasy universe that I find appealing. Creating and playing as a fantasy archetype, fighting monster and skeletons, etc. (R29).*

Similar issues were that; you as the player, never found out what impact you had on the world, or that completing quests chains would have had more impact on rivaling quest chains or that the story would have focused more on the political aspects rather than on the chosen one trope. As respondent #88 stated:

*Show the impact of choices made during the story on the world. The faction and dragon quests acted as background noise to each other. Would have liked to have seen a more solid link to both of them as consequences to each other and an impact to one questline as the other was completed. I would have made the ending battles feel a little more meaningful and would have focused less on the Dovahkiin and more on the political aspects of the province. (R88).*

Some respondents wished that you were not the "chosen one" and rather than were an average joe, if you are playing someone who does not have the ability to directly shape the world and instead should have been someone on the sidelines rather the focus.

*The player's role in the story is that of an observer and an assistant rather than an actual agent of change. If the player is not able to directly shape the world, the player character needs to be someone less important, someone who isn't railroaded into being verbally referred to as a central figure but relegated to the sidelines in actual story relevance. (R100).*

From my personal experience as well as what the respondents have said in regard to Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's story was that the primary motivation and enjoyment came from exploring the world and that the story was rather generic and a typical fantasy story of one where you are the chosen one. Due to Elder Scrolls having great support for player-created modifications, this allowed the players to design new scenarios for you – the player to roleplay.

A common complaint about the Final Fantasy story was its linear nature or the lack of freedom such as the lack of ability to revisit areas you had completed. For example respondents #14 and #20, both commented the linearity of the game:

*Much more freedom to explore and discover side stories and quests like in previous titles. (R14).*

*The story was very linear and many of the areas that you progressed through became unavailable. I would have liked these areas to become accessible again. (R20).*

Another big complaint was the front-loading of information into data logs rather than explaining things through dialogue.

*Too much explanation is left to the in game data log. The story was ok at first when the characters knew very little of what was going on, later after finding out what was going on, they continued down the same stupid path instead of finding another path to achieve what they wanted. (R6).*

This seems to come down to personal preference as some respondents felt that while they agreed that a lot of the information is given through data logs, they never felt that they needed to look it up and that the information would be gathered throughout the game if they were patient enough, however, they felt that the ending was the only portion where the game was lacking proper explanation. Respondent #49 clarified:

*Unlike most, I feel that Final Fantasy XIII's open world worked well. I liked that I learned about the world through natural dialogue over time, rather than awkward exposition dumps. I never needed the Datalog to learn what was going on. It came naturally over time just by paying attention. However, the ending was rather weak, and was the only part that didn't make much sense. It was the one place that felt contrived and like it was lacking proper explanation. (R49)*

While some complaints varied from person to person, the universal constant was the fact that respondents felt that Final Fantasy was pretty linear and a lack of side activities was considered as a weakness. Another major complaint was the back loading of information onto the datalog as opposed to exposition through dialogue.

### ***Characters and characterization***

I examined the player's views regarding the games' characters and characterization and found several statistically significant differences. The player's considered the characters of Final Fantasy (M=6.4, SD=2.8) to be slightly easier to identify with than that of Elder Scroll (M=5.3, SD=2.6) (See Figure 10 below and Table 11 in Appendix 4). While players felt that they identified as the main character to the same degree, Final Fantasy (M=6.3, SD=3.4) had a bit more variance between their answers than that of Elder Scrolls (M=6.3, SD=3.0). This is particularly interesting because both games have a completely different approach to the protagonist. Elder Scrolls gives you a basic backstory as to how you start but everything else is up to you. Depending on how much you wish to role play your character may have a lot of backstory – or none at all. Final Fantasy on the other hand gives you a well thought out characters with their own backstories.

### Comparing the characters between Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

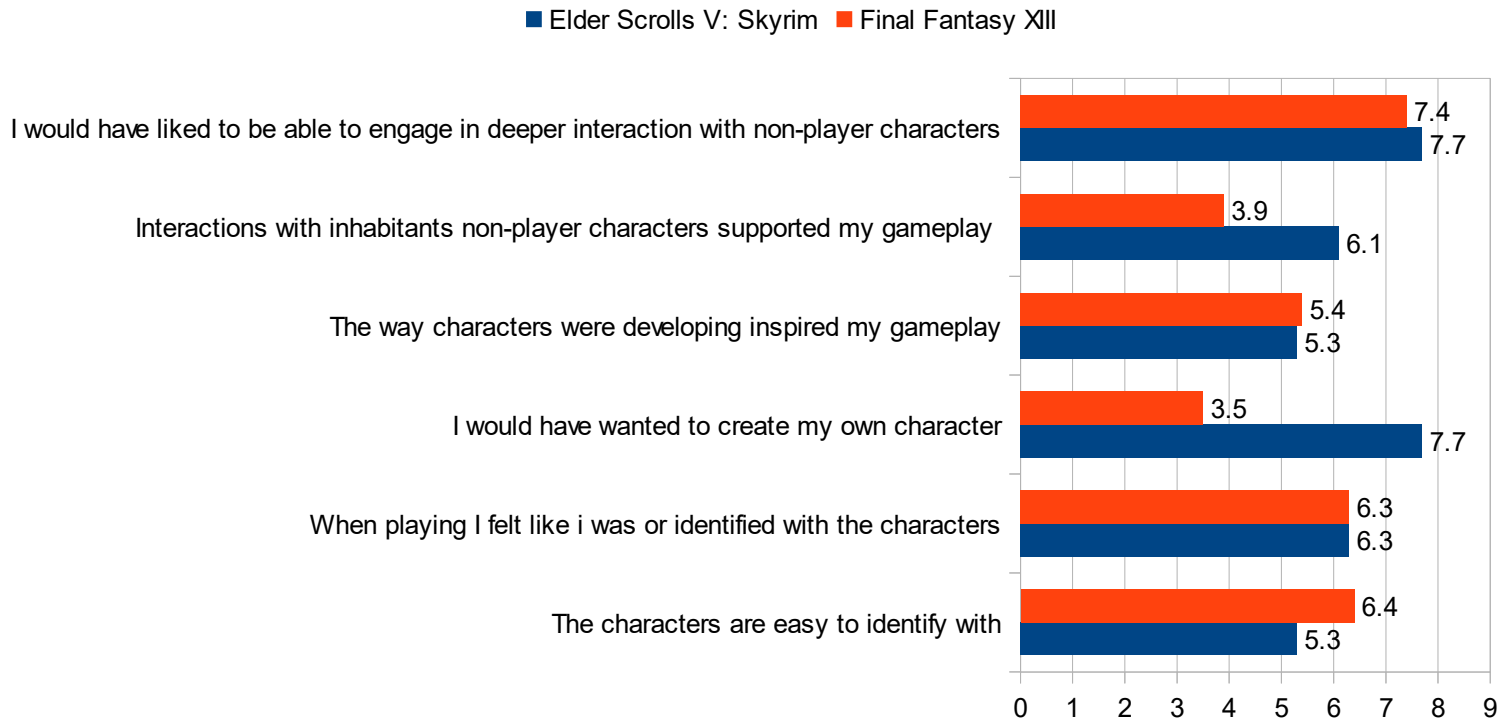


FIGURE 10. Comparing Game Characters of Elder Scroll V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games)

Non-Player Character's (NPCs) supported the character to different degrees in both games. In Final Fantasy (M=3.9, SD=2.7) since it was a very stream-lined experience, NPC's received a poor rating, while in Elder Scroll's (M=6.1, SD=2.7) case the NPC's were seen as far more interesting. This most likely has to do with Elder Scroll's Radiant AI system which allowed them to generate quests and behave in a more realistic fashion such as working during the day and going to sleep at night. A common trait for both, Final Fantasy (M=7.4, SD=2.9) and Elder Scrolls (M=7.7, SD=2.8) was the desire to have more meaningful and in depth interactions with NPC's. Respondent #6 felt that the lack of interaction with NPC's was fitting due to story reasons as you were wanted fugitives and as such could not just stroll into the nearest village to talk to them.

*Interacting with NPCs in FFXIII would have detracted from the games story – you're six main characters are numbers 1 to 6 on the most wanted list, they can't just walk into towns and chat to people. (R6)*

While others, such as Respondent #7 felt that NPC's should have been given more dialogue to gradually explain the world's lore and history to the player, rather than having them read it in the data log.

*Give NPC's more dialogue to gradually explain the worlds lore and history rather than hiding everything in an in-game wiki page only. (R7).*

Others, such as respondent #20 felt that some of the characters were not very likable or that they did not grow as a character during the course of the game while others did. He also felt that due to the lack of NPC's the game felt like you were always alone, just you and the enemies due to the fact that you had little interaction with characters that were not in your group.

*Some of the characters were not very likable and did not grow during the course of the game – like Snow. I would have liked to have seen these characters grow and change their outlook on the world, like how we see a definite change in Lightning towards the end of the game. Another change I would have made is to actually include NPC's in the game world. Most of my time in the game felt very alone and empty because there was no one to interact with in between cities. (R20).*

Respondent #153 who had a similar opinion to respondent #20 in regards to the lack of NPC's but had issues with some of the characterization such as making the lead spell caster – a role that usually goes to smart character's having some voice acting sounding overly sexual which contrasts with the rest of her voice acting.

*Easily the biggest criticism here is that there are not meaningful interactions with NPCs. You can get some incidental dialogue as you pass by some characters in the early sections of the game, but most of the time, that you actually interact with a “character”, what you deal with is essentially a gravestone that ends with you agreeing to honor the character's memory by completing their unfulfilled mission. (R153).*

*The player characters generally have believable interactions with good delivery of their lines in both dubs, though we still end up with some questionable writing and directing in certain cases. A great example being a character with less-than logical thinking early in the game whom they end up being the best spell caster (a role normally associated with high intelligence). A particular irk many players had with the English*

*voice overs is that one character (the youngest in the group) ends up having a lot of delivery that's a bit overly sexualized, which does not fit the rest of her character. (R153).*

### ***Gameplay dynamics***

I examined the player's views regarding the games' gameplay and gameplay dynamics and found several statistically significant differences. The player's considered the learning curve of Final Fantasy (M=6.9, SD=2.3) to be slightly harder to learn than that of Elder Scroll (M=8.3, SD=2.3). Both Final Fantasy (M=6.5, SD=2.6) and Elder Scrolls (M=6.5, SD=2.9) had an equally entertaining and engaging gameplay loop as well as they were both able to keep the player's entertained and engaged during their playtime and while over time they felt that the gameplay was getting repetitive this did not dissuade them from playing (see Figure 11 and Table 12 in Appendix 3).

Players found the battle system of Final Fantasy (M=6.8, SD=3) to be more entertaining than that of Elder Scrolls (M=5.7, SD=2.8). Even though Final Fantasy used a hybrid turn based combat system called Active Time Battle where a gauge is filled during combat, and once filled the character can act after which the gauge empties and starts filling again. Elder Scrolls on the other hand used a traditional real-time combat system.

Another major difference is that most players did not find that Final Fantasy (M=3.4, SD=2.3) encouraged exploration while in Elder Scroll's (M=8.4, SD=2.4) case it did. This goes back to how each game was designed. Final Fantasy was designed to tell a particular story and that was the focus, while Elder Scrolls was built around the idea of an open world where you could do whatever you wanted and as such, exploration was a high priority.



## Comparing the gameplay dynamics between Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

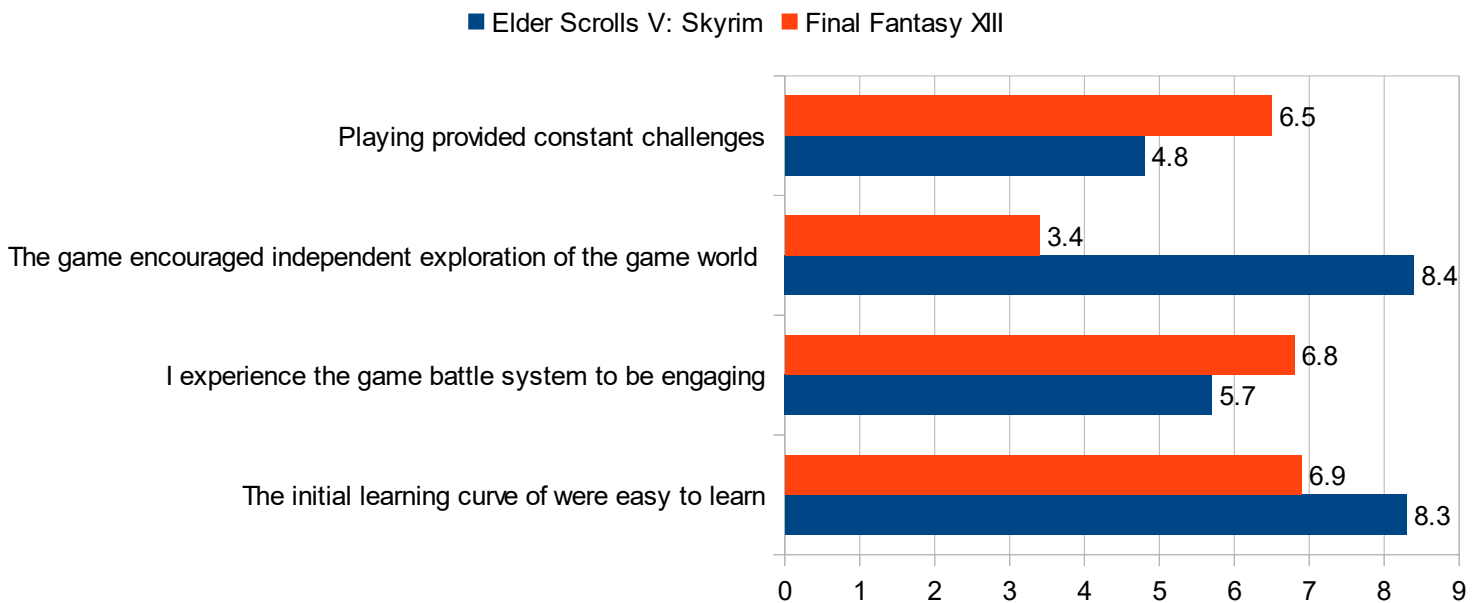


FIGURE 11. Comparing Gameplay dynamics of Elder Scroll V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games)

Final Fantasy ( $M=6.5$ ,  $SD=2.9$ ) was seen by players to constantly providing a challenge while Elder Scrolls ( $M=4.8$ ,  $SD=2.5$ ) did not. Due to the open world nature of Elder Scrolls – and open world games in general, since you can go anywhere at anytime, developers litter the world with objects and as such it is rather common – and easy to become overpowered really quickly. This does not happen in story-driven games because the developers who the exact order you will visit each area and as such can make sure you are always challenged.

Respondents found far more issues with Final Fantasy than with Elder Scrolls. The primary issues with Elder Scrolls was that combat became repetitive and boring near the end since most combat encounters did not require any real thinking or use of advanced combat skills. Final Fantasy on the other hand, had a good system in its paradigm mechanic, but respondents felt that it was not used to its full potential because it was a hassle to switch paradigms.

Respondent #20 felt that Elder Scrolls did not give as many options as he would have liked in regard to play style as you were limited to the traditional fighter, archer, mage archetypes with some leeway within them.

*The base game did not give as many options as I would have liked to the player in terms of plays style. (R20).*

By contrast, he felt that the paradigm system in Final Fantasy was good because it allowed character's you currently were not controlling to operate independently, however he adds a caveat to this that it was inconvenient to change paradigms and as such, it was too easy to stick to one paradigm and just hold the attack button down.

*I liked the idea of the paradigm system because it allows your other characters to operate independently. However, changing paradigms was inconvenient and it was very easy for most of the game to stick to a single paradigm and hold the attack button without any real planning. It was not until I started post-game content that I started to properly use the system as it was impossible to progress otherwise. I would have liked a more convenient way to transition between strategies mid-fight and in the over-world. (R20).*

Respondent #49 pondered that the first half of the game was just a glorified tutorial whose goal was to teach you the mechanics and this led to the impression that the game practically played itself, which was a falsehood but the early game was so easy that it gave that impression.

*I think that the first half of the game leaned a bit too heavily on trying to teach players. The game is difficulty to fully grasp, but the amount of time spent going easy on players during the first half can lead to the impression that the game plays itself. It most certainly does not play itself, but the early parts of the game don't make that clear. (R49).*

Respondent #100 considered that Final Fantasy tried to merge both the Western and Eastern RPG design philosophies but failed. He felt that the game should commit to one or the other.

*A linear world isn't inherently bad and an open world isn't inherently good, but Final Fantasy XIII manages to combine the worst of both worlds. The linear world at the beginning of the game was too constricting compared to older Final Fantasy games,*

*and once the world did open up, I wasn't interested anymore and I just wanted to advance the story. Either commit to a compelling linear story or a reward open world. (R100).*

A common complaint about Elder Scrolls was that certain gameplay mechanics were unnecessary (Respondent #33) since most combat encounters could be finished with the basic tools available (Respondent #77) or could have done with improved (Respondent #43).

*Engaging the more complex systems (special moves) felt unnecessary at any point. (R33).*

*The magic system could have been vastly improved, that and stealth archery made the game far too easy. (R43).*

*Towards the end-game side of things, combat tends to become repetitive – there's little strategy to most encounters throughout the game, but when taken for what it is, I do find Elder Scrolls combat to be enjoyable. If I were to change something, I'd probably add more abilities or a defense system which added weaknesses to exploit. (R77).*

### ***Game flow experience***

Finally, I compared gaming flow experiences between Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy by relying on the game flow model. (see Figure 12 and Table 13 in Appendix 4). Playing both games were generally enjoyed and there were no statistical differences between these games. Same was with the statement “*Did you feel skillful while playing*” and “*I felt completely absorbed into game world*” meaning that players in general felt being quite skillful and absorbed in the game world. There were significant statistical difference between the interest of the storyline and exploring the game world. Final Fantasy was considered to have a more interesting storyline (Final Fantasy: M=7.2; SD=2.73; Elder Scrolls: M=5.6; SD=2.85) whereas exploring Elder Scrolls game world was appreciated much highly than Final Fantasy (Final Fantasy: M=4.4; SD=2.86; Elder Scrolls: M=8.2; SD=2.56).

In regards to difficulty and frustration both game scored pretty similarly with respondents feeling Final Fantasy was a bit more challenging (Final Fantasy: M=6.6; SD=2.8; Elder Scrolls: M=5.3; SD=2.7), frustrating (Final Fantasy: M=5.6; SD=2.6; Elder Scrolls: M=4.4; SD=2.6) and overall requiring more effort (Final Fantasy: M=5.9; SD=2.5; Elder Scrolls: M=4.7; SD=2.6). This shows

that in an exploration driven game like Elder Scrolls the player feels far less frustrated if they get stuck somewhere as they can just choose a new direction to explore in.

### Comparing gaming experiences between Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

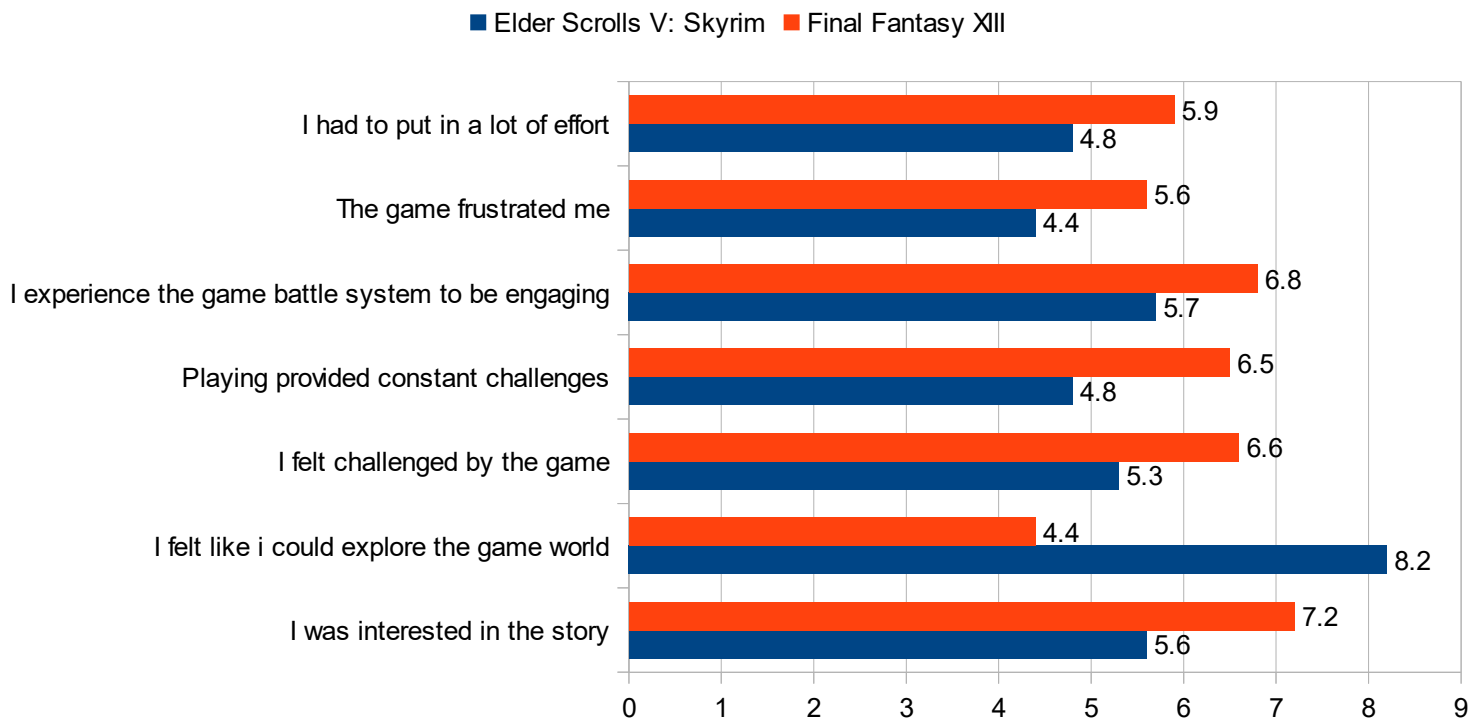


FIGURE 12. Comparing gaming experiences of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games).

Looking at the data it correlates to what I know, that while the story-driven Final Fantasy has a much more engaging story, the open ended Elder Scrolls gives the feeling of being able to exist in a world rather than just following the story.

To conclude, the present data analysis provided interesting results related how respondents evaluated different game elements. Furthermore, they also provided rich qualitative data by explaining their reasoning while assessing the bath games. In following, I will first deal with the methodological concerns of the present study and then I will draw conclusion and further implications of my study.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### 7.1 Methodological limitations

The Gaming Assessment Survey (GAS) targeted gamers who frequented video game discussion sites such as reddit or game specific forums such as the official Bethesda Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim or Square Enix's Final Fantasy XIII forums. The sample size ended up being 155 respondents over the course of a month. The original plan was to compare responses from both Eastern and Western respondents; however, as I was unable to get sufficient responses to the Japanese version of the survey. The Japanese version was translated and checked by Japanese PhD student, who also consulted me about Japanese game sites. I also got many advises from my other Japanese friends where to put the survey and they also spread the survey link. I attributed this to the fact that the Japanese gaming scene does not revolve around a central website or forum like how here in the West we have Reddit.

The GAS reached primarily young males with 63% of respondents being between the ages of 20 and 29 as well as 91% being male. As such, the results cannot be generalized across Eastern and Western gamers nor across gender. Assessing the RPG games through questionnaires are subject to response bias: person, who most likely to fill the questionnaire are those who have stronger opinions and interest in the topic inquired (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 170).

Reliability of the study refers to the repeatability and consistency of the measurement whereas the validity refers to the credibility or trustworthiness of the research (Sommer & Sommer, 1991, 170). There are two kinds of validity; internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the instruments and procedures that are used in the study: the instrument should measure what they were supposed to measure. External validity, on the other hand, is concern about how the results can be generalized beyond the immediate study.

Internal validity can be considered to be quite good in the present study; the 116 items in the questionnaire were all related to various aspects of game of RPG. The questionnaire was pilot tested

couple times and I made some changes for the wordings etc. before sending it to the discussion sites. Also, the present questionnaire can be repeated and similar kind of data can be collected a second time, however, it is difficult to estimate would it yield the exactly the same results – I think it depends on which game or discussion sites it will be send. I consider that the received data is quite reliable. I carefully planned and selected three different discussion sites in order to get variety of opinions related to both RPG games. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents evaluated both games, even the questionnaire was relatively long. However, the results cannot be generalized across gender since the results are biased toward Western male respondents.

The GAS instrument was rather long, as it was between 10 and 16 pages depending on which games the respondents answered to; this may have reduced number of responses. However, the survey functioned very well as the respondents took a keen interest in the subject matter as there were little to no missing values. Moreover, the respondents went into great details when answering the optional open-ended questions.

## **7.2 Synthesizing the differences between design of Eastern and Western games**

My first research question was “*How do players consider Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Fantasy XIII game design elements?*” and second one “*What kind of statistical differences can be found in the game design elements?*” Those who played over 100 hours graded the games much higher than those who played under 100 hours. Giving Elder Scrolls a 7.3 instead of a 6 when asked for a general rating, or Final Fantasy a 8.8 instead of a 7.2. When I correlated the data regarding the two games, I came to a surprising revelation. Despite what you may expect Final Fantasy was considered the superior game in almost every area, however, if you asked random gamers they would praise Elder Scrolls and rebuke Final Fantasy. I believe this comes from the history of the franchise as while Elder Scrolls has only improved game after game, Final Fantasy XIII is considered one of the weaker Final Fantasy games in it's franchise.

If you look at the pro's and con's of both games you can quickly see that Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim really shined on questions that related to exploration and freedom of choice (see Table 7). This is seen in questions that asked about linearity, immersion or side content. However, these did not come without a negative as due to the freedom offered by the game meant that other story related

questions such as how engaging was the story, was there sufficient amount of plot twists or was there a constant challenge proved to be major negative aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Final Fantasy XIII on the other hand, was seen as having an engaging story, a good amount of plot twists as well as the fact that characters were easy to identify with.

TABLE 7. A summary of comparing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

<b>The games were appreciated because:</b>	
<b>Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</b>	<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>
The storyline was not too linear	The storyline was engaging
The game world was immersive	The story had a good amount of plot twists
The story was not too hard to understand	The characters were easy to identify with
The story had a good amount of side content	Players were happy to play premade characters
The player felt like he was a significant factor	The game provided a constant challenge
Player enjoyed being able to create their own character	
NPC's felt like they supported the gameplay	
The game had little initial learning curve	
The game promoted independent exploration	
<b>The games were rebuked for:</b>	
<b>Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</b>	<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>
The storyline was not engaging	The storyline was too linear
The story had little plot twists	The game world was not too immersive
The character's were not easy to identify with	The story was hard to understand
The player felt like the game lacked a constant challenge	The story lacked sufficient side content
	The play did not feel like they had a major impact on the story
	Player's felt that NPC's had little impact on gameplay
	The game's initial learning curve was too hard
	The game did not promote independent exploration

These were all the major flaws of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. This shows us that depending on if you are trying to tell a story or create a world, the kind of RPG you make as well as what values the game developer deems important. If the story is what you wish to convey, a linear game allows this to be done easily as the player has little opportunity to lose focus on the task at hand. But this also

means the player feels that they have little choice in the matter and that leads to a bunch of other issues. For example, because Final Fantasy is so linear, it lacked side content which lead into the game feeling like you had no room to explore the world. For certain questions, respondents rated both games equally or close enough to not have a statistical difference.

My third question was “How do game players address the differences of game design element in Eastern and Western games?” First it must be mentioned that the data I obtained is strongly biased to the western way of thinking. While I wished to get perspectives from both the East and the West, I was however, unable to get sufficient Eastern responses. I attribute this to the fact that, unlike in the West, Eastern countries like Japan tend to communicate more through text messaging services as while gaming forums did exist, such as 5chan – they were not a constant hub of discussion like how we treat gaming forums here in the West.

A clear difference between Eastern and Western RPG's has appeared in the form of story focus. Eastern games are far more focused on telling a specific story and while they may or may not include exploration elements, the core focus is on telling that story. Western RPG's on the other hand, will tell a story as a by-product of involving the player into the world. A good example of this is the questions “*is the story too linear*” and “*is the story engaging*”. If the respondents said the story was too linear, they were also likely to say the story is engaging. Likewise, if they said the story was not too linear then they would respond to the second question by saying it's not too engaging.

There were clear parallels between the type of story told, immersion, difficulty in understanding the story and the amount of side content provided. Final Fantasy XIII with its' linear story provided the player with less of an immersive experience but an interesting story with sufficient plot twists. However, it lacked side content and many felt it was hard to understand what was going on as well as that they did not feel like they were a core component of the story being told. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim on the other hand, was an immersive experience, had a really easy to understand story, a good amount of side content and made the player feel like they were integral to the story. However, this caused the issues of lack of interesting plot twists or the fact that players felt that they did not like the way the story progressed – possibly due to it being a very stereotypical fantasy affair.



In regard to characterization, players felt that the characters in Final Fantasy XIII were easy to identify with but felt let down by the fact that there was little impact from NPCs. Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim players felt the opposite, with them feeling an impact from NPCs but little from the actual player characters. When respondents compared gameplay, Final Fantasy XIII really shined in its' ability to constantly provide a challenge as well as provide an entertaining and interesting battle system. Both which are factors that Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim failed at. Where Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim did succeed however, was the ability for a new player to easily get into the game as well as giving them the feeling of "*i could go anywhere*".

The key difference between Eastern and Western games in the end, comes down to one simple fact. Are you telling a story or are you giving the player a world to tell their own story? Both styles have their own benefits and limitations. That is not to say that you could not productively mix the two style, that it would be impossible. In the end what gamers got from each game came down to what they went in expecting. If they wanted to be told a story, they would have been perfectly happy with Final Fantasy XIII – provided they did not compare it to previous Final Fantasy games. On the same note if they went into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim expecting a story experience they came out with a mediocre story but a lot of side content to do.

### **7.3 Implication of the study and further research**

Initially my plan was to focus on game developers rather than gamers, however this plan was quickly scrapped as the timing and language requirements of getting interviews set up for both Eastern and Western developers would be astronomical. Instead, I decided to focus on Eastern and Western game enthusiasts through an online survey posted on popular gaming forums – either specific to a game or to a general gaming audience. However, since I ran into issues finding sufficient Eastern responses, I decided to focus solely on the Western responses and limit the amount of cultural discussion. In the future, it would be useful to include other forms of data gathering alongside the survey, such as interviews and expanding to other game genres such as online RPGs. Another, and probably the most important thing, I would do in the future is finding a way to reach Eastern gaming audiences.

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## APPENDIX 1 / 4

### Gameplay design questionnaire regarding the role playing games: Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and Final Fantasy XIII

The purpose of this study is to examine the design of role playing games (RPG) as a part of my thesis work at the media technology program of Centria University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Toward that end, I am collecting questionnaire data of gameplay experiences of Final Fantasy XIII and Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. I am collecting this data from gaming communities. My study consists of two sets of questions regarding design of both of the games as well as general gameplay preferences questions. I would like to ask you to respond to questions regarding either one of RPGs or both if you are playing both of the games. The data will be collected anonymously and analyzed statistically. My analyses will aim at examining how gamers from different countries experience various design decisions of the single player RPGs in question. Getting a large number of responses is critical for completing my thesis study so I greatly appreciate your participation. The questionnaire involved four parts: 1) some background questions, 2) general gaming preference questions, 3) a set of questions regarding Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, and 4) a set of questions regarding Final Fantasy XIII.

Otto Seitamaa

Centria University of Applied Sciences, Finland

email: [necrotto@gmail.com](mailto:necrotto@gmail.com)

\* Required

### General Questions

#### I) Background

##### 1.1) Age \*

- Less than 10
- 11-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or over

##### 1.2) Gender \*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other:

##### 1.3) Country of birth \* (list of all countries)

- Afghanistan
- Albania

##### 1.4) Current country of residence \* (list of all countries)

- Afghanistan
- Albania

## II) General gaming profile

### 2) Gaming Intensity

2.1) How many hours you play games on average in a regular day? \*

- Less than one
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 6+ hours

### 3) Gaming orientation

3.1) Playing games is an important hobby to me? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Totally disagree

Totally agree

3.2) I modify games, such as creating my own characters or levels \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Totally disagree

Totally agree

3.2.1) I modify games, such as creating my own characters or levels \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Totally disagree

Totally agree

### 4) Gaming Preferences

4.1) Preferred gaming genres \* *Select 3. Check all that apply.*

- Action/Adventure (Tomb Raider, Legend of Zelda, Batman: Arkham Asylum)
- Fighter/Brawler (Street Fighter, Tekken, Brawlhalla)
- Educational (Kerbal Space Program, Scribblenauts, Tis-100)
- First person shooter (Call of Duty, Far Cry, Battlefield 1)
- Puzzle/Puzzle-Platformer (Limbo, Trine, Peggle)
- Simulation (Flight Simulator, ARMA 3, Gran Turismo)
- Sports/Racing (Need for Speed, Mario Kart, Rocket League)
- Real Time Strategy (Starcraft 2, Warcraft 3, Total War: Warhammer)
- Action Role Playing Game (Diablo, Path of Exile, Grim Dawn)
- Action Real Time Strategy (League of Legends, Defense of the Ancients, Battlerite)
- Hero Shooter (Overwatch, Lawbreakers, Team Fortress)
- Role playing (Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, World of Warcraft, The Witcher 3)
- Survival/Horror (Alien: Isolation, Resident Evil, Amnesia: The Dark Descent)
- Third Person Shooter (Gears of War, Grand Theft Auto, Watch Dogs)

4.2) What are your top three games?

### 5) Choose which games questions to answer

5.1) Do you wish to answer questions related to Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, Final Fantasy XIII or both? \*

- Both
- Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- Final Fantasy XIII

III. Assessing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

6) Experience of playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

6.1) Which computing platform do you use to play Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \**Check all that apply.*

- Playstation 3
- Playstation 4
- Xbox 360
- Xbox One
- PC

6.2) How many hours have you played Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

- 0 Hours
- 1-6 Hours
- 7-12 Hours
- 13-18 Hours
- 19-24 Hours
- 25-30 Hours
- 31-36 Hours
- 37-42 Hours
- 43-48 Hours
- 49-54 Hours
- More than 55 hours but less than 100 Hours
- 100+ Hours

6.3) How skilled of an Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim player do you consider yourself to be? \*

1 2 3 4

Novice (just started)

Master (post-game mastery)

7) Participation in the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim gaming community \*

Never	Couple times a year	Couple times a month	Weekly	Couple times a week	Daily
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7.1) I post questions and answers in the Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim discussion sites:

7.2) I visit Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim discussion sites:

8) Overall assessment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

8.1) How would you rate Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim overall \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

8.2) I enjoyed being able to modify Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

## 9) General ratings of various aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

9.1) Gaming environment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.2) Main storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.3) Characters of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.4) Gameplay experience of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.5) Gameplay and character progression in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.6) Visual appearance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.7) Sound and music of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.8) User interface of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.9) Technical performance of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Worst Best

9.10) I enjoyed the ability to modify Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Worst

Best

**10) Assessing specific aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's storyline**

10.1) The main storyline in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was engaging. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.2) I would of prefer Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to have had a less linear storyline. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.3) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim successfully immersed me in the game world. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.4) I liked the way the story of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim progressed. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.5) I feel the storyline of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim was hard to understand \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.6) The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim story involved sufficient amounts of surprise twists. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.7) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I would have wanted more side content. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.8) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I felt like I was participating in creating the story \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

10.9) How I would have liked to change the story of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim?

**11) Assessing specific aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's characters**

11.1) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim characters are easy to identify with \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.2) When playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, I felt like i was the character \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.3) I liked creating my own Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim character \* Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.4) The way characters were developing in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, inspired my gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.5) Interactions with inhabitants in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim world (non-player characters) supported my gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.6) I would have liked to be able to engage in deeper interaction with non-player characters of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

11.7) How I would like to change game characters of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim?

## 12) Assessing various aspects of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's gameplay dynamics

12.1) The initial learning curve of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim gameplay and it's various functions were easy to learn \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.2) The gameplay loop\*\* of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is entertaining and fun \*

\*what actions you repeat throughout the game - for example, enter room, kill enemies, enter next room, repeat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.3) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim maintains my excitement and interest during the course of gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.4) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim gameplay became repetitive, decreasing my engagement \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.5) I experience the game battle system of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to be engaging \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.6) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim encourages independent exploration of the game world \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.7) I appreciate the computer control of side characters and enemies in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.8) Playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim provides constant challenges \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.9) The game environment of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim is captivating and intriguing \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.10) I consider the player controls of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim to be good \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

12.11) How I would like to change gameplay dynamics of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim?

### 13) General questions about how you felt about Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

13.1) Did you enjoy Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all

extremely

13.2) Did you feel skillful while playing Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all

extremely

13.3) I was interested in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim's story \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all

extremely

13.4) I felt completely absorbed into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 13.5) I felt like i could explore the world of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 13.6) I felt challenged in Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 13.7) Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim frustrated me \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 13.8) I had to put a lot of effort into Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely

## IV. Assessing Final Fantasy XIII

### 14) Experience of playing Final Fantasy XIII

14.1) Which computing platform do you use to play Final Fantasy XIII \**Check all that apply.*

- Playstation 3
- Xbox 360
- PC

14.2) How many hours have you played Final Fantasy XIII

- 0 Hours
- 1-6 Hours
- 7-12 Hours
- 13-18 Hours
- 19-24 Hours
- 25-30 Hours
- 31-36 Hours
- 37-42 Hours
- 43-48 Hours
- 49-54 Hours
- More than 55 hours but less than 100 Hours
- 100+ Hours

14.3) How skilled of an Final Fantasy XIII player do you consider yourself to be? \*

1 2 3 4

Novice (just started)

Master (post-game mastery)

Never	Couple times a year	Couple times a month	Weekly	Couple times a week	Daily
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15.1) I post questions and answers  
in the Final Fantasy XIII discussion  
sites:

15.2) I visit Final Fantasy XIII  
discussion sites:

### 16) Overall assessment of Final Fantasy XIII

16.1) How would you rate Final Fantasy XIII overall \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

16.2) How interested would you be in the option of modifying Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

### 17) General ratings of various aspects of Final Fantasy XIII

17.1) Gaming environment of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

17.2) Main storyline of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

17.3) Characters of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

17.4) Gameplay experience of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

17.5) Gameplay and character progression in Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst

Best

17.6) Visual appearance of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst Best  
17.7) Sound and music of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst Best  
17.8) User interface of Final Fantasy XIII \*.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst Best  
17.9) Technical performance of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worst Best  
17.10) It would have been desirable to have the option to modify Final Fantasy XIII \*

- Yes
- No

### 18) Assessing specific aspects of Final Fantasy XIII's storyline

18.1) The main storyline in Final Fantasy XIII was engaging. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.2) I would of prefer Final Fantasy XIII to have had a less linear storyline. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.3) Final Fantasy XIII successfully immersed me in the game world. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.4) I liked the way the story of Final Fantasy XIII progressed. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.5) I feel the storyline of Final Fantasy XIII was hard to understand \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.6) The Final Fantasy XIII story involved sufficient amounts of surprise twists. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.7) When playing Final Fantasy XIII, i would have wanted more side content. \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.8) When playing Final Fantasy XIII, i felt like i was participating in creating the story \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

18.9) How I would have liked to change the story of Final Fantasy XIII?

**19) Assessing specific aspects of Final Fantasy XIII's characters**

19.1) Final Fantasy XIII characters are easy to identify with \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.2) When playing Final Fantasy XIII, I felt like I identified with one of the characters \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.3) I would have wanted to create my own Final Fantasy XIII character \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.4) The way characters were developing in Final Fantasy XIII, inspired my gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.5) I appreciate the way player characters of Final Fantasy XIII interacted with one another \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.6) Interaction with inhabitants in Final Fantasy XIII world (non-player characters) supported my gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.7) I would have liked to be able to engage in deeper interaction with non-player characters of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

19.8) How I would like to change game characters of Final Fantasy XIII?

**20) Assessing various aspects of Final Fantasy XIII's gameplay dynamics**

20.1) The initial learning curve of Final Fantasy XIII gameplay and it's various functions was easy to learn \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.2) The gameplay loop\* of Final Fantasy XIII is entertaining and fun \*

\*what actions you repeat throughout the game - for example, enter room, kill enemies, enter next room, repeat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.3) Final Fantasy XIII maintains my excitement and interest during the course of gameplay \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.4) Final Fantasy XIII gameplay became repetitive decreasing my engagement \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.5) I experience the game battle system of Final Fantasy XIII to be engaging \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.6) Final Fantasy XIII encourages independent exploration of the game world \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.7) I appreciate the computer control of side characters and enemies \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.8) Playing Final Fantasy XIII provides constant challenges \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.9) The game environment of Final Fantasy XIII is captivating and intriguing \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.10) I consider the player controls of Final Fantasy XIII to be good \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fully disagree

Fully agree

20.11) How I would like to change gameplay dynamics of Final Fantasy XIII?

**21) General questions about how you felt about Final Fantasy XIII**

21.1) Did you enjoy Final Fantasy XIII? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Not at all extremely  
 21.2) Did you feel skillful while playing Final Fantasy XIII? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 22.3) I was interested in Final Fantasy XIII's story? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 23.4) I felt completely absorbed into Final Fantasy XIII? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 24.5) I felt like i could explore the world of Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 25.6) I felt challenged in Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 26.7) Final Fantasy XIII frustrated me \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely  
 27.8) I had to put a lot of effort into Final Fantasy XIII \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all extremely

## APPENDIX 2 / 4

ロールプレイングゲーム(「エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリム」及び「ファイナルファンタジー XIII」)のゲームプレイデザインに関するアンケート

本研究は、ロールプレイングゲーム（RPG）のデザインについて調査することを目的としています。この調査は、セントリア先端科学大学（フィンランド）のメディアテクノロジープログラムにおける私の学士論文の一部となります。このアンケートはゲームコミュニティを通して行い、一般的なゲームプレイに関する質問と「エルダー・スクロールズ V:スカイリム」及び「ファイナルファンタジー XIII」に関する質問を行います。2種類のRPGについて、両方をプレイしたことがある場合は両方のRPGに関する質問を、片方のみプレイしたことがある方はプレイしたことがあるRPGに関する質問に回答してください。データは匿名で集められ、統計的な分析に用いられます。本研究における分析は、異なる国々のゲームプレイヤーが、シングルプレイヤーRPGの様々なデザイン決定をどのように経験するかについて調査することを目的としています。本研究の遂行のために、より多くの方にアンケートを答えていただく必要がありますので、ご協力お願い致します。

本アンケートは、以下の4つのパートに分かれています。

1)バックグラウンドに関する質問、2)一般的なゲームの好みに関する質問、3)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムに関する質問、4)ファイナルファンタジー XIII に関する質問

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\* Required

Email address \*

## 一般的な質問

### I) バックグラウンド

#### 1.1) 年齢 \*

- 10歳以下
- 11-19歳
- 20-29歳
- 30-39歳
- 40-49歳
- 50-59歳
- 60歳以上

#### 1.2) 性別 \*

- 男性
- 女性
- 明言したくない
- Other:

#### 1.3) 出生国 \*(all countries listed)

- アフガニスタン
- アルバニア
- アルジェリア

#### 1.4) 現在の居住国 \*(all countries listed)

- アフガニスタン
- アルバニア

### II) 一般的なゲームプレイのプロフィール

#### 2) ゲームプレイの頻度

##### 2.1) 普段、あなたは1日平均何時間ゲームをしていますか? \*

- 1時間未満
- 1-2時間
- 3-4時間
- 5-6時間
- 6時間以上

#### 3) ゲームに対する姿勢

3.1) ゲームをすることは、私にとって重要な趣味である。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

3.2) 私は、ゲームを修正する（自分のキャラクターあるいはレベルの作成等）。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

3.3) 私は、ゲームに関連したコミュニティイベントの運営に積極的に関与している。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

#### 4) ゲームの好み

4.1) 好みのゲームジャンル \*

最も楽しんでいるゲームジャンルを3つ選択して下さい。

- アクション / アドベンチャー（トゥームレイダー、ゼルダの伝説、バットマン：アーカム・アサイラム）
- ファイター / 格闘（ストリートファイター、鉄拳、Brawlhalla）
- 教育（Kerbal Space Program、ヒラメキパズル マックスウェルの不思議なノート、TIS-100）
- ファースト・パーソンシューティングゲーム（コール オブ デューティー、ファークライ、バトルフィールド1）
- パズル / パズルプラットフォーム（LIMBO、Trine、ペグル）
- シミュレーション（Flight Simulator、ARMA 3、グランツーリスモ）
- スポーツ / レース（Need for Speed、マリオカート、ロケットリーグ）
- リアルタイムストラテジー（スタークラフト2、Warcraft 3、Total War: Warhammer）
- アクションロールプレイングゲーム（ディアブロ、Path of Exile、Grim Dawn）
- アクションリアルタイムストラテジー（リーグ・オブ・レジェンド、Defense of the Ancients、Battlerite）
- ヒーローシューター（オーバーウォッチ、Lawbreakers、Team Fortress）
- ロールプレイング（エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリム、World of Warcraft、ウィッチャー3）
- サバイバルホラー（エイリアン アイソレーション、バイオハザード、Amnesia: The Dark Descent）
  - サードパーソン・シューティングゲーム（Gears of War、グランド・セフト・オート、ウォッチドッグス）

4.2) あなたが最も好きなゲームはなんですか? 3つお答えください。

#### 5) どのゲームに関する質問事項に回答するかを選択

5.1) 以下の選択肢のうちどのゲームに回答しますか? \*

- 両方
- エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリム Skip to question 115.
- ファイナルファンタジー XIII Skip to question 63.

### III. エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの評価

## 6)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのプレイ経験

6.1)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをプレイするために使用しているコンピューティングプラットフォームはどれですか? \*

- Playstation 3
- Playstation 4
- Xbox 360
- Xbox One
- PC

6.2) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをこれまで何時間プレイしましたか? \*

- 0 時間
- 1-6 時間
- 7-12 時間
- 13-18 時間
- 19-24 時間
- 25-30 時間
- 31-36 時間
- 37-42 時間
- 43-48 時間
- 49-54 時間
- 55 時間以上、100 時間未満
- 100 時間以上

6.3)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムプレイヤーとして、あなた自身どのくらいのスキルだと思えますか? \*

1 2 3 4

初心者（始めたばかり）

名人（ゲームを通して熟達した）

エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイの経験

一度も 年に 月に 毎 週に 毎  
ない 数回 数回 週 数回 日

7.1) 私は、質問や回答をエルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのディスカッションサイトに投稿する:

7.2) 私は、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのディスカッションサイトを訪問する:

## 8) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの総合的な評価

8.1)あなたは、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムを総合的にどのように評価しますか? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

8.2)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムを修正することが可能であることを楽しんだ。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

9)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの様々な側面の総合的な評価

9.1)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲーム環境 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.2)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのメインストーリー \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.3)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのキャラクター \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.4)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイ経験は? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.5)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムにおけるゲームプレイ及びキャラクターの進行 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.6)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの外観 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.7)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの音声及び音楽 \*Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.8)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのユーザーインターフェース \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.9)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのテクニカルパフォーマンス \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

9.10))私は、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムを修正する機能を楽しんだ。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

## 10)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーの特定の側面に関する評価

10.1)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムにおけるメインストーリーは、魅力的だった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.2)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムが、もっと直線的ではないストーリー展開だったら好きだったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.3) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムは、私をゲームの世界観に没頭させた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.4)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーの進み方が好きだ。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.5)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーを理解するのが難しかったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.6)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーは、十分な量の意外性のあるひねりが含まれていた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.7)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをプレイするとき、もっとサイドコンテンツが充実しているとよかったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.8)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをプレイしているとき、自分がストーリー作成に参加しているように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

10.9)どのように、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーを変えられたらよかったと思いますか？

### 11)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのキャラクターの特定の側面に関する評価

11.1) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのキャラクターは、簡単に識別できる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.2)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをプレイしているときに、私は自分がそのキャラクターであるように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.3)自分自身でエルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのキャラクターを創ることが好きだった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.4)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムにおけるキャラクターの発展の仕方は、私のゲームプレイ頻度を増加させた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.5)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの世界における居住者（プレイヤーではないキャラクター）との交流は、私のゲームプレイをサポートした。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.6)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのプレイヤーではないキャラクターとの親密な交流ができたらしいと思った。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

11.7)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームキャラクターをどのように変えたいですか？

### 12)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイダイナミクスの様々な側面の評価

12.1)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイは学習コストが低く、様々な機能は、学ぶことが簡単だった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.2)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイループ\*\* は、面白く、そして楽しい。

\* (\*\*ゲーム中に繰り返すアクション - 例えば、部屋へ入る、敵を殺す、次の部屋へ入る等)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.3) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムは、ゲームプレイの最中、私の興奮及び興味を保ち続ける。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.4) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイは、反復的になり、ゲームプレイを減少させる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.5)私は、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームバトルシステムを魅力的だと感じる \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.6) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムは、ゲームの世界の自主的な探検を奨励している。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.7)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムにおけるサイドキャラクターや敵のコンピューターコントロールを高く評価する。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.8)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのプレイは、絶え間ない試練をもたらす。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.9)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲーム環境は、魅惑的で非常に興味をそそる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意



12.10)私は、エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのプレイヤーコントロールが良いと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

12.11)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのゲームプレイダイナミクスを、どのように変えたいですか？

13)あなたがどのようにエルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムについて感じたかに関する一般的な質問

13.1) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムを楽しみましたか？ \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.2) エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムをプレイしている間、あなたは自分が熟練していると感じましたか？ \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.3)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムのストーリーはおもしろかった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.4)完全にエルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの世界に取り込まれたように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.5)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムの世界を探検できるように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.6)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムに試練を与られているように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.7)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムは、私を苛立たせた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

13.8)エルダー・スクロールズ V: スカイリムはかなりの努力を必要とした。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

## IV. ファイナルファンタジー XIII の評価

### 14) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のプレイ経験

14.1) ファイナルファンタジー XIII をプレイするために使用しているコンピューティングプラットフォームはどれですか？ \*

- Playstation 3
- Xbox 360
- PC

14.2) これまで何時間、あなたはエルダー・ファイナルファンタジー XIII をプレイしましたか？ \*

- 0 時間
- 1-6 時間
- 7-12 時間
- 13-18 時間
- 19-24 時間
- 25-30 時間
- 31-36 時間
- 37-42 時間
- 43-48 時間
- 49-54 時間
- 55 時間以上、100 時間未満
- 100 時間以上

14.3) ファイナルファンタジー XIII プレイヤーとして、あなた自身どのくらいのスキルだと思いますか？ \*

1 2 3 4

初心者（始めたばかり）

名人（ゲームを通して熟達した）

ファイナルファンタジー XIII ゲームシステムへの理解

一度も 年に 月に 毎 週に 毎  
ない 数回 数回 週 数回 日

15.1) 私は、質問や回答をファイナルファンタジー XIII のディスカッションサイトに投稿する:

ファイナルファンタジー XIII のディスカッションサイトを訪問する:

### 16) 全般的なファイナルファンタジー XIII の評価

16.1) あなたは、全般的にファイナルファンタジー XIII をどのように評価しますか？ \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

16.2) ファイナルファンタジー XIII を修正できるとしたら、それにどのくらい興味がありますか? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

17) ファイナルファンタジー XIII の様々な側面の全般的な評価

17.1) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のゲーム環境 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.2) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のメインストーリー \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.3) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のキャラクター \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.4) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のゲームプレイ経験は? \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.5) ファイナルファンタジー XIII におけるゲームプレイ及びキャラクターの進行 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.6) ファイナルファンタジー XIII の外観 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.7) ファイナルファンタジー XIII の音声及び音楽 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.8) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のユーザーインターフェース \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.9) ファイナルファンタジー XIII のテクニカルパフォーマンス \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

非常に悪い

非常に良い

17.10) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIを修正できればよかった。 \*

- はい
- いいえ

**18) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーの特定の側面に関する評価**

18.1) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIにおけるメインストーリーは、魅力的だった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.2) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIが、もっと直線的ではないストーリー展開だったら好きだったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.3) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIは、私をゲームの世界観に没頭させた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.4) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーの進み方が好きだ。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.5) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーを理解するのが難しかったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.6) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーは、十分な量の意外性のあるひねりが含まれていた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.7) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIをプレイするとき、もっとサイドコンテンツが充実しているとよかったと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.8) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIをプレイしているとき、自分がストーリー作成に参加しているように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

18.9) どのように、ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーを変えられたらよかったですか？

## 19) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのキャラクターの特定の側面に関する評価

19.1) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのキャラクターは、簡単に識別できる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.2) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIをプレイしているときに、私は自分がそのキャラクターであるように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.3) 自分自身で作成したファイナルファンタジーXIIIのキャラクターを持てたらいいと思う。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.4) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIにおけるキャラクターの発展の仕方は、私のゲームプレイ頻度を増加させた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.5) 私は、ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのプレイヤーキャラクター同士の交流の仕方を高く評価している。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.6) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIの世界における居住者（プレイヤーではないキャラクター）との交流は、私のゲームプレイをサポートしてくれた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.7) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのプレイヤーではないキャラクターとの親密な交流ができたらいいと思った。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

19.8) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームキャラクターをどのように変えたいですか？

## 20) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームプレイダイナミクスの様々な側面の評価

20.1) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームプレイは学習コストが低く、様々な機能は、学ぶことが簡単だった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.2) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームプレイループ\*\*は、面白く、そして楽しい \*

(\*\*ゲーム中に繰り返すアクション - 例えば、部屋へ入る、敵を殺す、次の部屋へ入る等)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.3) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIは、ゲームプレイの最中、私の興奮及び興味を保ち続ける。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.4) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームプレイは、反復的になり、ゲームプレイを減少させる。  
\*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.5) 私は、ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームバトルシステムを魅力的だと感じる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.6) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIは、ゲームの世界の自主的な探検を奨励している。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.7) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIにおけるサイドキャラクターや敵のコンピューターコントロールを高く評価する。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.8) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのプレイは、絶え間ない試練をもたらす。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.9) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲーム環境は、魅惑的で非常に興味をそそる。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.10) 私は、ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのプレイヤーコントロールが良いと考える。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

全く同意しない

完全に同意

20.11) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのゲームプレイダイナミクスを、どのように変えたいですか？

**21) あなたがどのようにファイナルファンタジーXIIIについて感じたかに関する一般的な質問**

21.1) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIを楽しみましたか？ \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

21.2) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIをプレイしている間、あなたは自分が熟練していると感じましたか？ \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

22.3) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIのストーリーはおもしろかった。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

23.4) 完全にファイナルファンタジーXIIIの世界に取り込まれたように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

24.5) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIの世界を探索できるように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

25.6) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIに試練を与えられているように感じた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく

とても

26.7) ファイナルファンタジーXIIIは、私を苛立たせた。 \*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

まったく                          とても

27.8) ファイナルファンタジー XIII にかなりの努力を必要とした。 \*

まったく    とても

## APPENDIX 3 / 4

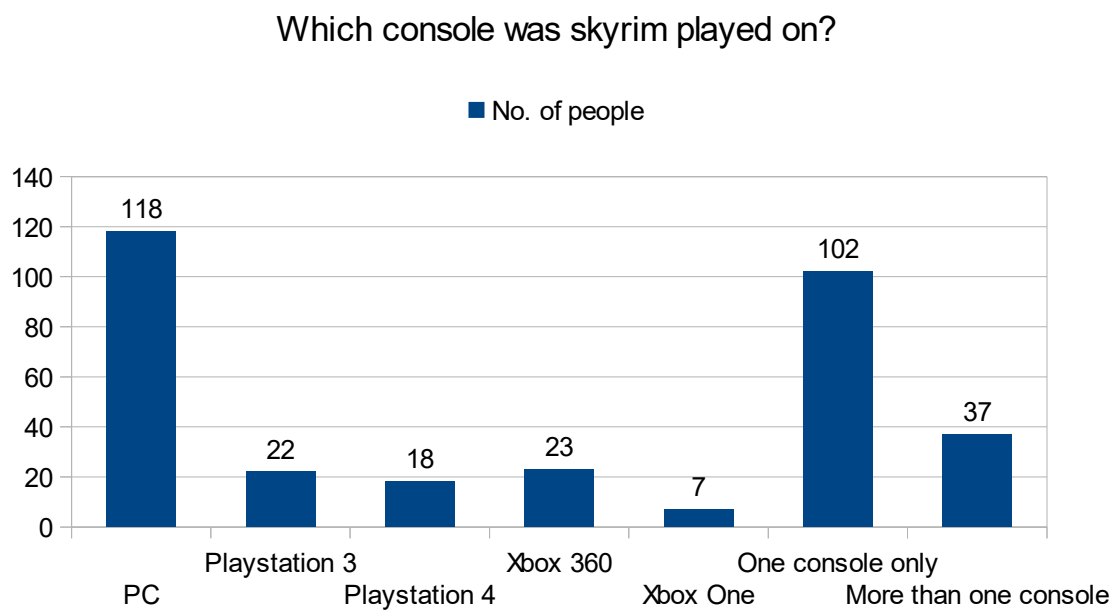


FIGURE 13. Which console and how many of them Skyrim was owned on (n=139 participants who played Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim).



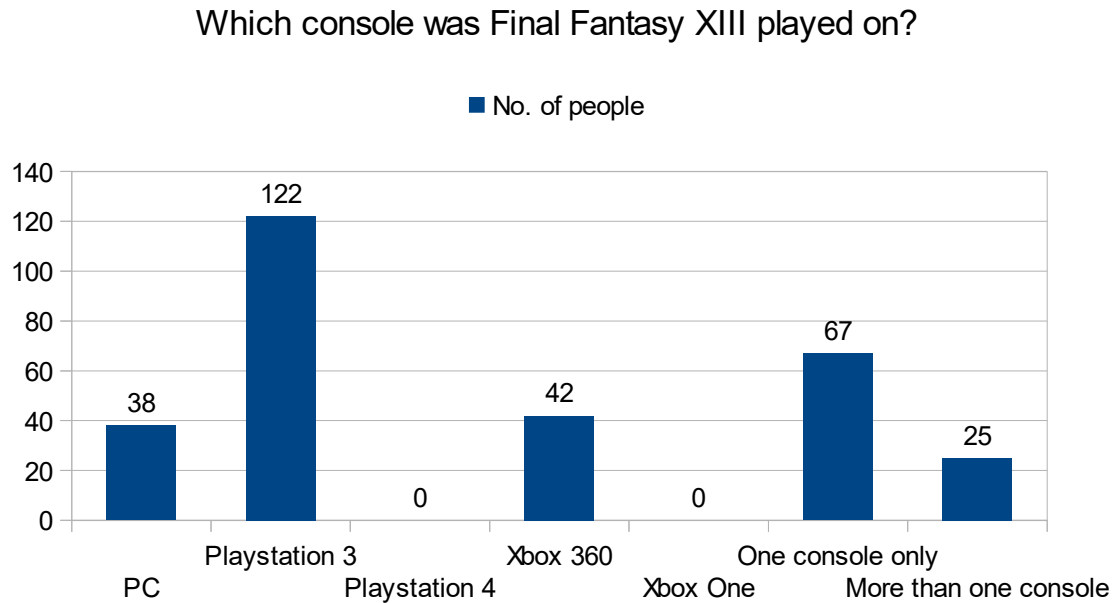


FIGURE 14. Which console and how many of them Final Fantasy XIII was owned on (n=92 participants who played Final Fantasy XIII).

#### APPENDIX 4 / 4

TABLE 6. How experience of playing Elder Scrolls affected player's rating of the game?

Sum variable	Played less than or equal to 100 hours		Played more than 100 hours		Independent sample t-test		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p (significance)</i>
General rating of Elder Scrolls	6,0	1,7	7,3	1,4	-4,85	138	0.000
Storyline of Elder Scrolls	4,7	2,0	6,0	1,9	-3,72	138	0.000
Gaming characters of Elder Scroll	4,8	2,2	6,3	2,0	-3,93	138	0.000
Dynamic gameplay of Elder Scrolls	5,5	2,2	6,9	1,5	-4,37	138	0.000
Game flow of Elder Scroll	5,7	2,3	7,5	1,7	-5,16	138	0.000

TABLE 8. How experience of playing Final Fantasy affected player's rating of the game?

	Played less than or equal	Played more than 100 hours	Independent sample t-test
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	<b>to 100 hours</b>						
<b>Sum variable</b>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p (significance)</i>
General rating of Final Fantasy	7,2	1,8	8,8	0,8	-4,48	90	0.000
Storyline of Final Fantasy	5,6	2,2	7,5	1,9	-3,97	90	0.000
Gaming characters of Final Fantasy	5,8	2,5	7,9	2,3	-3,60	90	0.001
Dynamic gameplay of Final Fantasy	5,7	2,0	8,2	1,3	-5,94	90	0.000
Game flow of Final Fantasy	5,7	2,3	8,4	1,2	-5,48	90	0.000

TABLE 9. Comparing general gaming characteristics of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77)

	<b>Elder Scroll V</b>		<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>		<b>Paired sample t-test</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p (significance)</i>
Gaming environment	7,7	2,0	7,5	2,3	-	-	ns.
Main storyline	5,1	2,1	6,8	2,6	-4,86	76	0.000
Characters	5,4	2,4	6,7	2,7	-3,54	76	0.001
Gameplay experience	7,3	2,6	7,0	2,4	-	-	ns
Character progression	6,9	2,4	6,9	2,6	-	-	ns
Visual appearance	7,1	2,0	9,0	1,5	-7,18	76	0.000
Sound and music	8,0	2,0	9,0	1,5	-3,75	76	0.000
User interface	6,0	2,4	7,4	2,0	-4,23	76	0.000
Technical performance	6,5	2,5	7,8	2,1	-4,69	76	0.000

TABLE 10. Comparing Storyline of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77 participants who responded to both of the games)

	<b>Elder Scroll V</b>		<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>		<b>Paired sample t-test</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p (significance)</i>
The storyline was engaging	5,2	2,7	7,0	2,7	-4,59	76	0.000
I would have preferred a less linear storyline	4,7	3,0	5,7	3,4	-2,30	76	0.024
I was successful immersed in the game world	7,3	2,8	6,7	2,9	-	-	ns
I like the way the story progressed	5,6	2,5	6,3	2,8	-	-	ns
I felt that the storyline was hard to understand	2,2	1,6	4,9	2,6	-8,48	76	0.000
The story involves sufficient number of surprise twists	4,3	2,5	6,4	2,5	-5,94	76	0.000
I would have wanted more side content	4,4	2,9	7,6	2,7	-7,42	76	0.000

I felt like I was participating in creating the story	5,1	2,9	3,7	2,9	3,04	76	0.003
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TABLE 11. Comparing Game Characters of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77)

	<b>Elder Scroll V:</b>		<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>		<b>Paired sample t-test</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
The characters were easy to identify with	5,3	2,6	6,4	2,8	-2,79	76	0.007
When playing, I felt like I was the character	6,3	3,0	6,3	3,4	-	-	ns
I would have wanted to create my own character	7,7	2,4	3,5	3,3	9,86	76	0.000
The way characters developed, inspired my gameplay	5,3	2,7	5,4	3,2	-	-	ns
Interactions with inhabitants supported my gameplay	6,1	2,7	3,9	2,7	5,53	76	0.000
I would have liked to be able to engage in deeper interactions with Non-Player Characters	7,7	2,8	7,4	2,9	-	-	ns

TABLE 12. Comparing Gameplay dynamics of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77)

	<b>Elder Scroll V</b>		<b>Final Fantasy XIII</b>		<b>Paired sample t-test</b>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
The initial learning curve was adequate	8,3	2,3	6,9	2,3	4,55	76	0.000
The gameplay loop was entertaining and fun	6,5	2,9	6,5	2,6	-	-	ns
My excitement and interest was maintained during the course of gameplay	6,7	2,9	6,4	2,8	-	-	ns
Gameplay became repetitive, decreasing my engagement	5,8	2,8	6,0	2,9	-	-	ns
I experienced the game battle system to be engaging	5,7	2,8	6,8	3,0	-2,40	76	0.019

The game encourages independent exploration of the game world	8,4	2,4	3,4	2,3	12,89	76	0.000
I appreciate computer control of side characters and enemies	5,4	2,4	5,6	2,9	-	-	ns
Game provides constrain challenges	4,8	2,5	6,5	2,9	-4,17	76	0.000
The game environment is captivating and intriguing	7,5	2,5	7,6	2,5	-	-	ns
I consider player controls to be good	7,0	2,0	7,5	2,0	-	-	ns

TABLE 13. Comparing gaming experience of Elder Scroll and Final Fantasy (n=77)

	Elder Scroll V		Final Fantasy XIII		Paired sample t-test		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Did you enjoy the game	7,5	2,8	7,1	2,7	-	-	ns
Did you feel skillful while playing	6,4	2,7	6,2	2,9	-	-	ns
I was interested in the story	5,6	2,8	7,2	2,7	-3,92	76	0.000
I felt completely absorbed into game world	6,6	2,9	6,4	2,9	-	-	ns
I felt like I could explore the game world	8,2	2,6	4,4	2,8	8,50	76	0.000
I felt challenged by the game	5,3	2,7	6,6	2,8	-3.16	76	0.002
The game frustrated me	4,4	2,6	5,6	2,6	-3,03	76	0.003
I had to put a lot of effort into the game	4,8	2,6	5,9	2,6	-2,94	76	0.004