



# Engaging of a competitive player in es-ports organization

**Case: KOVA**

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### **Tiivistelmä**

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, mitkä tekijät sitouttavat kilpapelajaajan e-urheiluorganisaatioon ja löytää kohdeorganisaatio KOVAlle tapoja sitouttaa pelaajat paremmin organisaation toimintoihin.

Työssä käytettiin sekä kvantitatiivista että kvalitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää. Kvantitatiivinen tutkimus toteutettiin pelaajille suunnatulla Webropol-kyselylomakkeella ja kvalitatiivinen tutkimus toteutettiin puoli-strukturoiduilla haastatteluilla haastatteleamalla pelaajia sekä organisaation johdossa työskenteleviä henkilöitä.

Tutkimuksen tuloksista huomattiin, että kommunikaatio on todella tärkeä osa sitouttamista, ja että kohdeorganisaatiolla oli ongelmia organisaation ja pelaajien välisessä kommunikaatiossa.

Tulosten tarkastelun jälkeen organisaatiolle laadittiin toimenpide-ehdotus pelaajien sitoutumisen parantamiseksi. Toimenpide-ehdotus sisältää sisäisen viestintäsunnitelman, joka antaa organisaatiolle työkaluja sisäisen kommunikaation parantamiseen sekä pelaajien parempaan sitouttamiseen.

### **Avainsanat (asiasanat)**

Esports, e-urheilu, sitouttaminen, urheilijan sitouttaminen, työhyvinvointi, merkityksellinen työ, kommunikaatio

### **Muut tiedot (salassa pidettävät liitteet)**

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### **Abstract**

The aim was to study what factors engage the competitive players to esports organization and find ways to engage players better in the operations of the case organization KOVA.

There were two research methods used: Quantitative research was implemented by using a Webropol questionnaire for the players and qualitative research was implemented by interviewing the players and the organizations' management staff. In qualitative research the method was semi-structured interviews.

As a result of the research, it can be seen that communication is a very important part of engagement. The results showed that there are issues in communication between the organization and the players.

After carefully analyzing the results, a proposal for action was prepared for the organization, which includes an internal communication plan that will allow the organization to improve internal communication and thus also the players' commitment to the organization.

### **Keywords/tags (subjects)**

Employee engagement, Athlete engagement, Esports, E-sports, Communication, Meaningful Work, Well-being at work

### **Miscellaneous (Confidential information)**

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# 1 Introduction

Esports is a rather new but continually growing industry both in popularity and money. The global market for esports was valued over a billion US dollars in 2021. (Willings, 2021.) The field of esports is constantly being researched, but a big part of research is related to the business side, brand value and visibility of esports. In this study the focus is on player engagement.

According to Arajärvi and Salmikivi (2007), high amount of player changes is detrimental. It is difficult for spectators to identify with the players, the team play does not have time to develop to its peak and the coach's job focuses on reviewing what has been learned before and adapting new players. Even though they are talking about basketball, the same goes for esports teams and organizations. The players of esports organizations can have an enormous influence on the organizations' brand, and it is common in sports and esports to use players in content creation and advertising. Professional athletes have an undeniable influence on the purchasing decision of their fans, and the fan wants to adopt the aspects of the skilled player. (Hanks n.d.)

In this study the case organization is KOVA, a Finnish esports organization established in 2019. KOVA competes in different games, and the most popular of them are Counter-Strike: Global offensive, Valorant and Sim racing. As in any organization, there have been changes in KOVA's rosters, and the organization may not recognize the factors that affect the well-being of players and thus performance. The purpose of this study is to find out if there are ways to keep the good players in the organization, how the above issues should be led and developed and how to engage the players to the mentioned organization. It is also researched if KOVA's organization has ways to engage the players, and if it has, how those actions should be developed.

There is research from the point of view of sport and the business side which show that a committed person performs their duties better, their well-being at work is better and they achieve better results. That is why it is important for the case organization to find ways to engage the players to

the organization and its operations, because if the players are engaged to the team and to the organization, it is easier to achieve success in games and it is also beneficial for the business.

The research is conducted by using a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Using these two research approaches this study aims to answer two research questions:

1. *What factors engage the player in the organizations' operations?*
2. *How does the organization strive to engage players in its operations?*

Based on the research results, an action proposal is made for the case organization, which will allow the organization to take action to better engagement of the players.

## **2 Electronic sports**

### **2.1 What is esports?**

Esports is one of the most recent phenomena in the field of sports. Instead of physical sports, in esports athletes play video games professionally and competitively against each other. Competitive gaming has been around for a very long time, but it wasn't suitable for the masses until about 1990, when the games evolved to the point that anyone could enjoy them. (Rantala & Kraneis 2018, 10.)

According to Ford (2020), esports shortly means competitive gaming at professional level. There are leagues and teams which consists of the most skilled players who have contracts just like in regular sports. They compete in tournaments for money and other prizes. Most known esports

games are popular games that non-professional gamers play at their homes. Some of the most notorious ones are League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and Dota2.

Esports is already a big phenomenon but it still in growth. Millions of people can enjoy esports and it is mostly watched through streaming platforms like Twitch. If one wants to be an esports player they can prove themselves in ranked matchmaking and then participate in open qualifiers. (Ford 2020.)

Esports organizations get their revenue mostly from sponsorships and co-operations while the players can earn big sums of money from tournaments prize pool which is usually shared between the players in the team. Players also have salaries. There is also income in ticket sales and accessories. (Willingham 2018).

## **2.2 History of esports**

Competitive gaming got air under its wings in the 1990 when network connection spread from universities and research institutes to the public facilities like libraries and schools and homes of consumers. At the same time the network connection got faster which was crucial to the online gaming in real time. This changed console- and computer gaming since now it was possible to play against other people in a much wider scale than ever before. Around same time company called Id Software launched game called "Doom". Doom is FPS-game and is thought to be one of the most important games in the development of modern esports. Microsoft organized a big Doom 2 tournament in 1995 which was the biggest competitive gaming event so far. It was also shown in cable television. The lowering price of information technology and the wide spreading of internet made competitive gaming more professional and serious than before. At the same time professional



gaming got more economic interest and partners and sponsors started to support gaming tournaments with cash. Soon there were big gaming tournaments where participants could get a noticeable amount of money as a reward. (Rantala & Kraneis 2018, s-15-19)

As the gaming industry got to the 21<sup>st</sup> century the popularity of professional video gaming was in the rise. The amount of prize money has risen to millions of dollars and the tournaments are now being held in stadiums and big halls with millions of viewers. The biggest reason why Esports has been so popular since 2010 is mainly because of massive online videogames and online video sharing platforms YouTube and streaming platform Twitch. Also, the new generation has moved from watching tv to these online sharing platforms, where consumer can view the content, they want around the clock. Esports is a new phenomenon in the field of sports, and it is constantly growing. (Rantala & Kraneis 2018, 21-23.)

### **2.3 Most popular esports games**

Esports games are divided into various categories. Most popular categories are FPS, RTS, MOBA, Fighting games and Sport games.

In First person shooter games (FPS) a player sees the game through the eyes of the main character. The idea in FPS games is to eliminate the opponent by using different guns. The player gets points by fragging (eliminating) the opponents. There are several different game modes in FPS games, such as Deathmatch, Capture the flag and Search and destroy/defuse. (FPS, räiskintäpelit, n.d.) Most popular FPS-games are CS:GO, Valorant and Overwatch.

In real time strategy games (RTS) players must act in real time. Basic idea is to collect different resources, that are used to build different kinds of buildings and troops. In maps, there are limited number of resources and players often fight over them. In RTS games tournaments are usually 1 versus 1 game, and the goal is to destroy the opponent's troops and buildings. Players must pay attention in two different areas: Micromanagement, which means control over troops, and macro

management, which means controlling production resources and economic balance. Scouting and map management is also a basic part of playing strategy games, because players must react fast to what the other one is doing. (RTS, strategiapelit. N.d.) One of the most popular RTS games is StarCraft.

MOBA games have reached the biggest player audience of all game genres. In MOBA games there are two teams, and the goal is to destroy the enemy base while defending their own. The matches are usually played on the same map, for example in League of Legends the matches are always played on a map called Summoner's Rift, but in some games, there are several maps. Teams of five players are playing with strong characters which are called heroes or champions, and all champions have various kinds of abilities and skills. Skills get better when the game goes further. Players have computer-controlled troops there to help them. (MOBA, areenapelit. N.d.)

The basic idea in battle royale games is to be the last team or player alive. Usually, games are in an island where is 50-100 players at the same time. To win the game, players must eliminate other players or teams. Usually, the area where players are gets smaller and smaller, so players are closer to each other. In battle royale games there are two different game modes: Either it is played from players vision or it is played from third person's perspective. (Battle Royale, selviytymispelit. N.d.)

Different sports games are based on real-life sports. Sport games are played on PC and different consoles (PlayStation, Xbox). The most popular way to play sport games is 1 vs 1 format where one player controls the whole team, but one character at the time while other characters are controlled by the computer. The rules of the games are based on real-life sports. In NHL games there have been tournaments which are played 6 vs 6, so that every character in the game is controlled by one player. (Urheilupelit, n.d.)

## 2.4 Esports ecosystem in a nutshell

At first sight the ecosystem of esports might be hard to understand, but actually the ecosystem is quite similar to any other sport, like football or ice hockey as seen in Figure 1. It has fans, players, teams, competitions, and service providers. The main difference between esports and traditional sports is the role of video game publishers such as Valve and Riot games: They own the rights to games, and their influence runs beyond the traditional sports concept of right holders. (Fläckel 2021.) Of course, the same esports company can be in multiple different roles at the same time, as they may work as competition organizers, right holders and content creators. (The Esports Observer n.d.).



Figure 1. Simplified overview of the esports ecosystem. (Esports Observer, n.d.)

Video game publishers may organize tournaments and leagues, but it is also possible that publisher may license rights to a third-party organizer, but publishers have still a lot of impact to tournaments and leagues as they own the rights to games (McGlynn 2020).

In early years of esports, the teams who took part in tournaments or leagues were just groups of players who decided to play together. For smaller tournaments it still can be the same thing, but for bigger leagues and tournaments teams have organizations behind them. According to McGlynn (2020) esports organizations have become more akin to employers with professional players being their employees. Organizations can provide different benefits to their players, such as training, equipment, and entry fees to tournaments. Organizations may also negotiate sponsorship deals in their own right and on behalf of their players.

Sponsorship deals are the key channel of revenue in the esports industry. In 2021, the global esports market was valued at 1.08 billion US dollars, and the revenue from sponsorships and advertising totaled 641 million US dollars from it. (Statista 2021.)

### **3 Commitment to the organization and the team**

Engagement of an employee – or a player – means emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals. It means that employees care about their job and the company, and they want the company to be successful. (Kruse 2012.)

In esports organizations, the players and the staff of the organization may live in different cities or in different countries. That means that for most of the time the players are working remotely, at least in Finland. Some bigger organizations have so called “gaming houses” for their players where players live and work, but in Finland those are quite rare. Most of the organizations offer bootcamp possibilities to the players, but usually bootcamps last from a couple of weeks to few weeks. Because the players do not see each other or the staff of the organization often, it is important for organizations to think about how they engage their players.

### 3.1 Athlete engagement

The word, “engagement” in sports is borrowed from the business world. The purpose of athlete engagement is similar to business world: Measurement of individuals motivation and commitment to his role in the organization. Most people have basic psychological need to succeed, belong to something and be autonomous. In sports these needs can be satisfied when they are succeeding in their sport, they get the feeling of belongin from coaches and teammates and they are cabable of developing their skills through selfdriven training and motivation. When these psychological needs are satisfied it leads to engaged athlete. Athletes own enjoyment of the sport also affects on the level of engagement and those athletes who enjoy their sport the most have the best internal motivation and engagement. (Hodge, Lonsdale & Jackson, 2009.)

Athlete engagement has effect on the performance and success of the athlete and whole organization. Engagement does not always just appear from the athlete, and that is one of the main things where the coach comes in with help and support. Coaches have to build motivating and rewarding culture where the athlete gets recognition. By creating this environment athletes become self-motivated and committed to their part. They want to performe at the very best level they can not only for themselves but also for the good coaches. It has been proven that the support of a coach has a lot to do with athletes level of engagement and self motivation. This is very comparable to the business world. For example Apple is well known for its good benefits and working conditions so the employees want to work for Apple because they have opportunity to became better, they have good working environment and Apple pays them well. It’s the same thing except in sports the reward is winning matches and enhancing as an athlete. (What it’s really like working for Apple, 2020.)

Here are few ways how to keep athletes engaged by the organization and coach. Let the athletes be part of the organization and listen, what they have to say. The environment where the athlete feels he has a say enhances the engagement. Give them opportunity to express themselves and be creative. If they have their own method of training let them do their way if its effective and works.

Too much pressure can be overwhelming, so give your athletes time and space to think and develop in the peace of their own mind. Give and take feedback. Giving feedback even if it has negative vibe makes athlete feel that they matter and they need to improve. Also listen to feedback and try to be better as a organization for the athletes. Offer your athletes different opportunities and keep them interested. Don't force the engagement, it comes from the athlete and creating trustful relationship might take time. (Hanson, n.d.)

According to Hanson (n.d.), disengaged athlete does harm themselves and the whole organization. The lack of commitment from the athlete affects their teammates, organization and coaches.

### **3.2 Meaningful and valued work**

When an employee feels that their job is high valued, they usually are more productive and engaged to the organization. According to Matikka (2021) engaged employees are valuable recourse to the organizations, because the compensation costs of a person who performs well may rise close to 200% of their annual salary.

Meaningful work and job satisfaction make employees more committed, and this increases the company's productivity. The association for Finnish work (2015) has defined three elements for high valued work:

- High value work is productive work, and it creates value instead of extracting it. It means that high value work does not involve rent-seeking behavior that monopolizes recourses and skims off revenues.
- High value work creates long-term value.
- High value work creates shared value by finding opportunities for business and innovation.

High value is not just the preserve of the technology or manufacturing sector, because it can be developed throughout the economy. It is not just about higher wages, but the secret is to invest both in people and the business to deepen employee engagement. Employee engagement is indentified in business literature as one of the most significant differentiators of business

performance. The more meaningful a task or job, the more motivated and engaged the employee. (The Association for Finnish Work, p. 7-8, 2015.) As seen Figure 2., this creates a virtuous cycle where motivated employees create higher productivity, which leads to higher investment and then to higher social returns, which makes employees more engaged.

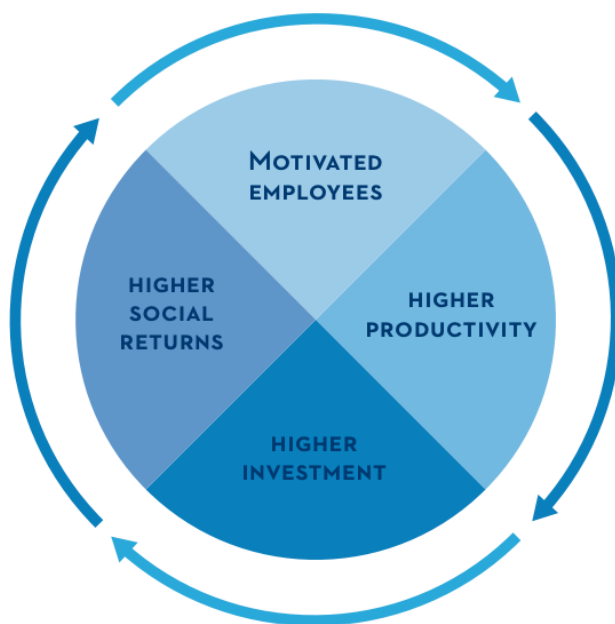


Figure 2. Virtuous cycle of high value work. (Source: Association of Finnish Work/ The Futures Company 2015)

Well-being at work means safe, healthy and productive work done by skilled workers and work communities in a well-run organization. Both employee and employer are responsible for well-being at work, and the acts of it must be long-term. (Työterveyslaitos n.d.)

Well-being at work affects an organization's competitiveness, financial performance and reputation. It can also be used as an advantage when recruiting new employees to the organization; there has been discussion in different medias about how hard recruiting new employees is and, in some cases, there is even a labor shortage. (Kaarna 2020). In esports,

especially in Finland, it might be hard to find fresh players who are good enough because the scene is still quite small.

A prosperous work community is vigorous, inspiring, confident, encouraging, provides positive feedback, dares to talk about problematic situations and maintains the ability to act in changing situations. Well-being at work is also the well-being of the employee. A well-being employee is motivated and responsible, can utilize their strengths and skills, know the goal of their work, feels important, receives feedback and gets excited about their work. (Työterveyslaitos n.d.)

It is the responsibility of the employer to make sure that well-being at work is taken care of by managing and leading the organization and by developing the work community and the work itself. Employee does not get “a free pass” when talked about well-being at work: Employee must take care about their own health, maintain a good work atmosphere, and keep their motivation and to be ready to start a conversation and interaction. (Tie työelämään n.d.)

### **3.3 Meaning of coach**

Coaches are guides and motivators for the athletes. The usual thought of a coach is that coach is a person who organizes the practises, comes there, and tells athletes what to do. There is so much more deeper aspect in coaching that one might think at first. Coaches have wide variety of different tasks and the biggest and the most important task is managing athletes and creating positive environment. Managing athletes does not only include before mentioned things but also the management of time, motivation, performance and atmosphere for example. Coach is the one who needs to create the environment where athletes are self-motivated and want to enhance their skills with their own will and not because someone tells them to do so. (Goldsmith, n.d.)

*“Coaching is people related job, where you need to know humans’ physical, mental and social behaviour. Good coach can identify inner strengths in athlete and take them in beneficial use. Also open interaction is needed.” - Elina Gustaffson, boxer.*



As Elina Gustaffson mentioned, one important feature that good coach has is that he can help athletes find those inner strenghts and use them to get better results. Coaches need to prepare athletes and inspire them to get better also mentally. Good coach helps athlete to reach full potential both physically and mentally and at the same time keeping athlete in balance. Balance in this subject means that the coach can motivate the athlete train more or train less depending on the situation. They look after their athletes and make sure they don't burn out by training too much or lose their flow by not training enough. (Loikkanen, 2020)

Coaches job is to help the athlete to get self-motivated by creating the opportunities and right environment for it. Motivation cannot be forced. By creating the right environment the athlete gives themselves for the sport and do more than being asked by a coach. Self-motivation that awakes in athelete can be seen for example if the athlete does more repetitions or runs a longer distance or trains more than the coach expects, and the will to do so comes form the athlete and not from the coach, but in the environment that the coach has offered and build. (Goldsmith, n.d.)

### **3.4 Mentally preparing becoming a pro athlete**

Becoming a pro athlete requires a lot of mental preparation and there are several factors on the mental side that can either enhance individuals performance or do harm to it. There are several factors that have effect on athletes performance mentally: Overall balance in life, selfconfidence, ability to focus, setting up goals, motivation, attitudes, controlling excitement, leading your own performance and ability to take feedback and interact. Preparing mentally may take a lot of time and requires a lot of energy. According to the most recent study done by the psychologists in the Queens university in Kingston, Canada, person can have up to 6,200 thoughts in a day (Berman, 2020.) and as a pro athlete you should be able to manage and have effect on many of them. There has also been a study that states that person can have up to 70 000 thoughtst in a day, but based on our research we think that this new study seems more reliable. (Forssell, 2016, s. 40-43)

It is very normal behaviour for a person to get stuck on your mistakes and negative thoughts that might run in your head over and over for a long periods of time. As an athlete this has negative effect on your performance. It is important to train your mental side, so that individual can push those negative thoughts away and focus on something else. One way of doing this is by accepting the mistake and making it smaller in their head. Many finnish pro-athletes have good examples how they have reached the right mindstate neede for the situation they are in. One way of doing this is by speaking to themselves either in their head or saying it silently. For example Aki Riihilahti, Finnish football player says to himself befor every match this sentence: "I am mentally and physically prepaped for every situation". This helps him to get the right focus. (Forssell, 2016, s. 22-26)

Knowing your strenghts, weaknesses and your own identity is useful in preparing mentally. Athelets can identify their areas that need to be enhanced but at the same time they recognize those abilities that they are good in. Knowing your strenghts and repeating them in your head or out loud brings you self confidence and is more likely to lead in good results in matches and tournaments. Some think that there is no such thing as too confident in sports. Self confidence is something one should not mix up with arrogance. (Forssell, 2016, s. 84-89)

### **3.5 Importance of team**

There are E-sports where you play as an individual, but the most notorious games are played in teams. The co-operation between the players is the key to success. E-sports games that are played in teams are all about co-operation. The players are dependent on each other, and they trust that the person sitting next to them does the job they should so every individual can focus on their own task.

The same rules of the business world also apply to the esports industry regarding the importance of teamwork. A well-functioning team provides a lot both to the players but also to the organization. In a well recruited team, every person understands each other and works hard for the common goal. (Tang, N.d)

It is important to acknowledge that there are many roles inside an esports team and when organizations are recruiting players and building teams, they just do not pick talented players at random. In some games, for example there are various kinds of characters that have different skill sets and some players are specialized in playing that. In games that do not have different characters like Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, the players still have different roles, for example, leader and shot caller. These roles improve team synergy and make playing more organized. (Haapakoski, Niemelä & Yrjölä 2020 s. 40-57)

To succeed as a team, the members need to have good cognitive and social skills. In order to win tournaments, they need to know each other's personalities and playing style and they need to support each other and be able to give and take feedback. Players in a good team feel belonging with their teammates and enjoy playing with them. This leads to a higher level of engagement not only to that team but also in organization. (The Cybersmile Foundation, N.d)

### **3.6 The importance of communication**

A well-functioning communication is one of the basic preconditions for a well-functioning organization and work community. Members of the organization must be able to trust that they will receive all the information that is relevant to their work. If staff feel that they do not receive information that is relevant to them, the consequences are bad for the functioning of the work community. The worst situation is when everyone knows something has happened, but no one is there to clarify what has happened and why. If situations constantly arise in which it becomes apparent that some have known and others have not, or that no one excluding management has known what has happened, trust in communication disappears. (Joki, 2021, 163-164.)

Communication is not a separate island where only those assigned to communication tasks work, but communication is everything that happens in the community. Well-managed internal communication creates a basis for external communication and all activities of the organization. Although communication is part of all human activities, international communication in an organization must be well planned and organized. Internal communication covers, among other things, the organization's goals, strategies, plans, finances, and decisions. Ideally, communication enhances operational development, promotes the definition and achievement of common goals, and improves well-being at work and commitment. The success of communication, the transmission of information and the functioning of the community are the responsibility of each member of the work community. (Hagerlund & Kaukopuro-Klemetti, 2013, 6-7, 10.)

For communication to work, it is important that all members of the organization strive for good work behavior. In practice, good work behavior is the choice to behave in accordance with good manners. Good work behavior includes, for example; Fairness: The employee treats their work, tasks and problematic situations as positively as possible, and does not bring negativity by constantly complaining; Good, open and honest interaction with supervisors as well as other members of the work community; Understanding and accepting difference: understanding that everyone works differently and the same outcome can be achieved in several different ways; Trust: Members of the organization are trustworthy by keeping their promises. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, n.d.)

Each organization has its own channels for internal communication. In different communication situations, different communication channels are used either one at a time or, if necessary, several in parallel. For some things, brief information is enough to communicate, while for others it is necessary to tell, read and give the opportunity to ask and answer questions and to remove all ambiguities. While there may be numerous channels of internal communication, there is no substitute for discussion between superiors and subordinates. (Joki, 2021, 168.)

As said before, it is common that in esports organizations players and management may live in different cities or even in different countries. It means that virtuality is a part of everyday life for the members of an esports organization and most communication takes place remotely. That is why interaction should be regular and agreed upon, and all members of organization should pay attention to how they say or write things, because it is more challenging to understand the other person perfectly when you cannot see their face and body language (Haapakoski, Niemelä & Yrjölä 2020, 99).

### **3.7 Player contracts**

Esports has been growing fast and more people earn their money from competitive playing. Because the amount of money is so big in esports, it is important to pay attention to the player contracts. Player contracts in esports are quite similar as in other sports, for example as in ice hockey. (Hautamäki 2019.)

In Finland, it has not been seen as necessary to regulate sport by means of special laws, but it has been considered as one form of free civic activity. There are no laws relating to the performance of sport, but there are some specific provisions in the legislation specifically for sport, such as the taxation of sporting activities. (Jalanko & Siiki, 2009, 11.)

In team sports, at least at the higher league levels, a player contract is concluded between the organization and the player, under which the player undertakes to make his stake in favor of the team. Player contracts are usually created when a player accepts the offer of the organization. A player contract is a key agreement that requires the express consent of both parties. It agrees on the responsibilities of both the player and the organization to each other. (Jalanko & Siiki 2009, 12.)

Finnish Esports Federation (SEUL ry) has created the base for the player contracts for Finnish players and organizations. Terms and conditions in the player contract base are those that have been

estimated to work in the most typical situations in which Finnish esports players enter players contracts. The basis is intended for situations where Finnish law applies to contracts. The contractual basis has been drafted in such a way that it practically meets the characteristics of an employment relationship. (Pelaajasopimus pohja, n.d.)

In the player contract, the athlete undertakes to play and train for the team in accordance with the instructions of the coach and the team management. The main obligation of an organization is usually to pay the agreed consideration, but contracts may also contain provisions of an ancillary that promote and secure the realization of the main performance. These may include, for example, the organization's obligation to provide the athlete with housing, the acquisition of a car and the insurance of the athlete. (Jalanko & Siiki, 2009, 12). In esports, organizations usually do not provide players with an apartment or car, as players can play online tournaments from home, or the organization can host a bootcamp for them. However, it is the organization of bootcamps and the provision of potential other benefits, such as equipment, that can be part of esports' player contracts.

The benefits included in the contract are not the ones that decide whether the player will join the organization, but they may be the means to engage the player. According to Rumpu (2018) employee benefits on top of pay are part of the overall reward that keeps talented players or employees in the organization. Employee benefits can also shape the corporate image, and therefore it is wise to include some benefits in the contract, even though the organization may also offer benefits that are not listed in the contract.

It is not equivocal whether the esports athlete's contract is an employment contract. Depends on the form and details of the contract whether the athlete is legally employed by the organization or is considered a self-employed person. (Jalanko & Siiki 2009, 12). However, the obligations and benefits of a player contract are usually so similar to an employment contract that, for the sake on

simplicity in this study, we will not go into detail in this research as how the form of contract affects the player's legal status.

## **4 Methodology**

We chose to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In quantitative research we focused on KOVA's players and asked about their engagement to KOVA. Based on the results of the survey, we developed an interview template, and we interviewed players and organizational leaders of KOVA.

### **4.1 Quantitative research**

In quantitative research the goal is to collect and analyze numerical data. It is mostly used when the target group is large and the wanted outcome of the research is a summary of something, for example measuring the happiness of the workers in a large factory. Things are presented in numeric quantity and often variables and relationships between different things will be clarified. The most used methods of gathering data are surveys, interviews, phone interviews and internet surveys. It is also possible to use several methods in one research. In quantitative research the subject of the study must be measurable. Several things can be measured and analyzed via quantitative research. Both easy and more complicated. A good example of the easier things to measure are height and age and more complex could be people's thoughts and feelings. (Bhandari, 2021)

It is important to choose how to measure. There are several different meters like height, distance, wellbeing at work. Our meters are the level of engagement- and overall satisfaction of players in KOVA. When deciding what meter to use it must fulfil certain requirements. When choosing the meter, it is important to know the target group of your study. There are several variables which must be taken into consideration like age, ethnic background, culture etc. Meter can be created but often there are ready meters that can be used. (Mittaaminen, n.d.)

Quantitative research aims to explain the subject by observations. Targets of measurement can be called units of observation. Unit of observation is determined based on the research problem. Our research problem is competitive players engagement to KOVA, so our units of observation are the players, management, and staff of KOVA. These people make up our population of the study. (Otos ja otantamenetelmät, n.d.)

In our research we decided to use internet survey as a method in collecting data and we gave our target group a week to respond. We used this method because our survey has some personal questions, and we feel like it is easier for our target group to answer in an anonymous survey. Also, it is an easy way of spreading our survey and individuals in our target group can answer whenever they have time within the given period.

Meter: Engagement of players in KOVA

## **4.2 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research is a research method where one collects data from individuals by different methods. Empirical materials are used as research materials, which can be, for example, texts, discussions, interviews, observation diaries or spaces where any activity takes place. Sometimes numerical data, such as various statistics, can also be of interest for qualitative research, but its purpose is not to get numerical data like in quantitative research method but to get a deeper understanding of the issue. (Juhila n.d.) Like in this study, we are trying to understand the behavior, emotions and attitudes of the players and staff.

When qualitative materials are used, it means that the materials are not edited in numerical form and the results are not inferred from, for example, how many interviewees talk about some subject. (Juhila n.d.)



In qualitative research, it is important that research materials are not taken out of context. For example, actions of a person are researched where the action happens. (Juhila n.d.).

Qualitative research has traditionally been combined with an appreciation of subjectivity, agency, and perspectives. It also involves emphasizing the meanings and interpretations of the parties involved. Qualitative research focuses on the meanings present in people's actions or meanings they give to their internal experiences. The people whose actions or experiences are being studied are key to understanding these meanings. (Juhila n.d.)

Inductance or material tonnage distinguishes qualitative research from quantitative research. In qualitative research, empirical data is the one from which to start, and the results so-called emerge from the data collected and only then are they possibly compared to precious theories or research results. (Juhila n.d.)

### **4.3 Implementation of the research**

#### **Webropol questionnaire**

For quantitative research we used Webropol questionnaire (seen in Appedinx 1.). A questionnaire is a research instrument which includes several questions. A questionnaire is shared with the target audience of the study in order to gather information about the subject of the research. The good thing about this method is that researchers can gain a lot of numeric data quickly. Online questionnaires are easily shareable and can be answered any time within the time given. Our questionnaire had different scales which measured feelings, attitudes and basic information like time spent in organization, does one play in a team or not etc. The problem in questionnaires is that we can never be sure that the right person filled the questionnaire or that the answers are fully reliable because people might lie even though the questionnaire is anonymous. (Mcleod, 2018)

Quantitative research was conducted using a questionnaire created in Webropol seen in appendix 1.. A link to the survey was sent to 34 KOVA players via Discord (KOVA has a private server with all players in it) with a cover letter. Players had a week to respond to the survey. The survey was in both Finnish and English because some of the potential respondents speak another language than Finnish as their native language. Of those 34 players, 22 responded.

The survey examined players' attitudes towards gaming, organization and communication between the organization and the players. We asked a lot of questions about satisfaction and the importance of different subjects. For example, how long has one played in the organization and is it their full-time job or more of a hobby. Based on the answers we got information about the overall situation in KOVA and detected some problems which helped us to think of the themes and questions for our theme interviews.

The aim of the survey was to get an overview of what players think about the organization and at what level the players' commitment to the organization is, based on variables such as different games and the time spent at KOVA. For the most reliable results, the survey used yes/no questions, open-ended questions and questions answered by players using the Likert scale. When using the Likert scale, respondents chose the best option according to their own opinion.

We used a five-point Likert scale where the respondents could choose how happy or unhappy, they are and how important they feel different subjects are. In our questionnaire we measured the importance and quality of different subjects regarding the KOVA.

For example in the picture above, we asked the players about importance of actions of a coach. We used five point likert scale. Each of these given answer options we get numerical data about the overall feelings of the players regarding the given subject. When the data collected is presented as in the table above, it is quite easy to analyze and figure out the problems.

The strength of using Likert scale in the questionnaire is that the respondents can choose anonymously from different answer options and give their honest opinion and there are not yes/no questions which is good for the researchers. The downside of the Likert scale is that it's not fully reliable because people tend to want to give a positive image of themselves and that might lead to lying even though the questionnaire is anonymous. (McLeod, 2019)

### **Semi-structured interview**

For qualitative research in our study, we used semi-structured) interview as a method in collecting empirical data (seen in Appendix 2.). In a semi-structured interview, all interviewees are asked the same or at least almost the same questions. A semi-structured interview can also be called a thematic interview, as the interviews usually have pre-planned themes as well as specific questions. A semi-structured interview is suitable for situations where it has been decided to want information on specific issues and it is therefore not decided or necessary to give the interviewees very great freedoms in the interview situation. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006.)

In this research we used thematic interviews to get a deeper understanding of the engagement of a competitive player in esports organization. Themes for interview were compiled based on the responses to the quantitative survey. As pointed out before, it is important to qualitative research that research materials are not taken out of context and that actions of a person are researched where the action happens. That is why interviews were all conducted via video conference calls on Microsoft Teams: Most of the communication in the subject organization takes place through Discord or some other applications, so remote interviews were more comfortable for interviewees than face-to-face interviews. Also, the interviewees live in different cities, so remote interviews were the most effective way to conduct research on schedule.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish as it is the native language for interviewers and interviewees. This ensured that the parties understood each other. In total there were six interviews: Three for the organization's management staff and three for the players.

In qualitative research the purpose is to understand certain phenomenon rather than to understand statistical relationships (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). For this research the key was to understand how players and organization's management see engagement and how they feel about it. As the organization has teams in five different games, we decided that three people from different teams is a sufficiently representative sample. The players interviewed were from teams that are most visible in KOVA's actions and contribute to the success of the organization. From the organization's management we selected the three people who are most involved in the decision-making related to the players.

For the players interviewed, there were 20 different pre-planned questions and five different themes and some background information. For the management interviewed there were 14 different pre-planned questions from the same themes. The themes were:

- Action of a team
- Actions of a coach
- Legal matters
- Communication between the players and the organization
- Partnerships

The interviews lasted from about 20 minutes to 45 minutes. Initially, the interview time was limited to a maximum of 45 minutes so that processing and analysis of the material did not take too long.

After all interviews were conducted, one of the players asked us to exclude his interview from this study. That is why the results include three interviews from the staff and two interviews from the players.

## **5 Results**

The results of the questionnaire and interviews are presented in parallel in the following chapters, as the themes were the same in both research methods. At the beginning of each subsection, first we present the results of the questionnaire, followed by the results of interviews with players and staff. The results should note that one of the players we interviewed subsequently requested that his interview not be used as research data.

### **5.1 Background information**

#### **Questionnaire**

In the questionnaire we asked the players how long they have been in KOVA. There were 22 respondents and 72 % of them had been in KOVA 0-12 months and 28 % 1-3 years. Next, we asked the players do they play full-time. In this question there were 22 respondents. As seen in the table below 18 % said yes, 27 % said they play 60-80 % of their time and 55 % said they play 20-40 % of their time. As a final background question, we asked if the players take competitive playing as a job or as a hobby. 45 % answered as a job, 46 % answered as a hobby and 9 % had no opinion.

#### **Interviews**

The first thing asked in interviews was how long the interviewees have been in KOVA. Player A and Player B have been in organization less than a year. For staff members the first question was the same, and Staff members A and B have been in organization from a start, and Staff member C less than a year.

Next question for players interviewed was that whether they play full time. Both players said that they play full time.

For staff members the next question asked in interviews was about their roles and have they changed. Staff member A, who has been in KOVA from a start has worked in different positions: At first, he was responsible of social media and marketing, and little by little he started to take more responsibility from the whole organization. Staff member B has always worked as a manager, but the job description has changed a little because of corona, and for example he is not that big a part of a content as before. Staff member C is working as player manager, and he also makes content for organization.

## **5.2 Action of a team**

### **Questionnaire**

We asked the players if they were part of a team. There were 22 respondents and 95 % of them said that they belong to a team 5 % said that they do not.

We asked how the players experience the actions of team members. This question is for those who answered that they are part of a team. There were 21 respondents in this question. We had three sections within this question and those were communication, participation in mutual activities and feedback. The scale in this question was from 1-5, 1 = very bad and 5 = very good. 72 % of the players thought that the communication is quite- or very good, 23 % thought it was moderate and 5 % thought it was slightly bad.

When asked about participation in mutual activities 80 % thought it was quite- or very good. 10 % thought it was moderate and 10 % thought it was slightly bad. When asked about feedback 72 % thought it was quite- or very good, 19 % thought it was moderate and 9 % thought it was slightly bad.

Next in our questionnaire we asked how important the players consider the actions of team members. Also, this question is for those who answered that they are part of a team. There were 21 respondents in this question. As seen in the figure below, we had three sections questions within this question and those were communication, participation in mutual activities and feedback. The scale in this question was from 1-5. 1 = not important at all and 5 = very important.

As seen in Figure 3., 100 % of the players thought that the communication is very important. When asked about participation in mutual activities 95 % thought it was quite- or very important and 5 % thought it was slightly important. When asked about feedback 100 % thought it was quite- or very important.



Figure 3. Actions of a team.

## Interviews

In the interview the next question to the players was how they would describe communication inside their teams. Both mentioned in their responses that communication is important, and they feel like communication in their teams is at a good level.

*“I think the communication is really good level, sometimes someone may leave something unsaid to avoid conflicts – but we have a really good and open atmosphere” –  
Player A*

After that we asked in interviews how they implement an equal division of labor in the team. The answers showed that each member of the team has a role to play in the team, and that it is not possible to implement a completely equal division of labor in practice.

Player A thinks that it is part of his role in the team to put a lot of effort into things outside the actual playing, but that they have been discussing the matter inside of the team and sought to share the work more equally.

Player B says that in their team some do more, some less, but it is quite equally shared. He also says that even if someone does more work than others, everyone is always aware of what needs to be done and where the team goes.

The next question was about giving feedback within the team and its relevance for the actions of the team. All of them agreed that giving feedback to one another is important. Player B points out that it is part of the sports that can give and take feedback.



*“First of all, criticism must be accepted. If someone takes it upon themselves, there usually will be problems among the entire team – for us, it is pretty easy to give feedback to each other and everyone understands its importance – at this point in our careers giving and receiving feedback is essential. Frankly, if someone cannot take feedback, it is pretty amateurish.” – Player B.*

From the staff members we asked how they see the internal functioning of different teams. All of them said that in principle, the teams are very self-directed and take care of their own affairs.

*“The role of the organization is usually to support the players and help in case of problems” - Staff member C*

### **5.3 Action of a coach**

#### **Questionnaire**

We asked if the players have an in-game coach. There were 21 respondents in this question. 24 % answered yes and 76 % answered no. Then we asked those who had a coach how satisfied they were in the actions of the coach. There were 5 respondents. This question had four sections which were support, communication, the division of roles and motivation. The scale was from 1-5 where 1 = unsatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. When asked about support 40 % were quite satisfied and 60 % answered moderate, when asked about communication 100 % of the respondents were quite satisfied, when asked about division of roles 20 % were slightly satisfied and 80 % felt moderate, when asked about motivation 40 % were quite satisfied, 40 % answered moderate and 20 % were slightly unsatisfied.

We asked how important players consider the actions of the coach. Also, this question was for those who answered that they have a coach. There were 5 respondents. This question had four

sections which were support, communication, the division of roles and motivation. The scale was from 1-5 where 1 = not important at all and 5 = very important.

When asked about support and about communication, 100% of the players thought it was quite- or very important. When asked about division of roles 60 % felt it was quite or very important and 40 % thought it was slightly important or not important at all and when asked about motivation 100 % of the players thought it was quite- or very important.

### **Interviews**

The interview revealed that none of the players interviewed currently have an in-game coach, but Players A and B believe that it would be beneficial for the team.

Players A and B both said that although it would be beneficial for the team to have an in-game coach, it is hard to find one. Player A and his team hope to find a Finnish-speaking coach, but in Finland the scene is so small that it is hard to find one. Player B thinks that having an in-game coach would reduce his workload.

When asked what players would like the coach to do, Player A and B again are on the same page: It would be nice to have someone who could help, for example, analyze the game and reduce their workload. Player A also thinks that the coach could act as an authority that would, so to speak, discipline the team.

*“I would like good authority from the coach -- yes, I feel that I have authority on the team, but when I am one of the players, I would still need someone who is not a player and who would say things as they are and tell the team how to act.” – Player A.*

Player B hopes that the coach would bring some experience to the rather new team. The right kind of person for their team would be someone who could help, especially the younger players, to create their fundamental better.

In the staff interviews we did not ask anything related to the in-game coaches.

## **5.4 Legal matters**

### **Questionnaire**

We asked the players how satisfied they were in their player contract. This question had 21 respondents. We had four sections within the question and those were the length of the contract, rewards/prizes, benefits, and responsibilities. The scale was from 1-5 where 1 = unsatisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

As seen in Figure 4. below, when asked about the length of the contract 71 % of the players were quite- or very satisfied and 29 % felt moderate, when asked about rewards and prizes, 38 % were quite- or very satisfied, 33 % felt moderate and 29 % were slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied. When asked about benefits 43 % were quite- or very satisfied, 29 % felt moderate and 28 % were slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied, and when asked about responsibilities 76 % were quite- or very satisfied, 10 % felt moderate and 14 % were unsatisfied.

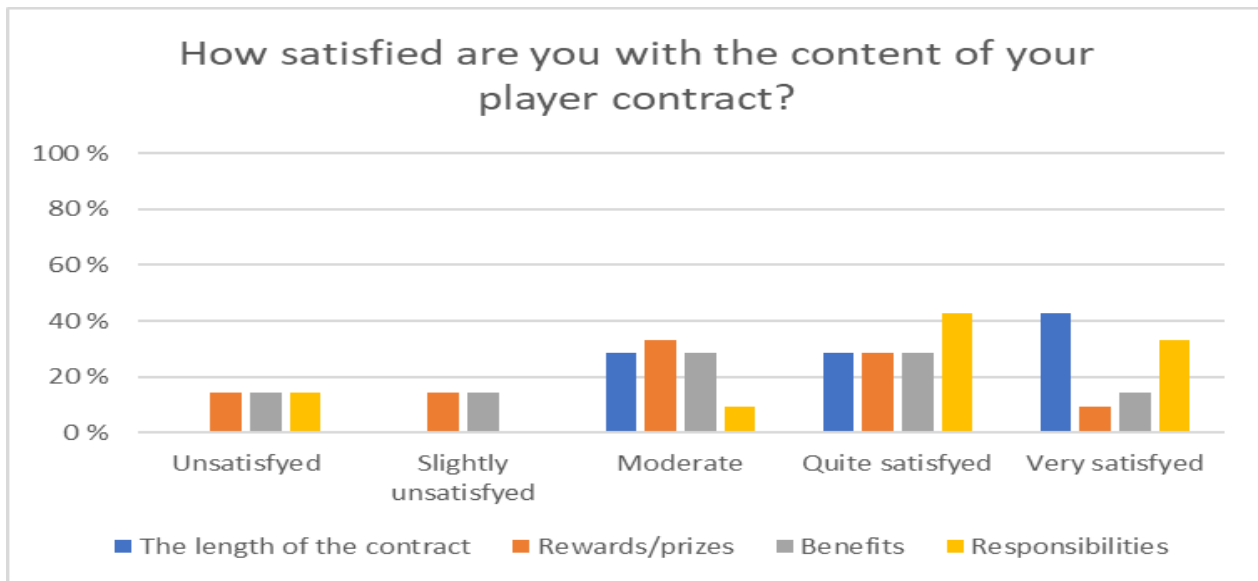


Figure 4. Satisfaction with the player contract.

We asked the players how satisfied they were with the opportunities KOVA has to offer. This question had 22 respondents. There were three sections in this question which were games/tournaments, bootcamps and coaching. The scale was from 1-5 where 1 = unsatisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

When asked about games and tournaments 55 % were quite- or very satisfied, 27 % felt moderate and 18 % were slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied. When asked about bootcamps 41 % were quite- or very satisfied, 32 % felt moderate and 27 % were slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied. When asked about coaching 38 % were quite- or very satisfied, 43 % felt moderate and 19 % were slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied.

We asked the players how important they consider those opportunities KOVA offers. This question had 22 respondents. There were three sections in this question which were games/tournaments, bootcamps and coaching. The scale was from 1-5 where 1 = not important at all and 5 = very important.

When asked about games and tournaments 82 % of the respondents thought it was quite- or very important and 18 % had no opinion. When asked about bootcamps 86 % felt it was quite- or very important. 14 % had no opinion. When asked about coaching 68 % felt it was quite- or very important, 18 % felt moderate and 14 % felt it was slightly important or not important at all.

## Interviews

In the interviews the Players had a bit different opinion about legal matters, and they thought a bit differently about their player contracts. Players A and C are quite satisfied with their player contracts.

*“At the time I feel that the player contract is fair to me. Naturally, that bigger the organization, the more the contracts have specific details.” – Player B*

Player A thinks that player contract favors him a lot, and he thinks that even if the contract changes more favorable to the organization, he is still satisfied with it.

*“When I signed the contract, I thought that it is very favorable to me.” – Player A.*

Player B feels that for himself many things related to benefits and obligations are obvious because of his long career in esports, especially if obligations are related to content making and marketing.

*“Players must be ready to do things like that [content making and marketing] because those things take the organization forward. -- It is not just the playing and success that grows the organization.” - Player B.*

Player A was quite unsure about his response, but he said that he believes that he knows enough about the matter talked about.

After that we asked players what they think about their benefits and obligations. Player A was really satisfied, Player B had no complaints but didn't feel as positive about the matter.

*"Everything is really fair, and almost too good for the player. I would not mind if they were little bit worse."- Player A.*

Player A had not much else to say other than he was really pleased about the whole situation.

Player B thinks that the benefits and obligations are related to how well one performs in the organization. He thinks that when the players perform well, the organization grows, and they might get bonuses for that. Overall, he seemed quite pleased.

*"If you do your job well, it usually pays off."- Player B.*

Then we asked what kind of benefits the players would wish from the organization. Again, Player A was really satisfied with the situation and Player B did not expect much but had some wishes.

Player A said that KOVA has offered so many things so far and he thinks it is really big deal, that they can offer so much. He says that he has been very satisfied.

Player B said that there are some things you can expect from the organization and those are common bonuses you get from playing. He states that he hopes for good bonuses when performing well in playing. He also adds that it is equipment sport so when mouse or keyboard brakes he keeps it kind of obvious that organization provides new ones.

In the next question we asked what kind of opportunities players hoped that KOVA could offer. Player A had not much to add, he was still very satisfied and player B had some hopes related to the environment.

As said, Player A was very happy with the whole situation, and couldn't think of anything else to add.

Player B hoped that the organization could create an environment where players could function. He also adds that bootcamps are something he expects from the organization because there the team enhances their team dynamics, and it helps the team go forward.

For the staff member we asked How KOVA communicates players' benefits and obligations for them. Staff member A said that he thinks that every player knows about their benefits and obligations, and if player needs to do something, organization informs them. With obligations there has not been problems, but when talking about benefits, staff member A thinks that all players may not be aware what they can get or where to get them.

Staff member B says that benefits and obligations are communicated to the players in contracts.

Staff member C also mentions that all that is written in contracts and some benefits and obligations are "self-evident" and no-one has to tell the players about them. But also, if, for example, it says in a contract that a player can go to one event in a year, but the player does not say anything about it, it is very hard for the organization to remember to offer that kind of benefit. He does not think that the organization has had problems with these things.

*"Rarely we have problems with these things, and very rarely you have to say that "You have to do it because it is in the contract". Everything is handled through friendly communication." – Staff member C.*

After that we asked the staff members what kind of opportunities KOVA wants to offer to the players. Staff member A mentioned all kind of negotiations between the teams and tournament or-

ganizers. He thinks that players do not want to negotiate about game schedules and such, but because they are already used to it, they do it by themselves. He also mentions that organization can bring visibility in different medias for the players.

*“The negotiations are the biggest benefit what we can give to the players. Also, we can bring visibility to players through partners, for example.” – Staff member A.*

Staff member B agreed with staff member A, and he highlighted that KOVA wants to offer players a vantage point in Finland’s leading esports organization and all the benefits it brings.

*“Benefits include visibility, financial support, opportunities to develop... And players are not only members of the team, but also members of the organization and through that they get to present themselves more.” – Staff member B.*

Staff member C did not say much about this matter, but he pointed out that it is important that the organization and the players communicate with each other a lot so that everyone knows what should happen.

## **5.5 Communication between the players and the organization**

### **Questionnaire**

There were three questions in the questionnaire related to communication between the players and the organization. At first, we asked the players how equally KOVA treats its players, and there were four different sections: Player visibility in social media, player visibility in co-operations, communication from KOVA’s organization to players and players’ benefits. The answer options for questions given were on scale 1-5 where 1= Not equally at all and 5= Very equally.



As seen in Figure 5. below, most of the respondents, 63 % said that player visibility in social media is quite or very equal. 18 % had no opinion, and 19% responded that the visibility in social media is slightly or not equal.

50 % of respondents responded that player visibility in co-operations is quite or very equal, while 23% responded that it is slightly or not equal. 27% of the respondents had no opinion on this matter.

When asked how equally KOVA's organization communicates with players, 59% responded that quite or very equally. 18% had no opinion, and 23% responded slightly or not equally at all. When asked about how equally players of KOVA are treated in player benefits, 41% responded quite or very equally, 32% had no opinion and 28% responded slightly or not equally at all.

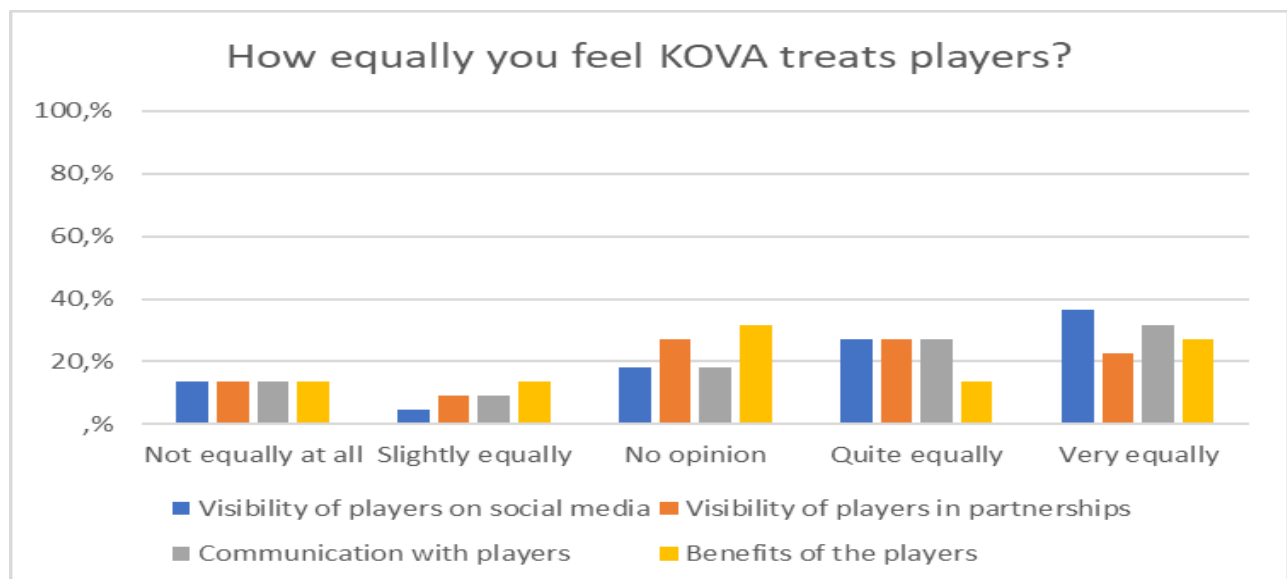


Figure 5. Equal treatment.

After that we asked how satisfied players are working with the organization. There were four different sections: Do they feel that it is easy to communicate with the staff of the organization, do

they feel that they can give feedback to the organization, do they receive enough feedback from the organization and do they feel that the work environment in KOVA is pleasant. The answer scale given was 1-5, where 1=Unsatisfied and 5= Very satisfied.

As seen in Figure 6. below, 68% of respondents were quite or very satisfied when asked how easy it is to communicate with the staff of the organization. 9% were moderately satisfied, and 23% were slightly or unsatisfied. 73% feel that they are quite or very satisfied with giving feedback to the organization. 14% were moderately satisfied, while 14% were slightly or unsatisfied. 72% of respondents feel at least moderately satisfied with the feedback received from the organization. 28% are slightly or unsatisfied with the matter.

When asked do they feel that the work environment in KOVA is pleasant, 90% responded they are moderately, quite- or very satisfied. Only 10% responded that they are slightly or unsatisfied.

We asked the players if they had ever considered switching from KOVA to another organization. This question had 22 respondents. There were 5 answer options to choose from and the respondent could pick several of them. Those options were, "no", "yes, better salary", "yes, better environment", "yes, better opportunities for development" and "yes, other reason, what?". The percentage in this question will go over a 100 %.

50 % of the respondents answered "no", 27 % answered "yes, better salary", 9 % answered "yes, better environment", 27 % answered "yes better opportunities for development" and 23 % answered "yes, other reason, what?".

The answers when asked about other reason were "if I could get a lot better contract" and "Other E-sports organizations make it apparent that also the players will benefit from partnerships/sponsors (products etc.)".

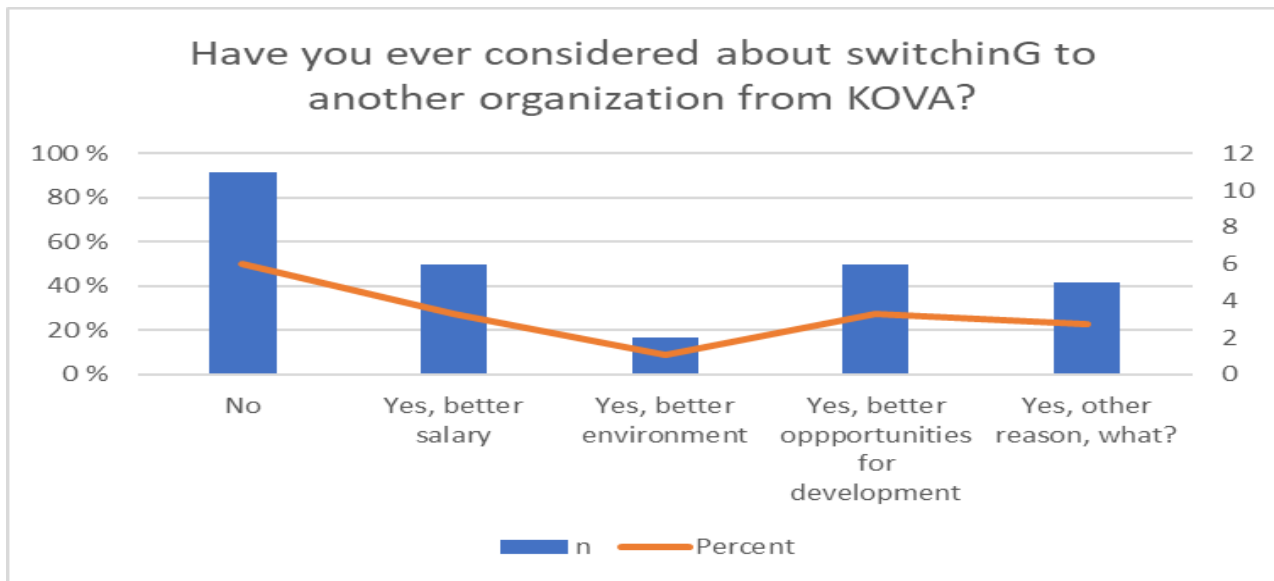


Figure 6. Switching organization.

## Interviews

In our interviews we had three questions about what kind of communication players hoped from KOVA, is there anything they would like to change about it and what kind of feedback they would like to get. Player B said that communication should be transparent and open. Player A was a little bit displeased about the communication and hoped for some changes.

When asked about what kind of communication hoped for and in which channels Player A was displeased and did not really answer the question, Player B wanted it to be transparent.

Player A was displeased because the communication from the organization had been bad and there were some promises that the organization could not have kept concerning communication, for example on to one –conversations.

Player B said that it is best to say everything straight and not to hide anything. He mentioned some difficulties in communication and there were things that the organization did not tell the team that it was important for them to know in his previous teams. He said that the channel does not matter if things work out.

*“I hope for open communication, all things need to be said straight” -Player B*

Then we asked if there was anything that the players wanted to change in the way how the organization communicates to players. Player A had a short answer and was still displeased, and Player B could not think of anything to change.

Player A hoped that the organization would be more initiative when it comes to communication. He also hoped that the organization would ask even once a month how things were going.

Player B just added that all it takes is a good channel where organization can reach everyone easily.

Then we asked what kind of feedback players would like to get from the organization. Player A hoped for good and negative feedback and Player B did want feedback from content but not from playing.

Player A said that he wants good feedback but also likes to hear if something has gone wrong, for example in streams or gaming. He also adds that he wants straight feedback.

Player B said that he wants feedback regarding content creating, but not from playing. He adds that the players know when they have played badly and no one from the organization should come and tell them that.

*“Players don’t need anyone to tell them if they have played good or poorly, players can figure that out by themselves.” – Player B*

In the staff interviews we first asked them to describe the communication between the organization and the players. In this matter the Staff members disagreed a bit: Staff member A said that it varies between teams, and it has been a bit hard. The biggest problem is according to him that teams use variable channels to communicate and that is why sometimes information does not reach everyone. Staff member B thinks that communication is working all right, but there have been mistakes in the past, but it is going in a better direction. Staff member C described the communication channels and said that most of communication to the teams is informative.

After that we asked how they perceive communication between players and the organization. Staff member A said that his opinion on this matter is the same as in previous question. Staff member B thinks organization and the players communicate with each other very straight and there is no large hierarchy in the organization, so the communication is easy. Staff member C thinks that the thought behind the communication is that the players and the staff members are all human beings.

*“Communication is based on human relationships. It is an ordinary conversation, and my own approach is that we are all friends with each other, and it makes communicating a lot easier. Of course, there is slight difference in it in contract negotiations.”  
– Staff member C.*

The next question was whether they felt the organization has been successful in communicating with players. Once again, the answers were different. Staff member A says that he thinks that it has not been successful.

*“From the beginning, we should have been able to draw a line and follow it. Now that a new team has come in and we have made the decision where and when communication takes place, it works. In the past, we had different views on how to handle it and at this point it is hard to change that style anymore once a certain team is used to a certain style. I don’t think that we have succeed in communication.” – Staff member A.*

Staff member B thinks that organization has mostly been successful when communicating with the players, but he points out that it depends on the topic. Staff member C says that the organization has been working for better communication, and all communications take place on one channel.

*“Sometimes there have been situations where not all players have been told what is happening in the organization, but now efforts have been made to improve it and, for example, a meeting is held once a month among the entire organization.” – Staff member C.*

As seen in the questionnaire, all players did not feel that the organization treats players equally. That is why we asked from the staff members “How is equal and uniform treatment of players achieved at KOVA?”.

Staff member A said that in principle, everyone is treated equally within certain limits and staff member C agrees with him. Both point out that there are some things that are not the same for everyone, for example in player contracts.

*“If a game has much less visibility, then, for example, organizing a bootcamp for such team is does not make sense form an organizational point of view, and it can lead to teams not being on an equal position with each other. It can be a real challenge for the organization to explain to players why this is the case.” – Staff member A.*

*“There are differences in everyone’s contracts, and they are not fully equal, but of course at the human level everyone is treated equally.” – Staff member C.*

Staff member B focused on communication in this question and said that equality is achieved through communication. When important information is shared, it is shared with all the players together and not just with some players.

*“When we start to take something forward, not just on player is told about it, but everyone gets involved and everyone gets the same information.” – Staff member B.*

Staff member C said that equal treatment is also pursued in a way that does not ignore any player’s concerns but seeks to resolve them to the best of their ability.

For the staff members we also asked “How KOVA strives to keep players in the organization?”.

Staff member A said that the organization strives to meet the needs of the players to the best of their ability, be it salary, scheduling or coaching assistance or visibility.

*“For someone, it can be a really big thing to get to play in an organization where they can get a lot of visibility and then get to the next team. What we do for players is a really wide spectrum, and it is impossible to name just one thing.” – Staff member A.*

Staff member B stated the matter closely: The organization offers better than the competitor.

Staff member C thought this matter through human relationships. He says that everything is based on human relations, and everyone strives to be on good terms and communicate openly.

*“The aim is to avoid any conflict or disputes and to try to resolve the problems as quickly and as best as possible. Of course, there have been disputes sometimes but they are part of human relationships.” – Staff member C.*

## **5.6 Partnerships**

### Questionnaire

The last two questions in the questionnaire were about partnerships. First, we asked if the respondents had done work related to partners of KOVA, for example videos or interviews. The answer opinions given were yes or no. 23 % of respondents said that they have done work related to the partners of KOVA.

For those who replied yes there was an additional question: How pleasant they have experienced that kind of work presented in a previous question. The answer scale was from 1 to 5, when 1= Very pleasant and 5= Very unpleasant. 80% of the respondents replied that they have been very pleasant and 20% that they have been quite pleasant.

### Interviews

In the player interviews we asked them “How would you like to be seen in KOVA’s operations externally?”. It was a bit hard for players to answer this. Player A said that he likes to be seen as a player in interviews and did not add more to that. Player B said that he wants people to see that “this work is done on a long-term basis”.

After that we asked what kind of partnership works, they would like to do. Player A told that he streams a lot, and he hopes that partners of KOVA could be seen in his streams and that he could get compensation for it. He also added that he wants that organization can grow.



*"I want to help organization as much as I can." – Player A.*

Player B said that he thinks that every player should be open to every opportunity proposed. He did not mention anything specific which he would like to do, but he points out that everything new and distinguishable is welcomed. And if it makes him or his teammates leave their comfort zone, it is a good thing.

In our interviews with staff members, we asked two questions regarding player usage in partnerships and how those affect the level of engagement. Staff member A said that it should be effortless, Staff member B did not feel he was the right person to answer this question, but he gave us his views and Staff member C told us that it depends on the needs of the partner organization.

We asked the staff members what principles players are used in partnerships.

Staff member A said that there is not necessarily any frame why someone is picked but it should be as effortless as possible for the player. Staff member B said that he is not the right person to answer this question because he is not working with the partnerships and does not really know what content those include. Staff member C said that it depends on partner organizations' needs how players are being used and chosen in co-operation.

*"We need to notify and see what the best solution for the partner organization and what kind of audience is they want to reach. Then we practically choose a player and ask if he wants to do the partnership. Anyone can be chosen, but of course the organization thinks about how they get the best visibility and who is the best person for the co-operation." - Staff member C.*

Then we asked the staff members how they think that player usage in partnerships can possibly affect the level of players' engagement.

Staff member A said that when someone is used a lot in partnerships and marketing it creates an image which bonds the player to that esports organization in question. He also says that if the player is part of an organization's big growth it makes it harder for the player to leave.

*“It does inevitably lead to engagement if you as a player get a big financial compensation for partnership or a project that you have done alone, but it might not be the player's goal. In principle we do these tasks with people who we know are not likely to leave right away”. - Staff member A.*

Staff member B answered that the players get a change to be visible and beneficial for themselves as well as to the organization and potential partner. Players get to show their skills outside of playing.

*“Opportunity to be visible on many different ways. It is only positive for the organization but also for the player and for the team.”- Staff member B.*

Staff member C said that partnerships can have both positive and negative effects depending on what kind of partnership is in question. Some might like to do partnerships, and someone does not.

*“The main goal always is that everyone is happy, and many players like to do partnerships. If someone does not want to do partnerships, I'm sure we will find someone else who does. Main point is that everyone has a good feeling” - Staff member C.*

## **5.7 Commitment to the KOVA and its operations**

The last question asked in interviews was “What contributes to your commitment to KOVA and its operations?”.

Both Player A and B mentioned that good communication is required, and it was the only thing that they said to this matter.

*“I hope that the organization contacts players more, at least to ask how they are doing and that kind of stuff. I know they do it already, but I hope that they would do it more.” – Player A.*

*“Communication and trust between the organization and the players is important to me. As long as the communication works both ways and the goals are achieved, everything works and we move forward.” – Player B.*

The last question in staff members' interviews was “How do you contribute to players' commitment to the organization and its operations?”. Staff member A said that the biggest thing in this matter is to treat players as well as possible, but there's more to it: He also says that when an organization does great stuff, it is cool to be in it.

*“We have successful teams and naturally people want to be part of that process, part of that neat crew.” – Staff member A.*

Staff member B says that it is a big part of this matter to offer better than a competitor, but it is not the only thing. It is also important to show that organization cares about the players.

*“We need to show as an organization that we care about the players and the team where they play and the sport where they compete and give them the opportunity to participate in the making, as it can also give them something good in the future.” – Staff member B.*

Staff member C believes commitment is based on human relationships and that things are handled as well as possible.

*“There are examples of a star players who have remained in a same organization for a long period of time even if they had been offered a better salary elsewhere. Quite often it is precisely because those relationships are well built and trust in that particular organization has grown. They do not want to go anywhere else because they know that things are well managed in their organization, and that is what I strive for in my own work.” – Staff member C.*

## **6 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to find solutions for our two research questions: What factors engage the player in the organization operations and how the organization strives to engage players in its operations. Based on the questionnaire and interviews we figured the current state of the organization and if there are some areas where the organization could enhance their actions. In our research we found out that there are things that are in a good state but there were also several problems.

### **6.1 Teamwork and coaching**

Based on our interviews and questionnaire overall, players and staff members were quite satisfied with how the teams work, but there were little problems with how the tasks are shared, how the teams communicate and give feedback. All the staff members thought that the teams are self-guided and the players that we interviewed said that communication is at a good level but when studying the questionnaire there was still quite a large portion of respondents who think that there is room for improvement when it comes to communication and giving feedback. The opinion about giving feedback in the player interviews were divided. The other player thought that it was on a good level while the other one said that it’s a big problem in their team and there is a lot of room for improvement in his team.

The problem in how the tasks are shared came to the surface from the interviews. Based on the interview it's not equal and some have to work harder than others. In our interviewees team it is a big problem which they have talked about, but the situation hasn't improved much. In our questionnaire, however, the majority were very happy with how the team members take part in common tasks.

In our questionnaire there were only 5 players who had a coach. When it comes to coaching there were a lot of issues. Based on our questionnaire there was room for improvement in support, division of roles and motivation. Players we interviewed didn't have a coach at the moment, but they thought it would be valuable to have one. All the respondents who had a coach agreed that they are satisfied with the coaches' communication, but it seems that the players do not give feedback to the coach because all the other sections needed improvement.

We can draw a conclusion that there is a gap in communication between the teams and staff members because staff members couldn't say anything more of the teams than that they were self-guided and still we found out that there are some problems inside the teams that the staff members could not mention in the interviews. This could be because the teams do not communicate with the staff and vice versa staff do not ask the teams how they are doing.

## **6.2 Contracts, benefits, obligations, and opportunities**

Questionnaire and interviews gave us different results. The players we interviewed were overall happy with their contracts and everything it includes, but in the questionnaire, we found that majority of the respondents were not that satisfied with the benefits and rewards. Majority of the players were happy with the length of their contracts and obligations within it.

In the interviews, staff members said that the benefits, rewards and obligations are told in the contract and the players we interviewed said that they are aware of those and happy with them. But in the questionnaire, there was dissatisfaction and many respondents felt moderate. It might

be that some of the players are not aware of the benefits and rewards and that's why they answered moderate. It also seems that the benefits and rewards are not as equal and fair to everyone as to these players we interviewed based on the unsatisfied answers in our questionnaire. But as it turned out in one of our staff members' interviews, the rewards and benefits can't be equal to all due to the big difference in some games' popularity.

When it comes to opportunities staff members had a lot they wanted to offer, and they mentioned some things we didn't ask of the players like, for example visibility and financial support, but also basic things like bootcamps and tournaments. In the player interviews other player were very happy and couldn't think of anything to ask and the other just mentioned bootcamps as an obvious thing. In our questionnaire the answers were very divided, but we noticed that a big portion of the respondents answered moderate.

This probably is because currently, many of the teams do not have bootcamps, tournaments or coaches so it is hard for some to answer. Still 1/5 of the players were unsatisfied with every section. This might be because some of the games have bigger scenes than others and unhappiness might occur because KOVA can't organize tournaments, bootcamps and coaching for everyone. Or maybe staff at KOVA are not equally focused on all the teams because of the difference in popularity of different games, and that's why they invest more in the more popular games which leaves players of the not so popular games unsatisfied.

### **6.3 Communication between KOVA and the players**

Based on our research the functionality of communication is seen in very different ways in KOVA. Some of the staff members think that communication is at a good level while some think that it does not work as good as it should. The biggest issue based on the questionnaire is that some of the players do not think that they get enough feedback from the organization. In the interviews players had a slightly different opinion about feedback: While one wants feedback from everything he does, the other wants it just from his actions outside of playing.

While talking about communication, based on staff members' interviews every player should be at the same level. The questionnaire and the player interviews reveal that not every player thinks like that: Some of them think that it is hard to contact the staff of the organization and in the player interviews while one thinks that everything works great, the other hopes for the change and hopes that organization would have more conversations with the team.

The staff members and the players said in the interviews that they want to communicate with each other openly and straight. They also pointed out that it is important to have a good channel where to communicate, and from one staff member's point of view this is not the case with every team.

As the results show, not all the players feel like KOVA treats players equally although the staff members strive for it. It is natural that not all the contracts and teams have the exact same treatment, but it may need more communication and explanation why things are done the way they are.

It is noticeable that when asked in the questionnaire have the players thought about switching to another organization from KOVA, 50 % said no, and the reasons why some of them could switch to another organization are something like better salary or better environment. When asked do they feel that working environment in KOVA is pleasant, 90% responded they are moderately, quite- or very satisfied, but there is 10% who responded that they are slightly unsatisfied or unsatisfied. It can be seen that the organization should take actions and make every player feel at least moderately satisfied with the working environment. The staff members said in the interviews that KOVA wants to offer better than competitors, but there is still work to be done.

As mentioned before, the staff members see communication with the players differently. While one thinks it is very informative, the other thinks more about human relationships and that everyone should be friends with each other.

## **6.4 Partnerships**

Only 23% of the respondents of the questionnaire replied that they have done work related to the partners of KOVA. The answers cannot be considered completely reliable, as some of the content made by the players may be related to the partners even if it is not directly mentioned when the content is made. All of them who had done that kind of work had found the work at least quite pleasant. At the same time 50% of the players think that player visibility in co-operations is at least quite equal.

The players said in interviews that they are open to different kinds of work related to partners and they want to help the organization grow. The staff members said that there are not certain ways in which the players are chosen to do work related to the partnerships, but of course it is important that the player fits that work. It could be good for the organization to think about which players suit certain partners.

The staff members thought that using players in co-operation has mostly good effects on the player engagement, but only if the players feel good about it. That is why it might be smart for the organization to communicate about upcoming co-operations and ask which players are interested in working with it.

## **6.5 Action proposal for the organization**

Based on results and conclusions we have developed an action plan proposal for the organization. It includes suggestions that can improve and increase players' engagement with KOVA and provides tools for organization to improve engagement. The biggest problem we noticed was the lack of communication in almost every section of our study. Badly organized communication creates misunderstandings and uncertainty for the players. That is why we think that by solving the communication issue and by making it open and clear for everyone we can solve the issue in engagement.



As the internal communication in the organization seems to cause different opinions even among the staff of the organization, the organization should have a clear communication plan that sets out the following:

1. What matters are communicated to players
2. Where and when communication happens
3. Who communicates with the players

About what matters are communicated to players the organization should think that do they communicate about every new partnership, roster change or other possible change in organizations' actions or does the communication also include conversations about the organizations' daily basis. The more players know about the staff and their jobs, the easier it might be to communicate about the difficulties that the organization or the players might face.

Content creation and works related to the partners also are a part of players' job, and that is why it is important to communicate what kind of partnerships the organization has and what kind of works there may occur. It is important for the organization to know the players well enough to choose the best option for every partner related work for the best result and talk with players that would like to take part in this kind of work.

Organization should also pay attention to what is happening in the teams. It could be good for both parties to have regular meetings where players can openly talk about how they are doing, how the team is doing and all that kind of general staff. It is important to understand that difficult things may be hard to say in front of many people, and that is why some from the organization should also have one-to-one conversations with all players where players can talk about more personal or hard things. Also, if a team or a player has a coach, they should be included in these conversations and the organization should be aware of how players see the actions of a coach and how the coach sees the environment of the team. The organization should also encourage players

to give feedback to the coach, because our studies show that players are not satisfied with all the actions of the coach and here the organization could act as an intermediary if the players find it hard to give feedback to the coach.

As one of the players said in the interview, all that good communication takes is a good channel. We know that most of the time the organization uses Discord as a communication channel, and if that is seen as a viable choice, it should be made clear to everyone that all communication (excluding emergency situations) takes place via Discord. It also should be made clear to players that they have to use that channel to communicate and be active there, and they should check it regularly.

All the benefits of the players should be communicated to everyone clearly. The benefits which are for all players could be, for example, listed in Discord and there should also be instructions on how the players can obtain these benefits. If there are benefits that are only for certain players of teams, these should be informed to the players concerned but these benefits should not be hidden from the rest of the players. All those kinds of things should be openly discussed and explained that why those benefits are only for some players. Of course, the organization should strive for everyone to get equal benefits, but they do not have to be exactly same.

As the organization already has a general manager and a player manager, it should be made clear if they are the ones who communicate all the important things to the players and that they are the ones who ask if players are facing problems. Some of the players feel that it is hard to contact the staff, and that is why this matter should be made clear for everyone in the organization. It also means that staff members must communicate with each other a lot, so that everyone knows what is happening and that it is easy to tell players what is going on.

It is important to understand that when communication takes place online, especially when communication takes place by written messages, there may be misunderstandings. That is why there should be regular meetings where everyone at least has a microphone, even better if everyone

has a video connection. This also gives a chance to a better and more open conversations. Therefore, we recommend that the whole organization has regular meetings where everyone in the organization can talk to each other and ask questions.

## **7 Discussion**

### **7.1 Thoughts of results**

Our goal in this study was to get deeper knowledge of why players change teams so often overall in the esports industry and to narrow it down, we chose to do it to our local esports organization, KOVA. We wanted to find out the reasons behind this phenomenon and think of a helpful solution for it. The timing of this study could have been better because of the Covid-19 situation. It has affected the operations of the organization and for example there have not been live events which might have effect on the players' mind state. There also have not been live meetings which might have effect on the players' relationship with team members and all the communication between KOVA and players has been through remote channels. We had some step backs during this study because one of the teams which plays a very popular game left KOVA, so we did not get to interview them, also one sports game team left and one of the players we interviewed told us not to use the interview. These things were step backs but also prove the phenomenon we are studying.

At least in KOVA the biggest problem was definitely in the way the organization and players communicated with each other. In our interviews and questionnaire, it was the only factor that kept repeating itself. This can be reflected in well-being at work and athlete engagement. 50 % of the players who responded to our questionnaire had thought about leaving KOVA for some reason. This shows that the level of well-being and motivation in KOVA is not very high. This has straight effect on the athlete engagement, because engagement is born when the athlete is motivated and happy with the environment, they are working in. The communication problem creates uncertainty and misunderstandings when players don't get feedback, the organization doesn't ask them

how they are doing, and they are just used to functioning on their own without informing the organization of their actions and this leads to lack of knowledge in the organization so the only thing they can say when asked about internal functions of a team is that they are self-driven. One of the reasons there is a lack of engagement and players think of leaving could also be that there are no coaches. Based on our interviews and questionnaire, the coach is a valuable asset for the players. One of the coaches' tasks is to create a good environment, motivate and give feedback and these are also pretty critical factors in athlete engagement.

Overall, we think that we succeeded in the study, and we found the main issue in the organization. Our topic is relevant, and studies of engagement have been done a lot, but for the esports organization, we at least could find any. Maybe not one of a kind, but a rare study, and we are proud of that. The fact that we used both quantitative and qualitative research methods was necessary in our opinion, because for this study we wanted to hear the overall opinions of the bigger target group, but also wanted to get some deeper knowledge through the interviews. The communication problem was visible in the questionnaire alone and it would have been possible to do the conclusion just based on that but by using both methods we think that our study is much more reliable and because we got same kind of answers in the interviews too, it ensured us and brought us to conclusion about communication being the biggest issue.

However, after we started to analyze the data collected, it felt like some piece of information was missing, or it would have been nice to know something more, and that is because we did not ask some important questions that now on hindsight would have been genuinely nice to know. For example, in our player interviews we asked two players who did not have a coach would they like to have one and they both said that they would like to have a coach and it would make things easier, but in our questionnaire, we only asked about the importance of coach etc. From those who had a coach, even though it would be useful information and good data for our study to know what all the players think about having a coach and how valuable it would be to them. We do not think that it would have changed the outcome of our study, but it would have been valuable information and maybe it would have had some affect.

## 7.2 Validity and reliability

Reliability of the research means the permanence of research results, which means that if the research is repeated, the same results are obtained. Validity means that the things researched are the right things. (Kananen, 2015, 343.)

Our Quantitative research overall has good reliability since most of the players in KOVA responded and we made it clear in the cover letter that the questionnaire is anonymous, and no one can be recognized based on the answers. We didn't ask what games they were playing or other questions which would have weakened anonymity. Although because we cannot see who is filling the questionnaire and we cannot be sure that the respondent is 100 % honest the questionnaire doesn't have full reliability.

Our questionnaire had questions which were all relevant to the subject we were studying, so in our opinion the validity is good. Some of the questions could have been formed better and we had some spelling mistakes and for example we used a word "roling" as in division of roles and that might cause confusion to some because it has a fully different meaning. Still we feel like the respondents understood what we meant.

Research situation and the researcher always have an impact on the subjects, and this is especially evident in qualitative research. It is important to understand that interviews mostly focus on the past, and the answers may vary because the memory of humans is limited and people like to remember the good things. (Kananen, 2015, 338, 340.)

When we were thinking about the validity of our qualitative research, we had to decide if both of us take part in interviews as one of us works in the organization. Based on discussing with the instructor we decided, that both of us will be interviewing the subjects, but we tried to make clear

to the subjects that nothing said in interviews is told ahead with names and that the topics are not discussed with the rest of the organization, but everything is purely for research purposes.

We noticed during the interviews that different people understood the same questions differently, and there were some questions which needed a bit more explaining from the interviewers. The questions could have been a bit simple, but the difference in understanding can also be explained by the different positions and backgrounds of the subjects.

During the whole research we have considered how our own thoughts and feelings about the matter may have an impact to this research, and we have tried to avoid it. Still, it is important to understand that according to Kananen (2015) every researcher works in their own context, and that is always unique and that our own opinions may have influenced how we interpret the results.

### **7.3 Further research**

Athlete engagement in esports is just one important factor in esports organization, but there are several other things that could be studied in esports organization. It would be nice to study also how organizations recruit players and build up teams in electronic sports because the variety of games and playable characters require so much different skills from the players both and it would be very interesting to know what kind of personalities organizations are looking for. Also, it is known that athletes in more common sports take care of their physical- and mental health, and this is important for the esports athletes too, but the subject raises questions in people, because some people doesn't see playing videogames as a sport. So, it would be nice to study their training processes, how they enhance their cognitive skills and overall life management, because we think that it still differs from the common sports. Communication was the problem, but it was not the subject of our study. At least for KOVA, it would be helpful to do another research of communication inside the organization. It would help the organization to create one and clear communication

culture which probably would reduce ignorance and confusion within the players and staff members.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Webropol-questionnaire

### Pelaajien sitoutuneisuus organisaatioon

Tämä kyselylomake on osa opinnäytetyötutkimusta. Opinnäytetyön aiheena on Kilpapelaaajan sitouttaminen e-urheiluorganisaatioon [Engaging of a competitive player in esports organization, CASE: KOVA Esports]. Tutkimuksen toteuttaa Elina Laurila ja Jeremia Mamedjarov. Kysely on tarkoitettu KOVA Esportsin pelaajille.

Kysely on anonymi, eikä vastauksia voi yhdistää yksittäiseen vastaajaan. Vastauksia käytetään ainoastaan opinnäytetyön tutkimusta varten. Tutkimuksen avulla pyritään parantamaan organisaation toimintaa, joten jokainen vastaus on tärkeä!

Kiitoksia yhteistyöstänne!

#### 1. Kuinka kauan olet ollut KOVAssa?

- 0-6 kk
- 7-12 kk
- 1-2 vuotta
- 2-3 vuotta

#### 2. Pelaatko täysipäiväisesti?

- Kyllä
- Käytän 80 % ajastani pelaamiseen
- Käytän 60 % ajastani pelaamiseen
- Käytän 40 % ajastani pelaamiseen
- Käytän 20 % ajastani pelaamiseen

#### 3. Koetko pelaamisen työnä vai harrastuksena?

- Työnä
- Harrastuksena
- En osaa sanoa

#### 4. Pelaatko joukkueessa?

- Kyllä  
 En

#### 7. Onko sinulla pelinsisäinen valmentaja?

- Kyllä  
 Ei

#### 10. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet pelaajasopimuksesi sisältöön?

	Todella tyytymätön	Hieman tyytymätön	Tyydyttävä	Melko tyytyväinen	Todella tyytyväinen
Sopimuksen kesto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Palkkiot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edut	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Velvoitteet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 11. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet KOVAN tarjoamiin mahdollisuuksiin?

	Todella tyytymätön	Hieman tyytymätön	Tyydyttävä	Melko tyytyväinen	Todella tyytyväinen
Pelit/turnaukset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bootcampit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Valmennus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 12. Kuinka tärkeäksi koet KOVAN tarjoamat mahdollisuudet?

	En yhtään tärkeäksi	Hieman tärkeäksi	En osaa sanoa	Melko tärkeäksi	Todella tärkeäksi
Pelit/turnaukset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	En yhtään tärkeäksi	Hieman tärkeäksi	En osaa sanoa	Melko tärkeäksi	Todella tärkeäksi
Bootcampit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Valmennus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 13. Kuinka tasavertaisesti koet KOVAn kohtelevan pelaajia?

	Ei yhtään tasavertaisesti	Vähän tasavertaisesti	En osaa sanoa	Melko tasavertaisesti	Todella tasavertaisesti
Pelaajien nostot sosiaalisessa mediassa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pelaajien käyttö yhteistöissä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pelaajien kanssa kommunikointi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pelaajien edut	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 14. Kuinka tyytyväinen olet organisaation kanssa toimimiseen?

	Todella tyytymätön	Hieman tyytymätön	Tyydyttävä	Melko tyytyväinen	Todella tyytyväinen
Koetko, että organisaation henkilökuntaan on helppo saada yhteys?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Koetko voitavasi antaa palautetta organisaatiolle?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saatko tarpeeksi palautetta organisaatiolta?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Koetko työympäristön viihtyisäksi KOVAssa?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 15. Oletko koskaan miettinyt vaihtavasi KOVasta toiseen e-urheiluorganisaatioon?

En

- Kyllä, parempi palkka
- Kyllä, parempi ilmapiiri
- Kyllä, paremmat kehittymismahdollisuudet
- Kyllä, muu syy, mikä?

**16. Oletko tehnyt kumppanuuksiin liittyviä töitä KOVAssa ollessasi?**

- Kyllä
- Ei



## Appendix 2. Theme interview questions

### Questions for the players

Kuinka kauan olet ollut KOVAssa?

Pelaatko täysipäiväisesti?

#### **Joukkueen toiminnasta:**

Kerro, millaista joukkueen sisäinen kommunikaatio on?

Miten toteutate tasavertaisen työnjaon joukkueessa?

Kerro joukkueen sisäisestä palautteen antamisesta ja sen merkityksestä joukkueen toiminnalle.

#### **Valmentajasta**

Kokisitko pelinsisäisen valmentajan tarpeelliseksi? Perustele vastauksesi.

Mitä toivoisit valmentajan tekävän?

Millaisissa asioissa toivoisit apua/tukea valmentajalta?

#### **Juridiset asiat**

Millaiseksi koet pelaajasopimuksesi?

Koetko olevasi tarpeeksi tietoinen eduistasi/velvollisuuksistasi? Perustele.

Mitä mieltä olet eduista ja velvollisuuksistasi?

Millaisia etuja toivoisit pelaajana?

Millaisia mahdollisuuksia toivoisit KOVAN tarjoavan?

#### **Kommunikaatio**

Millaista kommunikaatiota toivoisit organisaatiolta?

Haluaisitko muuttaa jotakin tavassa kommunikoida organisaation kanssa? Perustele vastauksesi.

Millaista palautetta haluaisit saada organisaatiolta?

Mihin asioihin liittyen haluaisit saada palautetta organisaatiolta?

#### **Kumppanuudet**

Miten haluaisit näkyä KOVAN toiminnassa ulospäin?

Millaisia töitä haluaisit tehdä yhteistyökumppaneihin liittyen?

Mikä edesauttaa sitoutumistasi KOVAN organisaatioon ja sen toimintaan?

### Questions for the staff members

Kuinka kauan olet ollut KOVAssa?

Millaisessa roolissa toimit? (

Millaiseksi koet KOVAN eri joukkueiden sisäisen toiminnan?

Kuvaile organisaation ja pelaajien välistä kommunikointia.

Minkälaiseksi koet pelaajien ja organisaation välisen kommunikoinnin?

Koetko, että organisaatio on onnistunut kommunikoinnissa pelaajien kanssa? Perustele.

Miten KOVA tuo pelaajille ilmi heidän etunsa ja velvollisuutensa?

Millaisia mahdollisuuksia KOVA haluaa tarjota pelaajilleen?

Kuinka pelaajien tasavertainen ja yhdenmukainen kohtelu toteutuu joukkueessa sekä KOVAssa yleisesti?

Miten pyritte tasavertaiseen kohteluun pelaajien välillä?

Millä tavoin KOVA pyrkii pitämään pelaajat organisaatiossa?

Millaisilla periaatteilla pelaajia käytetään kumppaniyhteistyössä?

Millaisia vaikutuksia sillä voi mahdollisesti olla pelaajan sitoutumiseen?

Kuinka edesautatte pelaajien sitoutumista organisaatioon ja sen toimintaan?