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MARKET ANALYSIS FOR A NEW SERVICE

How guided gaming can be utilized as a market service for
unemployed young Finnish people

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International Business	Tiivistelmä
Tekijä	Eeva Tukia	Vuosi 2024

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Viime vuosina nuorisotyöttömyys on vähentynyt, mutta siitä huolimatta monia huolestuttavia trendejä nousee esiin nuorten hyvinvoinnin suhteen. Esimerkiksi yksinäisyys ja syrjäytyneisyys ovat nousseet esiin tutkimuksissa hyvinvointiin vaikuttavina asioina. Digitaalinen pelaaminen on yksi maailman nopeimmin kasvavista aloista, ja ala on noussut valtavan tuottavaksi alaksi. Kuitenkin digitaaliseen pelaamiseen liittyviä tutkimuksia on melko vähän, ja suurinta osaa niistä on taloudellisesti tuettu pelialalta itseltään. Ohjattua pelaamista ja sen käyttämistä aktivointi työkaluna ei ole juurikaan tutkittu Suomessa, oletettavasti koska ohjattu pelaaminen konseptina on varsin tuore.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli tutkia markkina-aluetta nuorten työttömien keskuudessa Suomessa, ja mitä mahdollisuuksia se tarjoaa toimeksiantajayritykselle. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tuottaa toimeksi antavalle yritykselle toimintamalli tulosten perusteella. Toimeksiantavana yrityksenä toimi Incoach Esports Oy.

Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen kehys sisälsi teoriaa työttömyydestä, syrjäytymisestä, ohjatusta pelaamisesta sekä markkinapalvelun tuottamisesta. Lisäksi tutkittiin Euroopan Unionin ohjeistuksia sosiaalisen aspektin kannalta. Tätä varten opinnäytetyön tekijä suoritti kyselyn markkina-alueella, jolla selvitettiin kiinnostusta ja ymmärrystä ohjatun pelaamisen konseptiin. Lisäksi tekijä haastatteli lyhyesti pelialalla toimivia ihmisiä, parantaakseen ymmärrystään heidän näkökulmistaan.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella markkinoilta löytyy vahvasti kiinnostusta ohjatun pelaamisen konseptiin, erityisesti aktivointi työkaluna. Mutta kuitenkin, tutkimus myös paljasti, että ohjatun pelaamisen konsepti on suhteellisen tuntematon käsite Suomessa. Tämän vuoksi, olisi tärkeää jatkaa tutkimista aihealueen ympärillä, ja mitä mahdollisuuksia ohjattu pelaaminen voi tarjota markkinoille.

Avainsanat   työttömyys, syrjäytyminen, pelaaminen, ohjattu pelaaminen, digipelaaminen
Sivut   30 sivua ja liitteitä 4 sivua

The number of young people out of the workforce has decreased in the recent years, however there are still many worrying trends such as loneliness and exclusion rising. Digital gaming is one of the fastest growing industries with huge market value, however the studies done about the gaming industry are mainly funded by the gaming industry itself. Guided gaming has not been studied enough as an activation tool, as the trend of guided gaming is fairly new.

The objective of this thesis was to examine the market for possibilities of the commissioning company, while researching how guided gaming can be beneficial for the unemployed young people of Finland. The aim was to research the market and come up with a business model for the commissioning company. The commissioning company for the thesis was Incoach Esports Oy.

The theoretical framework consists of theories about unemployment, guided gaming, and creation of market service. A survey was conducted to find out the interest and knowledge of the target segment about guided gaming. Additionally, short interviews were conducted of people working in the gaming industry, to understand the perspectives of the industry.

The research showed that the market is interested in the guided gaming concept, especially as an activation tool. However, the research also revealed that the concept itself is not commonly known in Finland. Therefore, it is crucial to continue the studies surrounding the guided gaming opportunities.

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1 Introduction

According to a study done in Finland, the number of young people and young adults outside of the workforce has decreased in recent years, still many worrying trends such as loneliness, worry about the future and generational unemployment emerge. (Marttunen & Haravuori, 2015, p. 83). The past couple of years with COVID-19 has been enhancing the feelings of burden, isolation, and uncertainty. At the same time, it is estimated that more than half of Finns actively plays various digital games (Tilastokeskus, 2019), as the trend has been growing and interest in gaming is higher than ever before. Especially amongst the young people between 20-29-year-old, time spent gaming and related content such as streaming has been increasing, and young adults are the most active gaming group. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2023)

Within the people who interact with digital games and content, there are unavoidably young people who are outside of the workforce and perceive life management problems, loneliness and other factors that affect their daily life, ability to function and wellness. These difficulties rise when young people are searching for employment opportunities, as often the attitude about digital gaming is disadvantaging against gaming, rather than seeing the possibilities of talented individuals within the gaming scene. Digital gaming is a rarely used tool in the service system, even when, through gaming there are opportunities to support inclusion and well-being through motivating activities, for example through rehabilitation into working life in the electronic sports ecosystem. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2023)

1.1 Background

The research was offered to the author by the commissioning company Incoach Esport Oy (further referred as Incoach). Incoach is the leading company offering gaming coaching and teaching in Finland, whose vision is to enable esports coaching for everybody interested in gaming. Their mission is to improve the support, teaching, and coaching opportunities on esports, while focusing on creating sustainable and developing gaming environment for everyday life. In addition to game coaching, the activities pay attention to the physical and mental well-being of the gamers, and their services are trusted already by 60 Finnish cities and municipalities. (Incoach, n.d.-a). Incoach and the author of this thesis researched new opportunities for the company to expand their business and agreed jointly on the study and the end results done on this thesis.

The purpose of this research is to study the challenges and opportunities within young Finnish people between 20-29 years of age who are out of societal norms of studies, military service or workforce. The research examines the possibility of using guided gaming as a tool to teach these young people on their way back to work life, utilizing their skills in the digital scene. The research examines the strengths and weaknesses of guided gaming, unemployment among young people and their combined opportunities.

The importance of the study combines with the needs of the commissioning company and the importance of the activation methods for unemployed people. Unemployment and especially long-term unemployed, pressures social protection systems of countries leading the integration of unemployed people back to the labor market being a crucial task of any government. (The Social Protection Committee, n.d., p.2). Within this research, the goal for the author is to provide Incoach with information and a working concept for new business opportunities of how guided gaming and integration to work life in Finland can be united.

1.2   Research question

This research utilizes quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the research question and subordinal research question. The author uses the data collected from a questionnaire and interviews from the target group and chosen interviewees, with a deep focus on desk study and document analysis.

This research was provided to the author by the company Incoach Esport Oy, and within this research the author researched unemployment issues within the ages of 20-29 in Finland, while answering the following research question:

- How can guided gaming be utilized as a market service for the unemployed?

With the subordinal research question:

- How can guided gaming benefit employment?

2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this thesis researches the topics of the European Union Pillar of Social Rights, guided gaming and youth unemployment and activities around it across the European Union to gather information. Additionally, the theoretical framework includes market scanning and information about new services for the market to support building service model for the commissioning company.

2.1 The European Pillar of Social Rights

The European Pillar of Social Rights (further referred as EPSR), is an ambitious aspiration initiated by European Commission and implemented by all European Union countries (further referred as EU) in November 2017. The aim of the EPSR is to address the challenges and changes in the labor market and in society by reinforcing social dimensions, balancing economic policies through social consideration and uniting European citizens. The EPSR is meant to be used as a tool, to encourage the member states for social rights cooperation and does not provide more jurisdiction or influence for the EU, to encourage the member states into the action, the European Commission prepared an Action Plan for EPSR, to provide concrete functions to implement for the member states. The Action Plan was approved, and the member states committed to action in 2021 during the Social Summit in Porto. The Action Plan is divided into three chapters, and includes twenty principles focusing on employment, poverty reduction and skill development. (European Platform for Rehabilitation, n.d.)

The employment actions aim to the goal of reaching 78% of employment on people between 20-64 years old by 2030 (European Commission, n.d.-a). The four employment principles include the rights for education, training, and continuous learning, to achieve necessary skills that provide the opportunities to participate in the society and work force. The principles also cover the equality portion, to enhance the equal treatment and possibilities regardless of the sex, gender, race, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation in terms of employment, education and availability of goods and services. Lastly, the principles cover the active support for employment, such as customed assistance for job hunting, re-qualification, and other employment prospects. (European Commission, n.d.-b)

2.2   Youth unemployment and exclusion

In the European Union people are divided by three categories when it comes to employment; employed, unemployed and outside of the labor force. From these groups, the active population are employed and unemployed people, as people outside of the labor force are for example retirees, children and disabled. Unemployed persons definition in EU is a person who is currently unemployed but actively looking for a job. Employment is a vital factor for every country when looking at the country's economic perspective, and within the last twenty years EU has faced two global crises, the bank crisis in 2008 and COVID-19, which both caused increased unemployment. When considering youth unemployment, the standard indicator for them is the age group between 15-29 years. The statistics in EU with youth unemployment is often higher than within older peer groups (O'Neill, 2023-a) as commonly this younger age group is recently graduated from school, and it might be difficult to obtain a job. (Eurostat, 2023)

Exclusion from society generally refers to being left out from education or work life, and the effects of other related difficulties such as substance abuse and criminal activity. Exclusion and criminal activities or being a victim of criminality are often associated together, and committing crimes often accelerates the development of exclusion. A person's experiences and conditions of childhood and youth are significant factors in the exclusion process, and boys have a higher risk of being marginalized than girls do. Exclusion causes considerable economic loss to the society and human suffering, and the importance to prevent exclusion is recognized by authorities and society in whole. (National Council for crime prevention, n.d.)

In this part of theoretical framework, the author will research and compare two similar Nordic countries in European Union: Finland and Denmark, to gain deeper understanding of the youth unemployment and activities within these countries. Additionally, the perspectives on youth unemployment from other European Union countries are researched to support the theoretical framework.

2.2.1   Youth unemployment in Finland

The well-being of young people in Finland has increased in the 21st century, and most of the Finnish youngsters enters the adulthood without difficulties when looking into health, education, and employment. The experience of being involved in youngsters' immediate communities and society has remarkable effect on the well-being of young people. Being part of society and communities includes the opportunities to participate in work life, social

activities, leisure time and the possibility to influence into the society. It also involves the chance to access basic services such as education and healthcare. Between the change from youth to adulthood and continuously after that, it is important for young people to be able to participate in peer groups, being heard and having the opportunities to influence their own course of life. In Finland, all young people have the right for the basic services, and they expect information and support from those services in their path of life. However, not all the young people have access to sufficient peer groups and social networks. They might feel that the support from the basic services is not useful or supporting enough, or even feel that they are being ignored. Young people may be defined as marginalized, and the support turns into problem solving which might cause clash on young person's own wishes. Significant risk factors for the exclusion of young person are long-term unemployment, low education, substance abuse and mental health problems. However, a single difficulty does not destabilize the individual's life or control; however, the risk of exclusion increases when disadvantages accumulate. The process of exclusion can be understood as a process, where the difficult factors that effect in young person's life are chained together and piled up. It is connected to their family background, activities and opportunities and development environment. Marginalization can be prevented by activities that promote individuals and family's wellbeing, by directing support to the development environment, education, and participation in workforce. (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, 2023)

It is difficult to estimate the actual number of youth at-risk for being marginalized and actual marginalized persons, but the statistics can be utilized to describe the various conditions of risks, such as non-participation in society. In the year 2022 over 9 percent of young Finns between the ages of 15-29 were not in the education system, work, or military service. Out of them, over 12 percent were aged between 25-29. The key factors in Finland to precent the exclusion of young people include youth social guarantee (youth guarantee), workshop activities and multidisciplinary guidance activities. The youth guarantee offers employment counselling to young people under the age of 25 and recently graduated people under the age of 30 and it is tailored to individual's needs, with the goal to guide the young person to education or into working life. (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, 2023)

The workshop activities are intended for young people included in the youth guarantee, who have finished primary school. The goal is to guarantee either a training place, educational route, apprenticeship, rehabilitation, or other way back to the society for the young people. The workshops support young people under the age of 29 in topics related to education, work life and life management, and they are based on coaching and individuals' participation according to their condition. These workshops are about communal learning environments

and functionality, and are organized by municipalities, associations, and foundations. (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d.)

2.2.2 Youth unemployment in Denmark

In the year 2022, the Danish unemployment rate of young people was just under 9% of the population. The banking crisis in 2008 rose the unemployment level of 15–24-year-old youth to over 16%, however the last couple of years the number has been decreasing steadily. (O'Neill, 2023-b)

The political atmosphere in Denmark supports the policies to promote the wellbeing of young Danish people. Their efforts focus on education and mental health, in their attempt to provide equality and opportunities for all the youth in Denmark. The Consolidation act on Municipal Provision compel the municipalities to guide and coordinate education and employment support for the people under 25 years. Much like in Finland, the COVID-19 effected young people in Denmark causing loneliness, isolation and exclusion from communities and the society. Denmark has similar activation objectives as Finland for youth unemployment, and Danish politicians have committed to Youth Guarantee that assures people under the age of 30 to employment, education and training opportunities and support. This system is constructed on robust partnership approach, allowing the responsible parties to offer mixture of activation operations for the youth, from healthcare to social assistance, education, and employment. The idea of the guarantee is to assure early intervention and support for unemployed youth, and to guide the youth for proper road to society and community. (European Commission, 2021, p. 8, 15, 50, 66)

2.2.3 Perspectives on youth unemployment from other European countries

Finland and Denmark share similar Nordic societies, and the actions against youth unemployment follow similar path. Prevention and active support and guiding are seen as important objectives to fight against youth exclusion, and political atmosphere on both countries recognizes the critical need to intervene on the difficulties early on young person's life. Loneliness and mental health problems are seen as some of the reasons for exclusion, and mentoring young people in social and educational routes are essentials for successful exclusion prevention.

The average youth unemployment rate in European Union as of August 2023 was at 14%. While Finland is above the average youth unemployment level of European Union with

16,1%, Denmark ranks below the average of 14% youth unemployment rate with 11,6%. Many Southern European countries rank relatively high compared to other EU countries, with Spain ranking number one with almost 27% youth unemployment, followed by Greece with 22,5%, Italy 22% and Portugal 20,3%. Reaching under 10% of youth unemployment rate are countries such as Germany 5,7%, Netherlands 8,7% Latvia 9% and Lithuania 8,6%. The European Union youth unemployment levels has been rising since the economic crisis of 2008, and it has been forecasted that these numbers will only increase in the future, as the pandemics, economy, rising population and automation of the processes effect on the employment overall. (O'Neill, 2023-a)

The guidelines that Finland and Denmark follow within their youth unemployment politics, follows European Union's decisions to focus on youth unemployment. The focus is set in the 2020 Youth Employment Support package, which focuses on four key factors as follows. The council reinforced the Youth Guarantee 2013 decisions, which both Finland and Denmark follow. Additionally, the Commission recommended strengthening vocational training, in order to create more attractive and modern operations. They also focused on improving apprenticeships by creating The European Alliance for Apprenticeships, that allowed increased opportunities for unemployed youth. Finally, the Commission reinforced the support for social protection of young people. (European Commission, n.d.-c)

These actions decided by the European Commission, focuses, and aids the member states in their battle against youth unemployment. They create guidelines for action, which has been picked up by all the member states of European Union. (European Commission, n.d.-d)

2.3 Guided gaming

In 2023 with fast internet and peoples need to connect, the popularity of gaming platforms such as Steam and Twitch has accelerated fast. These platforms gather people who enjoy gaming especially online, while communicating and connecting with other people. (Wallinheimo et al., 2022). With fast growth and interest in online gaming, electronic sports (e-sports) have risen to be a multibillion-dollar industry. In 2023, the gaming market is predicted to reach over 245 billion dollars. (Wallinheimo et al. 2021)

At correct quantity, gaming, just as any other hobby can be a useful method to relief stress and learn new skills, however the stereotypes usually assumes that gaming can be detrimental for one's career. Different factors, such as health, situation of life and game being played can influence whether gaming is health promoting or health degrading hobby.

(Pallavicini et al., 2022-a, p. 15). Studies has also found that gaming is effective way to support learning (Pallavicini et al-b, 2022-b, p. 11), and can be used a tool to improve wellbeing (Zhang et al. 2017, p. 4-5) and effect on behavioral changes. (Ajoranta & Salo, 2020, p. 6).

Guided gaming aims to reduce the harmful behaviors and effects of gaming, by teaching and educating players with structured and concrete planning. These plans often include schedules and plans for exercising, sleeping and healthy nutrition, depending on the target audience. For example, professional gamers follow different path of guided gaming, where the focus is ultimate gaming experience through proper exercise, leisure, and nutrition, while for example the elementary school student guided gaming focuses more on team working skills, language skills and controlled gaming environment suitable for younger audience. The term guided gaming refers to gaming sessions, where there is a teacher or guide to tutor the gaming lesson or program. These situations often happen in groups, however also individual guidance is available. These lessons often include different types of group tasks, that enhances players communication and teamwork skills. Gaming can also be completely competitive and goal oriented, both in individual and team level. In competitive gaming, the aim for the player is in the best performance instead of just having fun gaming. However, guided gaming is often something between these two things, between the performance and enjoyment. Often this means, that people play games together while learning important everyday skills while competing in a relaxed manner. (Incoach, n.d.-b)

2.3.1 Personal skills and gaming

According to the study, participating in extra-curricular activities can develop persons soft skills. (Lau et al., 2014). Defining the word soft skills can be difficult because it can differ in different contexts. However, mostly the word is described to refer in personal traits and interpersonal skills. Soft skills are for example communication, conflict management, critical thinking, and creativity. As soft skills are mostly recognized as personal traits and changing, or enhancing these skills can be difficult. However, acknowledging one's personal traits and challenges, a person can attend in self-training or guided training to target these areas, and improve their soft skills. Soft skills complement the hard skills, which are the technical requirements for the job. With competitive work market where individuals' talent is more important than ever, having proper soft skills can bring vast advantage for a person. (Schulz, 2008)

A study published in 2022 discovered that online gaming allowed the participants to obtain different soft skills, that can support the gamers with training to certain career path. For example, the managers on the study group were interested in action roleplay games where planning and organizing skills can be enhanced, while engineers were intrigued by strategy games that demand for problem-solving skills. (Wallinheimo et al., 2022). Furthermore, the results from another study demonstrate that playing action videogames improves persons cognitive and perceptual abilities. (Oei & Patterson, 2013). For instance, gamers who play action videogames display higher accuracy, swift attention focus, and greater visual processing compared to those who don't play videogames. (Green & Bavelier, 2012, p. 7).

2.3.2   Employability and gaming

Most employers primary desire for professional competence is communication skills. Employers also look for ability to apply knowledge, enthusiasm, problem solving skills and logical thinking to guarantee professional quality work. Perhaps surprisingly, the academic excellence was not seen as important as the knowledge of the industry, the company and candidates' motivation and personal attributes. (Barker, 2014, p. 7-9).

As shown in the part of personal skills and gaming, the cognitive and soft skills gained from playing videogames can reinforce employability skills. Especially when it comes to specific careers, such as engineer, manager, and IT professional (Wallinheimo et al., 2022), the findings support the idea of gaining skills from gaming and utilizing them in professional career.

2.4   Reddit

Reddit is a community created in internet for human connection and conversations. The channels reach millions of visits daily, and people interact with each other on different topics, communities, and streams, by posting, commenting, and voting. (Reddit, 2023). Reddit was chosen by the author as distributor channel for the questionnaire, that supports the research done in this thesis. Reddit reaches wide population of active internet users daily, and is in active use of gaming communities, hereby reaching the desired participants for the survey.

2.5 Launching new service to the market

Services differs from products based on their characteristics, and the key factor is the intangibility of the service. Service cannot be touched, as it doesn't have physical form. Each service is individually designed to answer certain need of the market, and often the expectation is that services should be available all the time. However, this means that without usage, the service is valueless. (Zeitahml et al., 2010)

2.5.1 Service design

Service design is a tool that helps companies to innovate and generate new services or enhance existing services. Service design is human-centered and collaborative method, that includes all the stakeholders and gives businesses an opportunity to view their services through their customers eyes. The process of service design includes cycles of research and development and eventually these steps lead to piloting of the service. (Stickdorn, et al., 2018, p. 19-21)

Service design (further referred as SD) has many different methods created by the designers inspired by other disciplines. However, the main goal of the service design is to create solutions to human problems. (Bender-Salazar, 2023). There are no binding rules when it comes to service design, and the steps of the process often overlap with each other. However, it is important to have clear objectives for successful service design. (Moritz, 2009, p. 149, 154). Within this thesis, the author utilizes the service design model by Stefan Moritz. There are differences within different service design models, as there are almost as many methods as there are creators of the methods. Mortizs' service design model is fairly easy to understand and conduct and was thus chosen to be the model in this thesis.

2.5.2 Mortiz design model

Stefan Mortiz, senior design director created six step service design model that covers the necessary steps to create new service. These six steps; understanding, thinking, generating, filtering, explaining, and realizing provide the author clear route to the new service model for the commissioning company. (Moritz, 2009, p. 123)

2.5.3   SD Understanding

Service design understanding phase focuses on the research and understanding the customers' needs and wants. Understanding connects the project into the reality, by identifying the actions and areas that the company needs to focus on. Investigating the company, their motivations and aspirations leads to understanding, which is the starting point for measures to achieve the goals of the customer. Quantitative market research is useful tool to reach the understanding, however this alone might not be enough to gather the full potential of the market, especially for complex services as most people are not able to assess their own behavior precisely. (Moritz, 2009, p. 124-127)

2.5.4   SD Thinking

In the thinking phase of service design, the key reference frameworks are identified by defining the details and criteria. Within this phase, the strategic aspects and the direction of the project are identified. SD thinking sets the baseline for the following service design categories and helps with natural transition between the phases. For instance, when the necessary elements of actions have been found, the thinking phase helps to determine how they are used in the next phase of SD generating. Basically, this means, that SD thinking phase yields the direction and the guidelines of the service design process. However, the quality of the SD thinking phase corresponds to the facts on which it is based on. Often common sense can determine the guidelines of the framework. (Moritz, 2009, p. 128-131)

2.5.5   SD Generating

The generating phase is all about the creativity, innovation, and creation. Within this phase, the ideas are being developed into concepts, that are born from the facts and needs of the company. Generating phase follows the strategy decided in previous phases of service thinking. Brainstorming and sketching are beneficial tools to turn SD generating phase into the reality. (Moritz, 2009, p. 132-135)

2.5.6   SD Filtering

Filtering in the service design, means combining the ideas and concepts of the process. Within this phase, the most optimal solutions are chosen by specific criteria based on the company's needs. Measuring and monitoring the performance is critical during this phase, as

the goal of this step is to identify the most desirable and suitable solutions. Tracking the performance also identifies the subjects that might need improving. Filtering phase requires decisions, as it is the only way to continue the process forward. (Moritz, 2009, p. 136-137)

2.5.7 SD Explaining

The SD explaining phase enables stakeholders to understand the process, because abstract concepts are obtained in this phase. This can include sketches, mockups, montages or even beta tests of the service concept. The aim is to understand and try out the service experience. (Mortiz, 2009, p. 140-141)

2.5.8 SD Realizing

Finally, in the realizing phase the goal is to make it happen. Whether it means to launching the actual service or just testing the waters with the prototype, realizing phase is all about the action. Deciding and setting the business plan and guidelines, developing the prototypes, and training the staff are crucial parts of this phase's success. It is good to keep in mind, that service presumably will not be perfect and needs improvements on the move, thus why SD realizing should be thought as new beginning of the service design, not the end of the road. (Moritz, 2009, p. 144-146)

2.5.9 Market scanning

When a business is interested on launching new service to the market, it is beneficial to scan the interest of the market first. There are two types of scanning methods, narrow and broad. Narrow scanning can be defined as generated market intelligence that is relevant on the current needs, and it can utilize the current competencies of the business. Narrow scanning can be used for tailored service models. Broad scanning can be explained as investigation of new markets and services, where the business is not currently operating but is looking for new opportunities. The main difference between narrow and broad scanning, is that narrow scanning focuses on certain customer needs while broad scanning focuses on unarticulated needs. (Olsen & Sallis, 2005, p. 468-470)

Within this thesis, the market is scanned for the initial interest for the guided gaming concept as a tool for employment opportunities. The research investigates existing market area with

the opportunity of new service model, to see the reactions and attitudes of the target group initially with the goal of creating new service model for the commissioning company.

3 Methodology

For this thesis, the goal for the author was to gain understanding of how guided gaming can be beneficial factor in youth unemployment and how these can be united in new service for the commissioning company of the thesis. The author began the process with reviewing existing literature on youth unemployment and exclusion, to gain better knowledge on the matter.

The existing material contains a wide range of objectives stated by the European Union Commission, which defines the guidelines for youth unemployment activities. The author gained knowledge of the activities, in order to research the opportunities for the commissioning company's new service, which led to the author's surveys and interviews. The author considered the most relevant research to be in the attitudes and interest of the topic among the target group.

Therefore, the author conducted two sets of exploratory research to fulfill the purpose of this thesis. The focus of the survey was on the target group of consumers, while the interviews focused on the point of view of persons working in the gaming industry.

3.1 Qualitative and quantitative research methods

Quantitative research methodology is used to study social, economic, and psychological processes by studying numerical models. Within this type of research, numeric data is gathered by different methods such as questionnaire and interviews, and it enables the researcher to conduct mature statistical analysis. The purpose of this type of methodology is to gather knowledge and understanding about the social world. (Queiros, et al., 2017, p. 2, 13). In this research, the quantitative methodology is pursued by document analysis point of view, by evaluating the results of the questionnaires and interviews and developing the conclusions from the information provided.

Quantitative research is a research method that focuses on the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data. This type of method is often used to study correlations between variables and make predictions or generalizations with a larger sample. Quantitative

research can be carried out with, for example, by multiple-choice question research, in which case the structure of the questions can be constructed to be unbiased and standardized. Such a method helps the researcher to test hypotheses, identify cause-and-effect relationships, and make statistical conclusions. The advantages of quantitative research can be considered its generalizability, objectivity, repeatability, and efficient analysis, because quantitative research offers a large sample of numerical data that is relatively easy to analyze. The disadvantages of this type of research method can be considered its lack of depth, inflexibility, and limited context. In addition, possible measurement errors or inaccuracies can affect the outcome of the study. In quantitative research accuracy and numbers are utilized to find solution in the research question, whereas qualitative research focuses on experiences and perceptions of people to solve the research question. (Polit & Beck, 2012).

The quantitative method used in questionnaire method has couple major advantages, it allows rapid administration and evaluation of the survey, so it is very time efficient. The data collected from survey method allows the comparison between target groups and enables the resolution of agreement or disagreement within the participants. However, the requirement of large samples needed for the effective results is the weakness of the survey method in quantitative research. (Choy, 2014, p. 101-104)

Qualitative methods in the other hand, allow the diversity and homogenous perspectives for the research. It can be used to determine cultural assessments, values, and beliefs. Qualitative methods also approach the questionnaire with open-ended questions, allowing the respondents to highlight issues that are important to them. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on understanding the experiences, perspectives, and behavior of individuals in their natural environment. This research method is usually used in the study of complex or difficult-to-understand phenomena, such as beliefs, attitudes, or emotions. In qualitative research, the material is mostly collected in the form of interviews, and one of its special features is the emphasis on context and the subjective interpretation of data. Such a strategy helps researchers better understand the perspectives of the target group. Qualitative research examines research findings holistically and focuses less on statistics and structured data. Its advantages can be considered, among other things, the richness and depth of the information collected, the understanding of the participants and flexibility. On the other hand, limited generalizability can be considered a challenge, because qualitative research is based on a small sample and the difficulty and time-consuming nature of its analysis. The qualitative method is often very time-consuming and might overlook issues, or completely

oversee them at all, also the open-ended questions might lead to objectively non verifiable data. (Choy, 2014, p. 101-107)

Desk study, known also as secondary research is a systematic investigation where existing data is utilized in research process, and can be supporting method for both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Desk study gathers information on many different sources, such as scientific reports, publications, and industry reports to gain understanding and reliable theory to support any hypothesis. Desk-study creates opportunity to research without time-consuming face-to-face interviews. (Fieldstat, n.d).

In this thesis, the desk study method is used to gather information and knowledge about unemployment of young people between the ages of 20-29 in Finland, the unemployment activities across the European Union, the challenges of exclusion, market scanning and service design. Additionally, the main goal of this research is to understand the importance of how guided gaming can be beneficial to reduce and prevent unemployment. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods supported by secondary research method, the author conducts clear knowledge of the chosen subjects and answering the research question "how guided gaming can be utilized as a market service for the unemployed" and the subordinal research question "how guided gaming could benefit employment".

3.2   Data collection

The author conducted a survey for the target group of young unemployed Finnish people between the aged of 20-29. The aim was to gather understanding from the target segment point of view, of how well they know the concept of guided gaming and if the market would have interest for such service. The survey (Chart 1) includes both quantitative and qualitative questions. Quantitative and qualitative research are complementary research methods that can together provide a broad and thorough understanding and results. Quantitative research data usually helps to understand the bigger picture, while the qualitative research data focuses on details and the human perspective. The strengths of using survey as a research method are the cost efficiency, time efficiency, uniformity of the responses and anonymity. However, the weaknesses of survey method are the possibility of lack of responds, risk of unintended respond and unclarity of the answers. (Fowler, 2013, p.41-43)

Chart 1. The focus of survey questions.

Survey questions:	Questions:
The basic information of respondents	1-4
The unemployment information of respondents	5-7
The knowledge of guided gaming	8-9
Participation to the guided gaming	10-15

The interview part of the research was conducted to persons working in the gaming industry, to gain understanding from the perspective of those, who work in the field and who train people to utilize the skills gained from gaming for employment. Interviews in research are often consultations that are motivated by certain purpose, where the researcher seeks for specific information. The interview method offers flexibility for the participants to get deep in the issues and opportunities of the research matter. It creates the possibility for the interviewer to ensure that the interview follows right route and that the person being interviewed comprehends the topic. Interviews conducted via e-mail are time saving and cost effective, they cover geographically large areas and eases the access to people. The disadvantages of the e-mail interview method are shortness of the interview, difficulty to identify the state of the participant and lack of physical aid. (Abhabi & Anozie, 2017, p. 86-97)

4 Results

The survey was distributed via social media channel Reddit. Originally the survey was open for answers for two weeks from December 18, 2023 to January 1, 2024 but the responding time was lengthened with two extra weeks from January 1, 2024 to January 22, 2023 to receive more responds. During this time, the survey was opened 91 times, however the completed answers were 61. Additionally, the author conducted four interviews with people working in the gaming industry.

4.1 Basic information of respondents to survey

The first question phase of the survey contained the basic information received from the respondents. In this phase, the respondents' gender, age, educational background, and place of residence were examined, which are described in the tables below. Out of 61 respondents, 44% were women, 44% men, 6,5% other and 4,9% did not want to respond on the gender question. 44% of the respondents were between the ages of 20-23, 28% between the ages of 24-26 and 28% between the ages of 27-29.
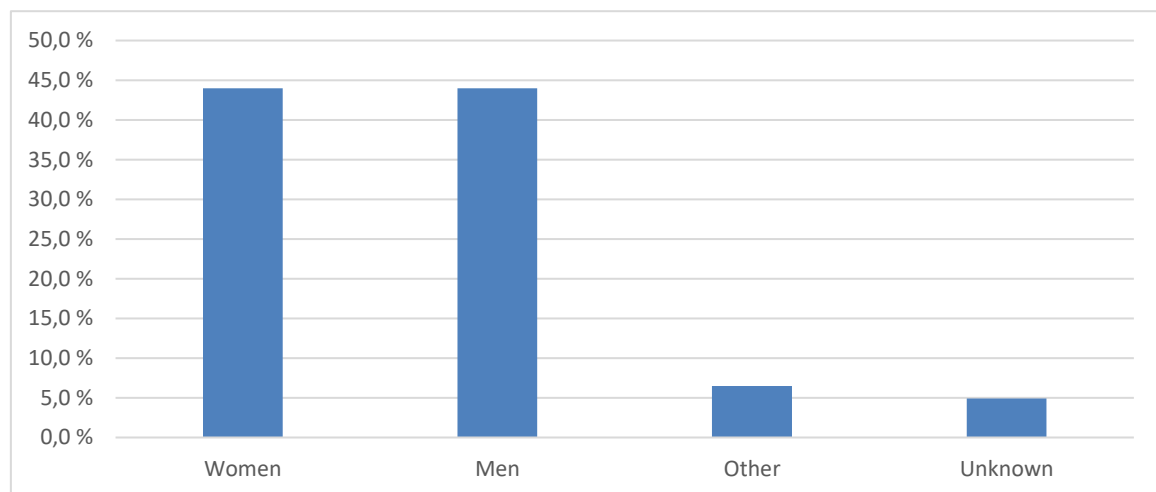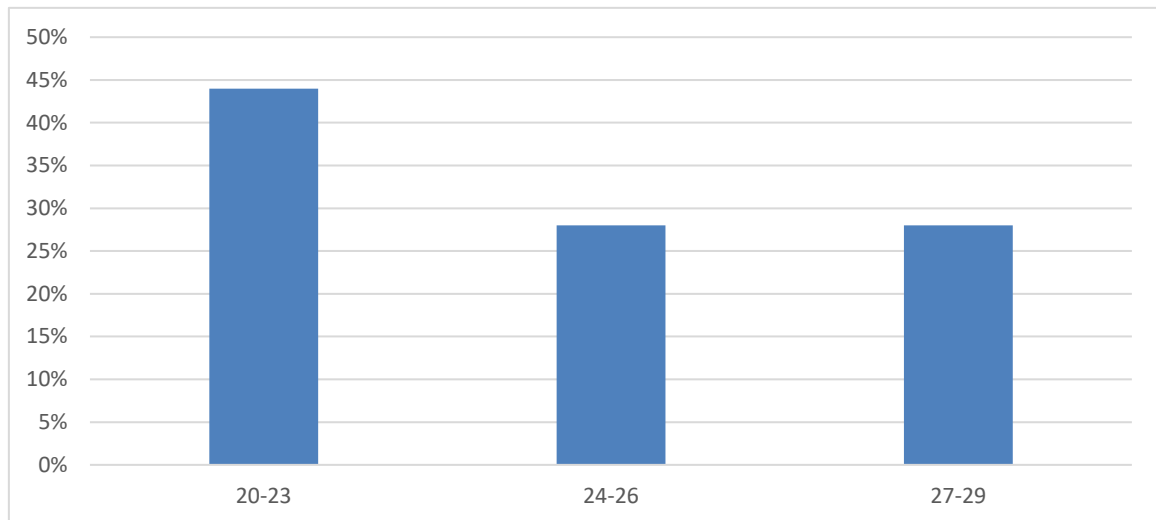
Chart 2. Gender of the respondents

Chart 3. Age of the respondents

When looking at the educational background, within the respondents it was divided as following: 14,7% primary school, 27,9% high school, 36,1% vocational training, 18% university of applied sciences and 3,3% university. Place of residency was divided as following: Uusimaa 26,2%, Varsinais-Suomi 8,2%, Satakunta 6,6%, Kanta-Häme 8,2%, Pirkanmaa 3,3%, Päijät-Häme 3,3%, Kymenlaakso 6,6%, Etelä-Karjala 3,3%, Etelä-Savo 4,9%, Pohjois-Karjala 1,7%, Pohjois-Savo 18%, Pohjanmaa 1,6%, Keski-Pohjanmaa 1,6%, Kainuu 3,3%, Lappi 1,6% and Ahvenanmaa 1,6%.

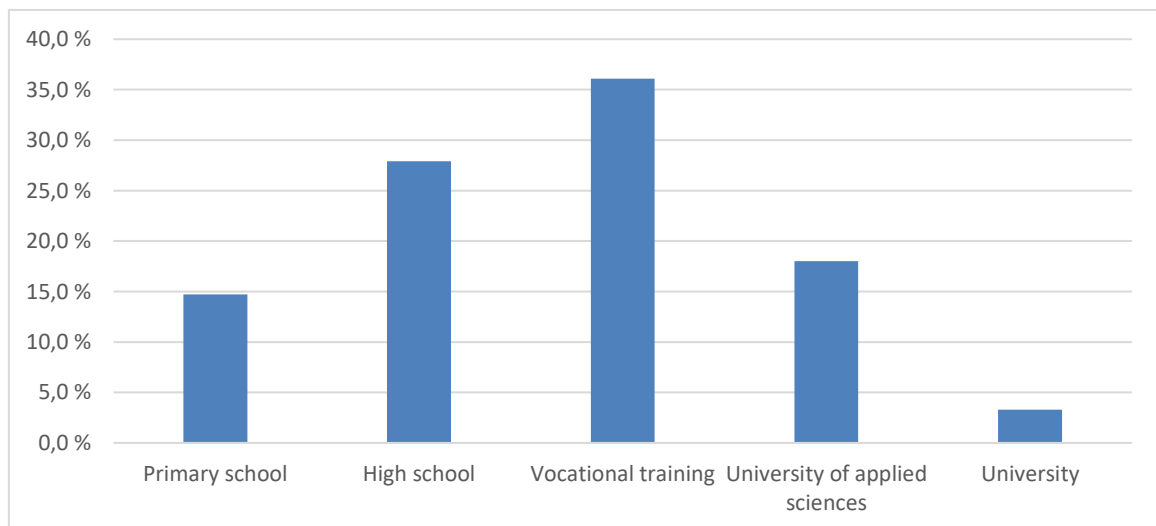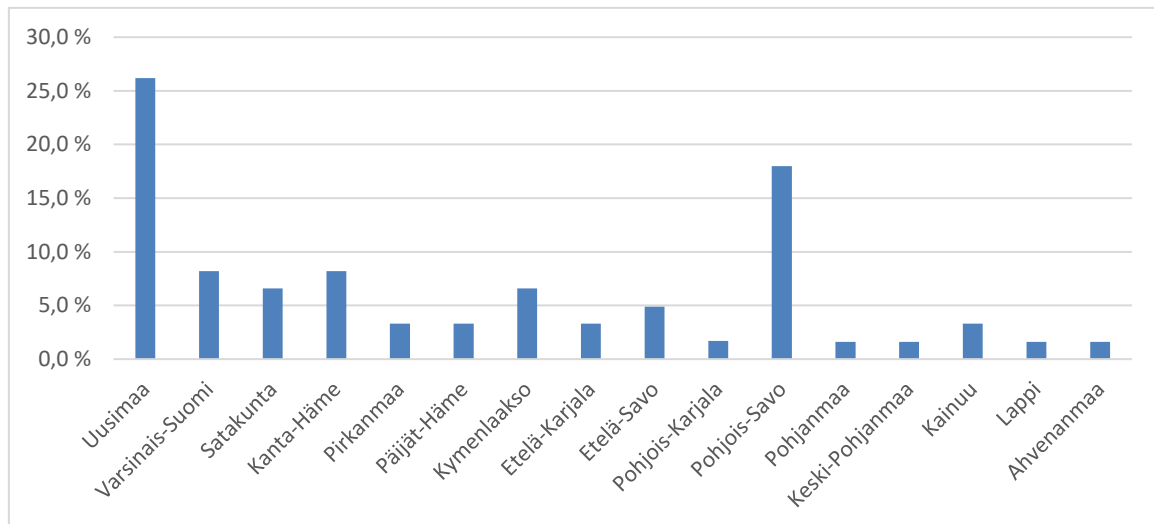Chart 4. Educational background of the respondents

Chart 5. Place of residence of the respondents

4.2 The unemployment information of respondents

The second question phase included questions about the respondents' unemployment situation. The questions examined the length of unemployment, unemployment benefits and respondents' thoughts about the reason of their unemployment. For the length of the current unemployment, 11,9% of the respondents had been unemployed for under a month, 28,8% between one to three months, 22% between three to six months, 18,7% between six to twelve months and 18,6% over twelve months.
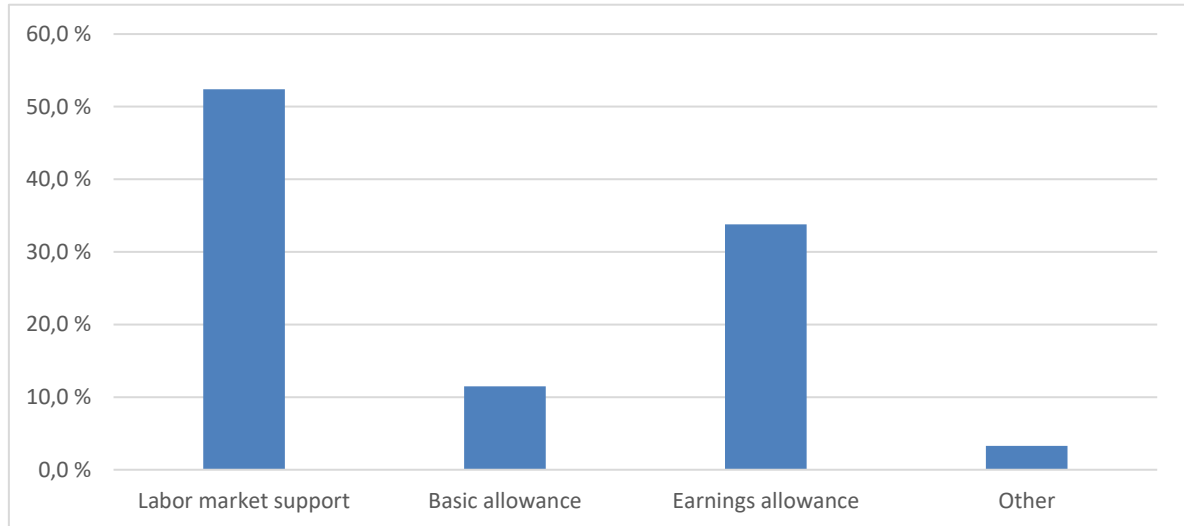
Chart 6. Length of unemployment
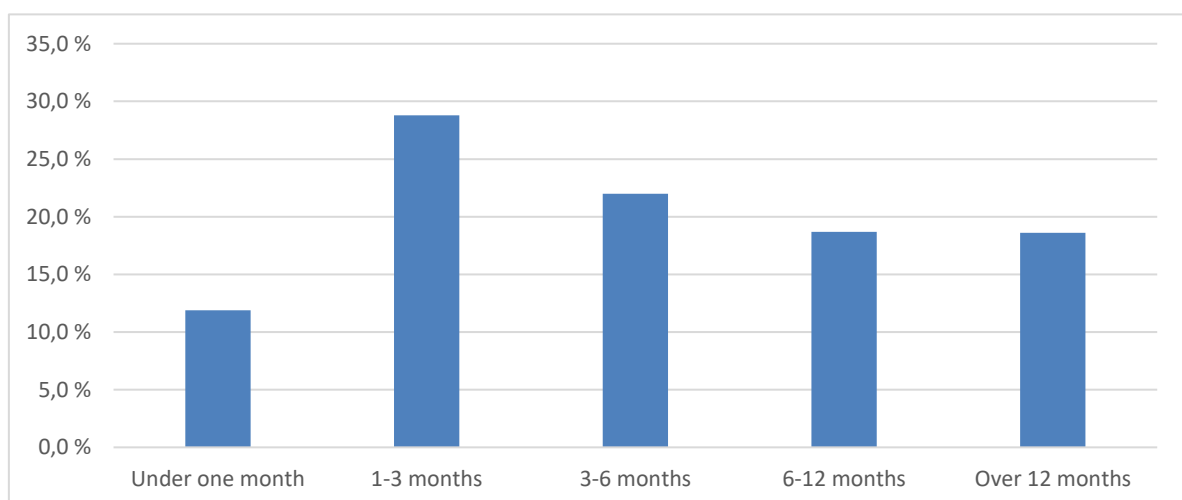
When it comes to unemployment benefits, 52,4% received labor market support (työmarkkinatuki), 11,5% received basic allowance (peruspäiväraha), 33,8% got earnings allowance (ansiopäiväraha) and 3,3% received other benefits.

Chart 7. Unemployment benefit

The reason for the unemployment question allowed respondents to have multiple answers as the question was designed as multiple-choice question. Out of 61 respondents, there was 95 chosen reasons for the unemployment. The respondents evaluated their reasons for being unemployed as following: 62,3% thought the current labor market situation is the reason for their unemployment, 29,5% thought lack of studies, 34,4% lack of job experience, 13,1% problems with physical health, 13,1% problems with mental health and 3,3% considered other reasons.

Chart 8. Reason of unemployment
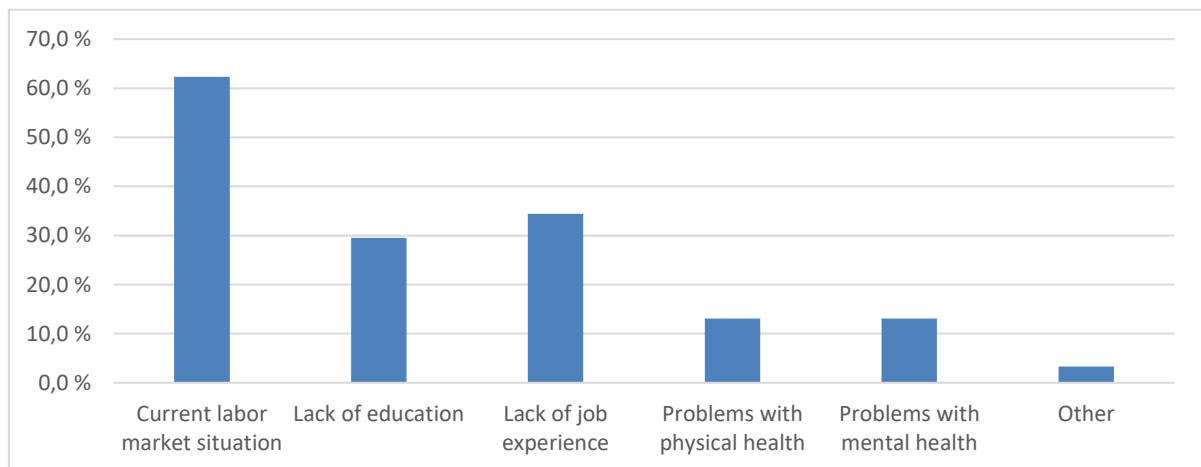
4.3   The knowledge of guided gaming

Within this part of the survey, the author examined the respondents' knowledge about guided gaming concept. The first question asked the respondents if they are familiar with the concept, where 18,3% of them were familiar 81,7% were not. The second question was open end question, and allowed the respondents to tell what they know about the subject. Most of the respondents were not familiar about the concept of guided gaming, and answers such as "I don't know" and "I have not heard about it" were most common within the participants. Most of the respondents opted out of answering the question at all.

4.4   Participation to guided gaming

The last part of the survey examined the interest for the guided gaming concept within the respondents. Out of 61 participants, 91,8% had not participated on guided gaming previously, and 8,2% had been involved. Respondents were interested to learn different skills with guided gaming, 19,7% hoped to gain writing skills, 39,3% cooperation skills, 27,9% communication skills, 26,2% time management skills and 13,1% other skills, including "gaming itself", "Finnish language" and "I hope to find friends" coming as most common answers.

Chart 9. What skills respondents hope to gain from guided gaming concept
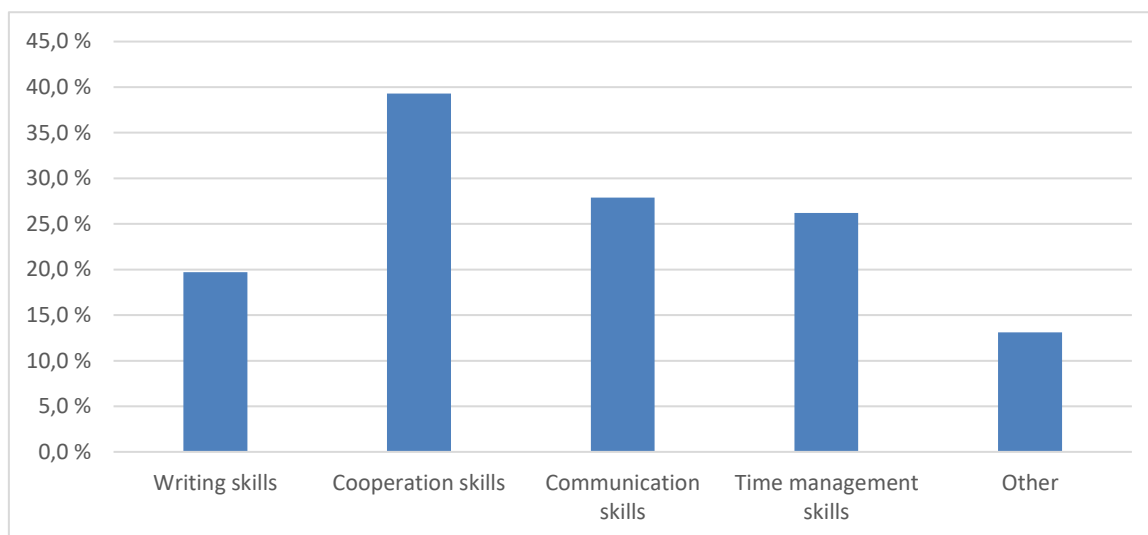
Most of the respondents were interested to participate in the guided gaming, if it was approved activity by Unemployment Office of Finland (TE-toimisto), with 81,7% of the respondents saying yes and 18,3% no. Participation as service on its own without cost had similar interest withing the respondents, as 80% were interested and 20% not interested of

the service itself. Participating to guided gaming as a service that costs money was an open-ended question for the respondents. 56 responds were given, and results such as "depending how costly it would be", "I don't have enough money" and "gaming is not so interesting that I would pay" were the most common answers. However, there was also positive interest for the concept with answers such as "I would be interested to know more" and "my hobby is gaming so yes". The last question of the survey examined if the respondents would be interested to participate either remotely (85,2%) or workshop concept (14,8%).

4.5   The interview answers

The interview part of the study included interviews for people working in the field of guided gaming, to reach understanding of the aspects from gaming industry and thus help the author to formulate the final business model for the commissioning company. The interview questions were fully open-ended and allowed the participants to share their thoughts. The interviews were done via email in January 2024 with cooperation of Incoach, and the names used are pseudonyms. The questions of the interviews can be found at the appendix.

4.5.1   Interview number 1

The first interviewee is Anna, who is working as a coordinator in a guided gaming company. Anna was asked what she would consider being the most important skills, that usual gaming can teach a person, and she sees casual gaming teaching people to have fun and relax while also teaching computer skills. Anna considers relaxing and having fun to be important skills in the modern life. When usual gaming is compared to guided gaming, Anna pointed out that guided gaming enhances gamers full potential with a guide who helps and challenges the gamer in ways that they most likely would not be doing by themselves. Skills vary with different games being played, but in general the guided gaming teaches cooperation and team player skills in various ways. When looking at how the skills acquired from guided gaming could benefit unemployment of a person, Anna considers cooperation skills and self-improvement necessary for modern day work life and therefor guided gaming benefitting the person attending. Anna sums up *"When you can see your place in a group (be it in your gaming team or work team), you can alter your input to match the workplace's and team's needs, and you value your teammates work effort."*. When the challenges in guided gaming and employment were in consideration, Anna brings up the struggles of people giving enough credit of their own input. However, guided gaming assists person to notice and

value their own and their teams input and thus encourages participants to bring up their best qualities and speak up in a job interview for example.

4.5.2 Interview number 2

The second interviewee is Ben, a trainee in a guided gaming company focusing on social media. Ben considers the most important skills learned from casual gaming to be teamwork skills when team games are involved, and close second is the opportunity to learn the English language and vocabulary, as most games are not available in Finnish language. When looking at the difference between casual gaming and guided gaming, and what skills can be acquired from the guided gaming, Ben deliberates that guided gaming shortens the amount of training needed to learn or to master a skill, as guided gaming enhances the speed of learning and the ability to prove the skills acquired. Ben sees, that guided gaming can benefit unemployed person as it teaches necessary teamwork skills and enhances the ability to acknowledge and follow the guidelines from the managers, as in guided gaming the player follows the guidance and commands of the guide. However, the challenges with guided gaming in Bens' opinion come from the need to *"grind hard"* as Ben himself quoted.

4.5.3 Interview number 3

The third interview was conducted for Tom, e-sport business student from university of applied sciences currently doing the practical training at guided gaming company. Tom considers the most important skill the casual gaming can teach a person, is a human interaction. Between casual gaming and guided gaming, Tom brings up the most valuable skills one can learn from guided gaming to be teamwork and proper interaction skills working with other people. Tom points out, that during casual gaming people often can act toxic towards other people, while also receiving it themselves from others. Guided gaming helps people to learn the skills to interact with others in a proper manner, and Tom considers this being an advantage while a person is looking for a job. Tom recognizes some challenges within the guided gaming clubs to be shyness and inactivity. These qualities could be considered tiresome, and exhausting if one needs constant encouragement to be active Tom sums up.

4.5.4   Interview number 4

The last interviewee was Jan, gaming club's coordinator and game educator from Tampere, who is working for guided gaming company. When Jan was asked, what he considers being the most important skills the casual gaming can teach a person, Jan responded them being teamwork, communication, leadership- and language skills. When looking at the difference between casual gaming and guided gaming were in consideration, Jan explains that the most important skills learned from guided gaming definitely are teamwork skills and communication skills. *"Playing games alone or in a solo environment may not provide as good development or experience in communication and teamwork compared to playing in a group environment with a guide or an adult present."* Jan states. When thinking about the skills acquired from guided gaming and how they benefit unemployment, Jan emphasizes that the skills learned can be utilized in the future working life, especially with analytical, talkative and "mentor" type of people, who can apply leadership, teamwork, and interaction skills to work life. Jan sees the positive effects of the target audience for guided gaming being outweighing the negatives, and the challenges he finds in guided gaming that could affect one's employment might lie in the inactivity of that person. This is seen as lack of seeking challenges or situations that might challenge a person, which can be negative in work life. *"It might be difficult to insert some learning techniques to guided gaming unless the games have inherent learning mechanics or such."* Jan states, while recognizing that gaming is often activity to have fun and disconnect from the outside world.

5   Recommendations

The objective of this thesis was to provide the commissioning company with a business model that could be utilized within young unemployed people of Finland. As mentioned previously by the Moritz design model, the SD understanding phase was concluded with the commissioning company Incoach with the discussions of the company's needs and wants. The author and the commissioning company agreed to scan the market for their service, while also researching how guided gaming and integration to work life in Finland can be united. Within the SD thinking phase of the design model, the author researched the literature and supporting materials of the topics and defined the guidelines for the process. SD generating and filtering phases included coming up with the ideas utilizing the existing business model of Incoach based on the aim of the research. Additionally, the questionnaire and interviews were performed to gain understanding and interest of the service and market

itself. Within the service design phase realizing, the author gives recommendations for Incoach based on this thesis.

While the author was working on this thesis, Incoach collaborated with Jyväskylän Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy in project funded by European Union social funding in Pelaten Duuniin! -project, which purpose was to promote the rehabilitation of young people outside of working life via guided gaming. The projects' purpose was to increase understanding of the digital gaming scene as a tool supporting the well-being, social inclusion and strengthening working life skills through guided gaming. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2023)

Based on the findings of this thesis and the Pelaten duuniin! -project, the author recommends Incoach to continue the work, if possible, with the European Union social funding or the Unemployment Office of Finland, as most of the respondents were interested of the service when it is an activation tool for unemployed. Utilizing the existing business model of Incoach, is more sensible as it has been proven to work. The positive feedback from the Pelaten duuniin! -project also supports this conclusion. As a market service on its own, it would be recommended to slowly introduce the concept to the wider audience, before launching the business as its own market service.

Incoach has well working business concept for their service, where they focus on teamworking skills, cooperation, communication, time management, healthy diet, and lifestyle. Their concept focuses on group activities, talking about individual and team goals, and how to act and game as a group. They also pay attention on the importance of sleep, rest, diet, and physical activities outside of the gaming. They guide and teach emotional skills whether it comes to handling stress, feelings arousing gaming and toxicity of gaming communities. The existing business concept supports the unemployed people on their way back to the work life, with goals and guidelines provided by the concept.

6 Conclusions

Guided gaming is not very commonly known in Finland, however as a rehabilitation tool for excluded young people it has shown promise as an activation tool to be used and studied further. The market opportunities with gaming field are vast, and it is one of the fastest growing businesses. While it has been studied, that online multiplayer gaming has positive effects on players' self-esteem and sociality, while it also can prevent loneliness, anxiety, and

depression (Kaye et al., 2022, p. 216), gaming could be very beneficial for all parties involved within this thesis.

6.1 Analysis

The aim of this thesis is to find out, if guided gaming could be utilized as a tool to benefit unemployment. This study conducted marketing scanning within the target group of young Finnish people who are unemployed and between the ages of 20-29, their experiences and knowledge of the guided gaming and the opinions and chances the people working in the guided gaming field finds within these topics. These were researched by conducting a survey through a webtool Webropol and distributed it via social media channel Reddit, where the target customer segment is active. Additionally, the research conducted interviews for the people working in the gaming scenery. The questionnaire and the interviews were used to answer the following research questions of the thesis:

- How guided gaming can be utilized as a market service for the unemployed?
- How guided gaming could benefit employment?

The thesis provides an overview of the knowledge of guided gaming, the interest of the target segment and how guided gaming and unemployment can be utilized as a market service that promotes employment. The literature review focuses on understanding the exclusion and its effects, the opportunities provided by European Union's social pillar and guided gaming and the skills learned from gaming. With this information from the literature review, the author created a survey and interviews, that concentrates the understanding of the matter from different perspectives.

The analysis of the questionnaire heavily indicates the interest for the guided gaming concept within the targeted, unemployed young Finnish people. Most of the participants had finished at least second-degree education, and there are no major differences between age groups or gender. Most of the respondents were from Southern Finland and from Northern-Savonia region, however within this type of service the location of the participants is not decisive as the service can be performed remotely.

Most of the respondents had been unemployed between 1-3 months (28,8%), however unemployed people from three months to an over year included almost 60% of the participants. Over half of the participants received labor market support which is the most common unemployment benefit in Finland. Most of the participants considered the major

reason for their unemployment to be the current situation of the labor market, however the lack of education and/or the lack of job experience also rose to important considerations. Problems with physical and mental health were given as a reason for little over 10% of the participants.

Looking at the part of guided gaming knowledge within the participants, it was clear that the concept is not commonly known within the respondents. Guided gaming is fairly new concept in Finland, and there are not many companies offering this kind of service, which would explain how guided gaming is not well-known concept within the peers. Within the open-ended question where the participants were allowed to give their thoughts about their knowledge of the guided gaming, the most common answers included "I don't know about the concept", or "I have not heard about the concept before". However, there was also answers such as "I know somebody who has participated in guided gaming at the school" and "I have heard about it". Lot of participants opted out of answering this question at all.

The part of the survey examining the interest for this type of market service, whether it is activation tool or service on its own, found out that most of the respondents had not been participating in the guided gaming previously. The respondents were fairly active answering the open question of the skills wished to learn from guided gaming. The highest skill desire was on cooperation skills, with almost 40% interest on the topic, followed by communication skills as a second. The open answers also included the interest to learn "gaming itself", "Finnish language" and the possibility to find friends from the guided gaming community. When it came to interest to participate in guided gaming if it would be approved activation tool by the Unemployment Office of Finland, the target group had major interest for the service, with over 80% agreeing. As a service of its own, the worries about the price rose as number one reason for disinterest or hesitation to participate on guided gaming. A lot of the respondents considered their financial situation to be obstacle for the participation if the service would cost money, which can be understood looking at the unemployment benefits received, as the basic labor market support is usually just enough for normal living costs. Other reasons for the disinterest as a service on its own, were the lack of interest for gaming overall. However, the positive feedback and answers included "hobby" and "interest to know more", which indicates the interest within the active gamers and people who do not know about the guided gaming concept previously. Providing guided gaming services remotely was highly more desirable than workshop concept within the respondents, while over 85% stated they would rather participate remotely on the service.

The interviews provided useful information from the people working within guided gaming for the author. There were big differences between the respondents and their opinions, however similarities were also found within the respondents. When the author looked at the results answering the question of what important skills casual gaming can teach the gamer. Casual gaming was seen as fun and relaxing way to spend leisure time, while getting human interaction. Gaming also teaches the gamer computer skills, while English language learning was pointed out to be one of the most beneficial skills gained from casual gaming. The differences between casual gaming and guided gaming pointed out the teamwork to be the most beneficial skill to be learned from guided gaming. While casual gaming is mostly done for entertainment, the guided gaming challenges the player in many ways to enhance their skills while doing something they enjoy. Teamworking skills are acquired by completing tasks and challenges in a team, while being guided by the teacher or the guide. These gaming guides can enhance the players full potential, as the guide can provide help and support to learn or master the skills. Proper human interaction was also pointed out as important lesson to be learned, as gaming communities can often be seen as very toxic with bad behaviour. Often having a guide or an adult present develops the experience in communication skills compared to playing in a group without these authorities.

When the answers of how guided gaming could benefit unemployment were examined, the cooperation and teamwork skills rose as the highest benefit acquired from guided gaming. These skills are crucial in modern days' work life, as the people diversifies, and workplaces become more and more multicultural. Self-improvement and challenging oneself were found as benefits that guided gaming teaches the player, as these are necessary skills in the ever-changing working environment. Following authority and guidelines are part of guided gaming concept, which prepares the person to the work life, while other benefits such as proper manners and interaction with people benefits the participants social aspects. The challenges found within the guided gaming were recognized to be the difficulty to give enough credit to themselves or to their peers, shyness, and inactivity of a person. Acquiring any skill requires hard work, and guided gaming can enhance learning these necessary skills in modern work life. The interviewees find positive effects of gaming and guided gaming outweighing the negativities, and guided game can be very effective way to learn or enhance ones' skills and attributes for work hunting.

In a summary, it can be stated that the market's interest in the guided gaming concept is relatively high, especially in cooperation with the Unemployment Office of Finland. Additionally, there is an opportunity for the concept as its own service, but it is of the utmost importance to expand the knowledge of the concept at first. Guided gaming can be utilized

by the unemployed to learn crucial work life skills, thus benefitting the unemployment and also the commissioning company with a business model.

6.2   Research ethics and reliability

The subject of the research was ethically justified, as the research has been conducted within permission and demand of the commissioning company. The respondents on survey were anonymous and had a free will to participate on the survey. The interviewees were chosen in cooperation with Incoach, and the materials has been anonymized in a way, that they cannot be recognized, and the results published with their permission. All the information has been processed and managed by data protection law. The research was conducted with good scientific practices, as it was following responsible and ethically correct methods like reliability and honesty (TENK, 2023). The thesis has been carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK, n.d.).

The analysis of the qualitative and quantitative research of this thesis has been carried out as purely as possible, without expectations from the author herself. However, when it comes to qualitative research, it is good to remember that despite the principle, the qualitative research is always a researchers' interpretation to some extent and the themes emerging from the material have been selected by the authors assessment. Even though most of the theoretical framework are peer-reviewed scientific articles, the limited reliable publications about guided gaming was found, and most of the material considers gaming itself. Additionally, a lot of the information available of the matter is associated with commercialism as gaming industry has enormous market value, and a lot of the findings were funded by the gaming industry itself and thus unreliable sources. The author used trustworthy sources such as European Union and other commonly known sources such as official Offices of Finland to obtain information. As the target group and market is in Finland, some Finnish sources was mandatory to use to gather information of the target segment. All the theoretical framework and material in this thesis can be reviewed with the help of source markings. The author faced some troubles during the thesis process, which caused the theoretical frame being relatively narrow.

6.3   Summary

While the general attitudes towards digital gaming in the past have been fairly negative and perhaps even categorizing towards the gamers, within the past few years, especially during

COVID-19 the opinions have begin to shift to more positive. The COVID-19 and the mandatory isolations it brought the need to find out new ways to spend time in isolation. This caused a huge rise to the interest and demand for digital gaming and services around it, such as streaming. While the youth unemployment levels started to decrease generally in European Union and especially in Finland, there are many worrying trends rising effecting the well-being and functions of young people. The worry about the future, loneliness, anxiety and life management problems have risen during the isolation periods, causing uncertainty within the unemployed young Finnish people.

Digital gaming has not been commonly used tool to rehabilitate or activate unemployed or excluded people in the past, however the recent promising projects and studies done on the subject have created understanding and interesting opportunities for the businesses offering such services. Combining digital gaming and activation tools for unemployed might raise some eyebrows, however guided digital gaming as a concept has been piloted as an activation tool with positive outcomes. The guided gaming concept focuses on increasing the positive skills and experience gathered from the gaming, while it also aims to reduce the negative effects such as toxicity. Guided gaming is a well-structured, educational concept that helps young gamers with typical challenges of unemployment, such as time management skills, writing skills and cooperation skills. These skills are considered important for employability, and with guided gaming these can be thought in relaxed but constructed environment.

Guided gaming can be considered benefitting all the parties, the businesses providing such service, the unemployed young people, and the society. The business providing guided gaming as a service clearly benefits by receiving turnover for their business, while the unemployed person can benefit by learning new skills while having fun, in controlled but fun environment. The benefits for the society may come with delay, however every employed person is a plus for the society and economy overall.

It would be highly beneficial to continue the studies around guided gaming as a service, as it has good opportunities for those who might struggle finding their place in this society. It also shows a positive light for the excluded people, who often are the most difficult group to employ.

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Appendix 1. Interview questions

Interview questions

1. Please introduce yourself and your occupation.
2. What do you consider being the most important skills, that usual gaming can teach person?
3. What do you consider being the most important skills, that guided gaming can teach a person? (the difference between guided gaming and gaming "normally")
4. How do you think these skills can benefit person, when they look for a job (how guided gaming benefits unemployment)?
5. What kind of challenges do you recognize in guided gaming, that can affect employment?

Appendix 2. Survey questions

Survey questions

1. What is your age?
   - 20-23
   - 24-26
   - 27-29
2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other
   - Prefer not to answer
3. What is your study background?
   - Primary school (peruskoulu)
   - High school (lukio)
   - Vocational training (ammattikoulu)
   - University of applied sciences (ammattikorkeakoulu)
   - University (yliopisto)
   - Other (muu):
4. What is your municipality of residence?
   - Uusimaa
   - Varsinais-Suomi
   - Satakunta
   - Kanta-Häme
   - Pirkanmaa
   - Päijät-Häme
   - Kymenlaakso
   - Etelä-Karjala
   - Etelä-Savo
   - Pohjois-Savo
   - Pohjois-Karjala
   - Keski-Suomi
   - Etelä-Pohjanmaa
   - Pohjanmaa
   - Keski-Pohjanmaa
   - Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
   - Kainuu
   - Lappi
   - Ahvenanmaa
5. What has been the length of your unemployment?
   - 1-3 months
   - 3-6 months
   - 6-12 months
   - Over 12 months
6. What kind of unemployment benefits you receive currently?
   - Labor market support (työmarkkinatuki)
   - Basic allowance (peruspäiväraha)
   - Earnings allowance (ansiopäiväraha)

- Other (muu):
7. What do you consider being the reason for your unemployment?
    - Labor market situation
    - Lack of studies
    - Lack of job experience
    - Problems with physical health
    - Problems with mental health
    - Other
8. Are you familiar of the concept of guided gaming?
    - Yes
    - No
9. What do you know about guided gaming?
-

10. Have you participated in guided gaming lessons?
    - Yes
    - No
11. If you would participate in guided gaming lesson, what skills would you hope to gain from it that benefits employment?
    - Writing skills
    - Cooperation skills
    - Communication skills
    - Time management skills
    - Other:
12. Would you participate in guided gaming lesson, if it was approved as activity for unemployment office (TE-toimisto)?
    - Yes
    - No
13. Would you participate in guided gaming lesson if it was service, but doesn't cost money?
    - Yes
    - No
14. Would you participate in guided gaming lesson if it would cost you money and why?
-

15. How would you prefer to participate in guided gaming lesson?
    - Remotely
    - Workshop concept

Appendix 3. Thesis Data Management Plan

THESIS DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

In this thesis, the author conducted interviews and survey during the research process. The collection of any personal information was not required in the thesis process.

1. Management and storage of research data

In the survey part of the research, the participants were answering anonymously through Webropol webtool. The interview participants were interviewed via email, and they were informed their involment on this thesis. Therefore, the author has the control of the data collected and stored. The stored data is anonymized and will not be named with any personal details. The interviews will be stored simply as "Interview 1", "Interview 2", and so on.

2. Processing of personal data and sensitive data

All the personal and sensitive data is managed within the rules of GDPR. Participants personal data will not be published in the completed thesis. Indirect identifiers such as gender and age can be mentioned if it is relevant for the research analysis, though these are not combined with specific responses.

EU GDPR, Article 4 https://www.privacy-regulation.eu/en/4.htm

3. Ownership of thesis data

All the data and results of the thesis will be owned by the author and the commissioning company Incoach Esports Oy.

4. Further use of thesis data after the work is completed

The data conducted within this thesis will not be used for further research. The data will be safely stored by the author for a period of one year from the approved date of the thesis, leaving the opportunity to verify the results of the thesis if necessary. After one year, the data conducted will be deleted within safe manners.