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Exploring motivations for attending a LAN from a U&G perspective

MASTER DEGREE

THESIS WITHIN: *Major in Business Administration*

NUMBER OF CREDITS: *15 ECTS*

PROGRAMME OF STUDY: *International Marketing*

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JÖNKÖPING *May 2022*

Master Thesis in Business Administration

Title: Exploring motivations for attending a LAN from a U&G perspective

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Date: 2022-05-19

Key terms: Esports, Video Games, Gamers, LAN, Uses and Gratification Theory, UGT

Abstract

Background: LANs are popular due to the unique social features where gamers share the same passion, meet, and compete with like-minded gamers. Further, a LAN forms new and unexplored feelings and impressions for gamers; therefore, it should be further explored. Therefore, understanding the gamers' motivations will allow for a better understanding of the unexplored benefits gained.

Purpose: By studying the phenomenon of LANs, this research aims to explore the motivations for attending a LAN by discovering and understanding the connection between benefits and motivations.

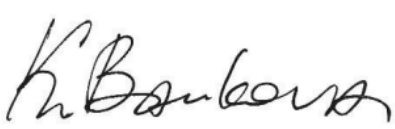
Method: To fulfil the purpose of this thesis, being of exploratory nature, qualitative research was used. The empirical data was accumulated through fifteen semi-structured interviews. The data has been analysed and interpreted using an abductive approach incorporating a thematic analysis.

Conclusion: This study explored the motivations and benefits of LAN attendance from a U&G perspective. The findings showed three motivations for attending a LAN competition, diversion and social interaction. Furthermore, the gained benefits are rewards, information, skills, escape, entertainment, relationships, socialisation and finding new teammates. The analysis resulted in developing a conceptual model illustrating the motivations and benefits.

Acknowledgements

This master thesis journey was full of exciting knowledge and meeting new people who helped us through the way by inspiring and supporting us. Thus, we would like to express our gratitude to the respected and outstanding professors who have supported our academic and personal growth during our one-year program. The knowledge and experience of each of them helped us complete our thesis. First, we want to express our gratitude and appreciation to Adele Brendt for being a wonderful supervisor and teacher. We are grateful for your support and guidance during the entire process and appreciate your valuable time and effort. This thesis will never be the same without your great support. We would like to extend our thanks to our seminar group for their time and effort invested in reading critically and providing valuable feedback, which was instrumental to our study. We would like to thank Justice, the student gaming club at Jönköping University, for giving us a chance to attend two LANs organised by them and for helping us reach some of our participants for interviews. We would like to express our appreciation to the 15 participants who took their time to be part of our interviews. Thank you for contributing to this thesis by providing your valuable opinions, feelings, and experiences that contributed to this thesis's quality, making it possible to meet our purpose. It is a pleasure to express our appreciation and gratitude to our families and friends for never giving up, believing, and motivating us throughout our academic development to accomplish this milestone. We would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to our course examiner Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas, who provided clear communication, practical and technical details that helped us reach the best possible results in writing this thesis.

Kamelia Bankova **Amelia Nablsi**



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Keyword List

Esports (electronic sports)	"The activity of playing computer games against other people on the internet, often for money, and often watched by other people using the internet, sometimes at specially organised events" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017).
Gamer	Is "A person who regularly plays computer or video games; an athlete who relishes competition" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d; Seo, 2016; Tang et al., 2020).
Local Area Network	Is "A group of personal computers and associated equipment linked by cable and that share a communications line" (Collins Dictionary, n.d, a; Jansz & Martens, 2005).
LAN	Is a gathering of people in a specific location physically where a local area network is formed, where people bring their personal computers (PCs) to play mainly multiplayer games (Collins Dictionary, n.d, b; Jansz & Martens, 2005).
Streaming	Is "A method of transmitting data from the internet directly to a user's computer or phone screen without downloading it" (Collins Dictionary, n.d, c; Qian et al., 2020).
Streaming platforms	Are "On-demand online entertainment sources for TV shows, movies, and other streaming media" such as Twitch (Qian et al., 2020; Endavo Media, 2022).
Twitch	Is "A streaming platform that lets users broadcast their screen whilst playing games; people can share their game experience and interact with others in real-time" (Deng et al., 2015).
Video game	Is "A game played by electronically manipulating images produced by a computer program on a monitor or other display" (Lexico Dictionary, n.d; Kiousis, 2002).

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce and outline the research subject. First, the background discusses an overview of the topic. Second, the problem rationalises the study's relevancy, identifying gaps in the research area and why it is done. Finally, the purpose and the research questions will guide the researchers in exploring the topic.

1.1 Background

Esports has been around since 1972, and it has been developing ever since (Tuting, 2020). Esports is a form of sports but takes place on different virtual platforms with other real or automated players, also referred to as "Gamebot" (Kaminka et al., 2002) in a digital and global sphere, where gamers compete (Jenny et al., 2017; Candela & Jakee, 2018; Pizzo et al., 2018; Scholz, 2019). Esports is expanding and becoming meaningful because people are becoming more appreciative of their leisure time (Seo, 2016). Additionally, esports is regarded as an escape from daily routine, which is why gamers take part in esports, whether online or offline. However, a player's experience with a game encounter is heavily influenced by the game's setting (Seo, 2013; Wang et al., 2021).

Esports is an electronic form of sport in media that implies that gamers are connected through the internet and play with other gamers worldwide by a technical interface (Hutchins, 2008; Seo, 2013; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Yu et al., 2018). Esports can occur online and offline (Seo & Green, 2008; Seo, 2013). In an online setting, esports can be a connecting point between amateur and professional gamers (Seo, 2013; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Yu et al., 2018). The gamers who engage in online esports desire high-quality performance, live streaming, and being part of the action (Neus et al., 2019).

On the other hand, in a LAN, gamers come physically together in big arenas to play and compete with other gamers. A LAN provides a unique setting where gamers can gain a greater experience of esports beyond the digital realm and establish deeper bonds and relationships with other gamers (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Hallmann & Giel, 2018). There is a potential for knowledge sharing through online streaming platforms in the context of online media consumption. Online gamers are more likely to have a closer perspective on the action than visitors attending LANs.

Due to streaming platforms such as Twitch, Facebook Gaming, and other similar ones, online users can follow the game's action, learn the strategy, employ tactics, and learn about the game (Hamilton et al., 2014). However, it has been argued that online gaming creates less of an escape from the surrounding environment for gamers, especially when they play from home (Neus et al., 2019).

LANs have shifted competitive video games from player-vs-machine to the physical player-vs-player in a local area network connection. Computers are connected locally to the same network; usually, a high-speed connection and gamers are gathered physically to interact and play competitive games (Griffiths et al., 2003; Taylor & Witkowski, 2010). LANs are popular due to the unique social features where gamers share the same passion, meet, and compete with like-minded gamers (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Taylor & Witkowski, 2010; Eklund, 2015; Taylor, 2016). Furthermore, offline communication is essential for gamers to build bonds and achieve high performance (Tang, 2018). Therefore, LANs are crucial for establishing bonds between gamers (Seo, 2013; McCauley et al., 2020). In addition, they are interested in emotional connection and social interaction with other gamers (Neus et al., 2019). Online, gamers can chat and interact on streaming platforms. However, it is argued that online chatting can never substitute for authentic human interaction that a LAN can provide. Nevertheless, the LAN environment forms new and unexplored feelings and impressions for gamers; therefore, it should be further explored (Neus et al., 2019).

1.2 Problem

From a gamers ' perspective, esports online and at a LAN cannot be considered a replacement for each other (Neus et al., 2019). Gamers who attend and play at a LAN anticipate certain gratifications that an online game will not satisfy (Ruggiero, 2000).

There is extensive research on gamers' motivations when playing online such as Fetscherin et al. (2005), Jansz & Martens (2005), Pöyhtäri (2016) and McCauley et al. (2019). However, Michailidis (2019) and Lui (2020) indicated that there is little research done on the motivations to attend LANs. Furthermore, Taylor & Witkowski (2010) proposes that LANs carry vital qualities not yet explored. Further, a gap in the literature has not been adequately addressed when it comes to LANs (Neus et al., 2019). As a result, exploring the different elements that can affect

gamers' motivation to attend LANs is crucial to utilise (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Scheibe et al., 2016; Bründl et al., 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Neus et al., 2019). As a result, the esports literature was reviewed to analyse motivations observed in online contexts and apply them to LAN contexts. Lastly, the study does not compare online and LAN gaming but instead explores the motivations for attending LANs, since a deeper understanding is needed to gain a richer perspective.

1.3 Purpose

This research aims to explore the motivations for attending a LAN by discovering and understanding the connection between benefits and motivations. Therefore, the following research questions were created.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What are the motivations for attending a LAN?
RQ2: What are the gained benefits from attending a LAN?

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework is presented. First, a comprehensive look at esports is provided, including audiences, types of games, and LAN structure, to give the reader a better understanding. Next, a review of academic literature is presented, along with the uses and gratifications theory. Finally, the study concludes by presenting the motivations derived from the literature chosen to be explored, and a conceptualisation is presented.

2.1 Esports

Esports consists of various video games, where one needs abilities such as multitasking, strategising, skilful and instantaneous brain and fingers to thrive (Hattenstone, 2017; Candela & Jakee, 2018). Esports is also similar to sports where there are teams, fans, tournaments and trophies (Hattenstone, 2017; Candela & Jakee, 2018). Esports can take place both virtually and physically (Seo, 2016).

Figure 1 *League of Legends World Championship final in 2019* (Powell & Blake, 2021).

2.1.1 Esports audience

Esports consists of audiences that can be both gamers and spectators. Gamers refer to people playing games on a professional and amateur level. Professional gamers are players who are highly experienced and skilled at playing games. In return, they earn an income from their playing (Seo, 2016; Tang et al., 2020). However, amateurs are non-professional gamers who are individual players or part of a team (Tang et al., 2020).

Being a gamer means playing games which is an active behaviour, contrary to watching streams which is a passive behaviour (Tang et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is argued that esports gamers are usually spectators of events and streams and vice versa. Esports spectators are usually active gamers who watch streams to develop their game skills (Jang & Byon, 2020; Tang et al., 2020). Researchers claimed that playing and spectating are crucial parts of esports consumption (Scholz, 2019; Tang et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Video Game Genres

Esports consists of various types of games that can satisfy diverse gaming needs, including competition and escape (Tang et al., 2020). Various types of games can also attract more audiences for games (Hamari & Keronen, 2017). Esports can be played individually or in a team (Scholz, 2019). Pavlovic (2020) describes 10 video game categories that are the most relevant in today's world. He outlines the following “Sandbox; Real-time strategy (RTS); Shooters (FPS and TPS); Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA); Role-playing (RPG, ARPG, and More); Simulation and sports; Puzzlers and party games; Action-adventure; Survival and horror; Platformer”.

There is an established degree of overlap between the categories, and therefore, gamers prefer to use a certain category name to distinguish the gameplay style (Pavlovic, 2020). However, in this research, the categories that will be covered are Shooters (FPS & TPS), and Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) because they are the most played and popular game genres in a LAN (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Duffy, 2020; Clement, 2021).

2.1.2.1 Shooters (FPS & TPS)

The Shooter category is divided into two, first-person shooter (FPS) and third-person shooter (TPS). FPS games allow the player to identify themselves completely. The only representation a player has are "weapons and hands" (***Figure 2***), which engage with the gaming environment via "virtual prostheses" (Grimshaw, 2008). Gamers of FPS games can experience the feeling of acting directly in-game and transforming themselves into virtual characters. In addition to the perspective of the first-person shooter, environmental interaction and the impact on gameplay enhance immersiveness (Nacke & Lindley, 2008; Black, 2017). FPS games offer a more dynamic game experience by eliminating the player's avatar[1] portrayal and placing the player in the first-person viewpoint (Black, 2017).

Figure 2 *Halo 5 boss: Why we love first-person shooter games* (Powell, 2015).

[1] **Avatar** - "is a personalised graphical illustration representing a computer user or a character or alter ego representing that user. An avatar can be represented either in three-dimensional form (for example, in games or virtual worlds) or in two-dimensional form as an icon in Internet forums and virtual worlds" (Techopedia, 2018).

In TPS games, the player is positioned close to his/her protagonist (avatar) in the game (***Figure 3***) and sees it on the screen as an isolated character on its own (Black, 2017). The perspective in those games is located "anchored" around a player's avatar. Therefore, the viewpoint of the game environment is revealed when the avatar moves. Thus the landscape in TPS games is short and fixated on the player's avatar (Black, 2017). However, certain games like Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V) are a mixture of FPS and TPS.

Figure 3 *The 15 Best Third Person Shooters to Play in 2018* (Vroegindewey, 2018).

2.1.2.2 Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA)

Multiplayer online battle arena games, also called MOBA, are games similar to real strategy games due to their common features like map accentuation, management of assets, and presence of actual competition with other players in the game (Pavlovic, 2020). MOBA games are multiplayer games which mean that there is an emphasis on multiple players who can compete against each other (Park & Kim, 2014). MOBA are team games where players can choose their teams of either random players or join a team of players they are familiar with (Bonny & Castaneda, 2017). This type of multiplayer game is worldwide known and has become the most favoured and preferred game type to play and engage in (Nuyens et al., 2016).

There are two types of MOBA games, some games have implemented artificial intelligence features (Bots) that play against a player, and others that consist of real players only. The most popular games that have evolved and increased the interest in esports in the multiplayer category are League of Legends (LOL) - (**Figure 4**) and Defence of the Ancients 2 (Dota 2) (Park & Kim, 2014; Nuyens et al., 2016; Pavlovic, 2020).

Figure 4 *Meme Stream Dream Team vs Throw Machine Gaming | Streamer Show Match at S8 NA LCS 2018 Summer Finals* (EpicSkillshot, 2018).

2.1.3 Structure of a LAN

Gamers are becoming more passionate about playing games in groups to enjoy the experience of it, and that was the commencement of LANs, where computers can be connected locally to the same network and gamers are all gathered in a physical space to interact and play competitive games. Usually, they gather in PC cafes or big arenas (Taylor & Witkowski, 2010; Borowy, 2012; Parelius, 2019). LANs should require a high internet speed to allow connecting multiple computers together inside a local area network (Jansz & Martens, 2005).

LANs mainly represent a certain local geographical area where gamers from the same area come together, yet it can bring gamers from other areas who have been separated by distance from their own local area to be part of a LAN (Taylor & Witkowski, 2010). At LANs, gamers are interested in playing multiplayer games and competing rather than playing single-player games (Borowy, 2012). Moreover, gamers who attend a LAN do other activities than only playing, they watch other players' games, socialise, share and download or update games with other gamers at the LAN (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Fetscherin et al., 2005). Gamers gather to watch a live stream or tournaments together at the LAN (Scholz, 2012).

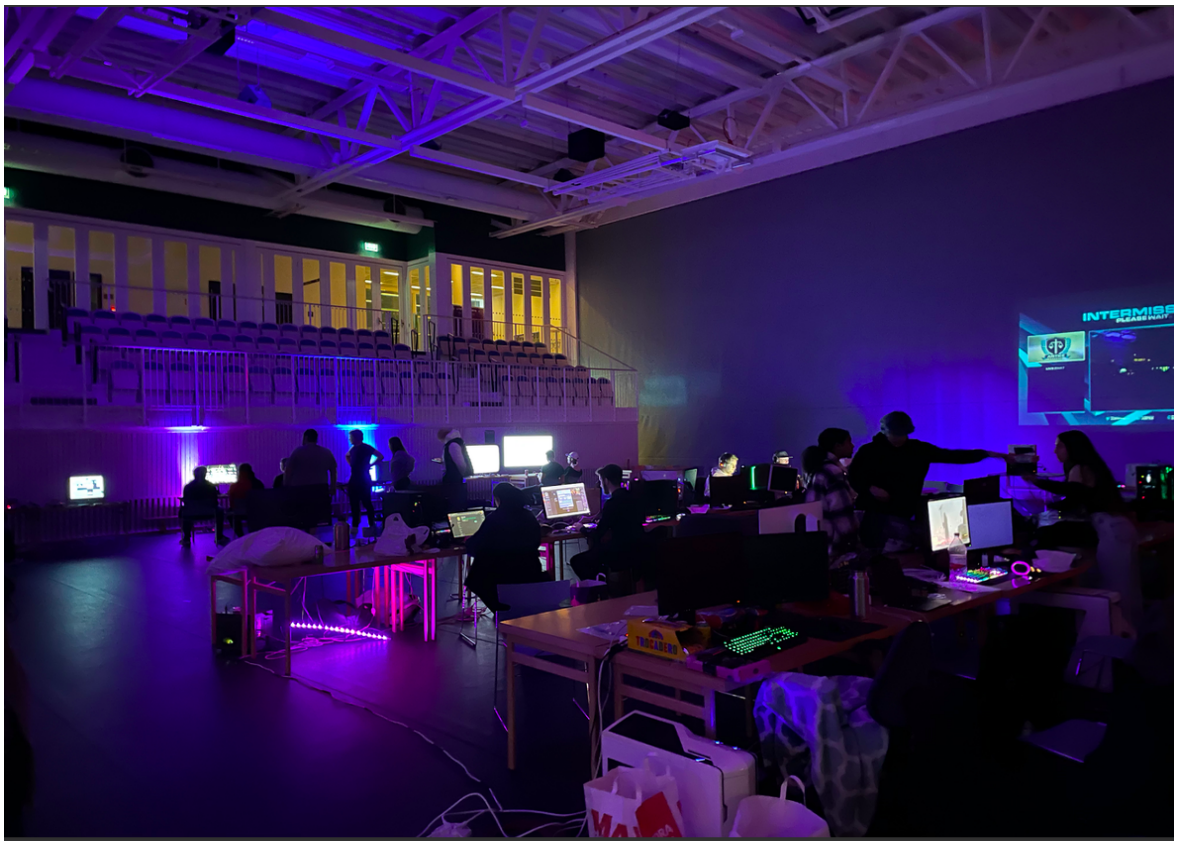

Figure 5 *Corehack Spring 2022 Jönköping, a LAN organised by Justice Esports Club* (Authors, 2022).

2.2 U&G Theory

The uses and gratifications theory, also referred to as (U&G) or (UGT), was first introduced in 1940 when scientists started to study the reasons behind why people choose to consume different forms of media (Katz et al., 1973). During the 1970s, scientists started to focus their attention on the results of media usage and the specific social and psychological needs they satisfy (Ruggiero, 2000). In 1974, Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz published their work, often credited as the foundation for the U&G theory (Lubis et al., 2018).

The U&G theory is used to examine and analyse the reasons behind using interactive media and what gratifications it might give to people using it (Katz et al., 1973; Ruggiero, 2000). In a world where media technology proliferates rapidly, research on the U&G theory has become more relevant than ever in exploring and understanding people's motivations for interactive media use and their gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000; Neus, 2020; Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Katz et al. (1974) set the basic five assumptions of the U&G theory as the following:

1. Users are active and use mass media for a specific goal.
2. Users choose media in connection to a previous experience and expectations.
3. Selecting and using media are purposive and motivating where users want to satisfy needs and desires.
4. Media compete with other sources of communication to satisfy needs.
5. Users judge the value and importance of mass communication they use on their terms of understanding and views.

U&G theory argues that people want to use media to satisfy certain needs and desires (Rubin, 2002; Cummings, 2008). Contrary to many other media theories which describe users as passive, the U&G theory describes users as active and interacting which allows them to have control over their media usage (Katz et al., 1973; Severin & Tankard, 1997; Ruggiero, 2000; Rubin, 2002; Neus, 2020). People consume media because they desire essential gratifications such as the need to improve knowledge, relax, social interactions, diversion, or escape (McQuail, 2010), which can be satisfied by using various media (Cummings, 2008; McQuail, 2010).

Two principles govern how media consumers use media. The first one characterises users as active in their choice of media consumption. This perspective implies that people do not just passively consume media but are engaged and motivated in their media selection process (Lowery & De Fleur, 1988). The second one states that people are aware of the reasons for selecting a particular media format and rely on their knowledge of motivations to make a media choice that meets their specific needs and wants (Ruggiero, 2000).

The U&G theory has been used within the research of online contexts (Whiting and Williams, 2013), Facebook and esports (Sjöblom and Hamari, 2017). The U&G theory is considered proper to explore and acquire insights into the uses and motivations of using video games and esports (Katz et al., 1973; Weiser, 2001; Stafford et al., 2004; Sundar & Limperos, 2013; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Researchers used the U&G theory to examine and understand the motives of why and how people consume esports and what needs esports as a media can gratify (Qian et al., 2020).

Due to the nature of electronic computer mediation, esports is considered a form of media and communication, so many researchers have used the U&G theory to better understand specific media consumption (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Video games are played to satisfy certain needs. Due to their interactive nature, gamers find video games fascinating and appealing (Jansz & Martens, 2005). Further, video games allow gamers to be active rather than passive in selecting and customising the game according to their needs, which from a U&G perspective will contribute to understanding the motivations for gamers to consume esports and the gratification they get because of that interaction (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Kim & Ross, 2006; Sherry et al., 2006; Qian et al., 2020).

Today, media providers or companies are seen as public and media-based communication organisers providing content and operating platforms in hybrid forms valid online and offline (Hess, 2014). Esport has been defined in the literature as a media provider where information, media, and events are integrated materially in a social field, which is a product of social relations in hybrid forms (Thompson, 1995; Hutchins, 2008; Lash, 2002). Nowadays, human activities intersect with ICTs (Information and communications technology). As a result, a LAN is the social form of esports that integrates the physical (offline) and technological (online) basis of

competition which is considered a form of media. Therefore, we argue that a LAN is a media provider in an offline form, and that is why it is relevant to explore the motivations to attend a LAN using the U&G theory (Hess, 2014; Thompson, 1995; Hutchins, 2008; Lash, 2002).

The U&G theory has a considerable value in communication and media research, yet, it has been criticised for many reasons.

- It suggests that users are active and make conscious decisions when selecting and consuming media. Usually, such studies rely on self-report data considered unreliable and not accurate (Katz, 1987; Ruggiero, 2000).
- U&G suggest that users can select and consume media freely. However, it is criticised that users can only select available media because many users do not have access to all media available, which might affect the gratifications they want to satisfy and make them passive users instead (Ruggiero, 2000; Krcmar & Strizhakova, 2009).
- U&G emphasises the users' role and ignores the restrictions and limitations of media messages that might affect users (Ruggiero, 2000; Krcmar & Strizhakova, 2009).
- Many scholars criticised and argued that U&G is not considered a theory because it is too broad. After all, there is a lack of conceptualisation and clear distinction between needs and motivations (Ruggiero, 2000; Krcmar & Strizhakova, 2009). It is further argued that defining and understanding gratifications is challenging because they are user-centred rather than media-centred. Where users associate satisfying certain gratifications with certain media, and different media will not satisfy the same gratifications (Becker, 1979).

2.3 Studies Using U&G

This study explores the motivations to attend a LAN from a U&G perspective. The U&G theory has not reached a universally adapted model to describe and illustrate it; therefore, considerable research and theories have been created utilising the U&G theory (Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Further, the U&G theory has not been investigated heavily in the context of motivations to attend a LAN (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Michailidis, 2019; Lui, 2020). Therefore, an examination of the relevant literature on esports (LANs, live-streaming, online sports, online games, social media, video games) is presented in (**Table 1**). The articles are alphabetically organised, following the empirical context column.

The authors highlighted in bold only the motivations chosen to be explored in the study. The decision was made based on the exclusivity of available information and detailed description regarding the chosen motivations.

Table 1 *Overview of the examined literature using U&G.*

Empirical Context	Study	Method	Motivations
Esports	Weiss (2011)	Qualitative	Competitive (**competition**, **achievement**, challenge, reputation, and rewards) Hedonic (**relationship**, **escape**, self-fulfilment, fun, and virtual identity)
Esports	Neus et al. (2019)	Quantitative	**Social**, **Achievement**, Knowledge, **Skills**, Aesthetics, **Escape**, Drama, Hedonic, Utilitarian, Satisfaction
Esports	Hamari & Sjöblom (2017)	Quantitative	**Social**, **Achievement**, Gain Knowledge, (Physical) **Skills**, Aesthetics, **Escape**, Drama
Esports	Chang (2019)	Qualitative	Hedonic gratification (**enjoyment**, passing time), **Social gratification** (**social interaction**, social presence), Utilitarian gratification (self-presentation, information documentation, **information sharing**), Technology gratification (media appeal)
Esports	Barney (2021)	Quantitative	**Skill-based motivations**, **Entertainment-based motivations**, and **Relationship-based motivations**.
Esports	Qian et al. (2020)	Mixed	Game Knowledge, Vicarious Sensation, **Competition Excitement**, Dramatic Nature, **Skill Appreciation**, **Competitive Nature**, Friends Bonding, **Entertaining Features**, **Socialisation Opportunity**, **Skill Improvement**.
Esports	Tang et al. (2021)	Quantitative	**Entertainment**, Knowledge Performance, Group affiliation **Escape**/Fantasy, Pastime

LANs	Jansz & Martens (2005)	Quantitative	**Competition**, Control, **Entertainment**, **Escapism,** and Pastime.
LANs	Michailidis (2019)	Quantitative	Extent team, Athlete fandom, In-game rewards, Event atmosphere, parallel events, Attendance cost and **Socialisation influence**
Live-streaming	Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018)	Quantitative	**Entertainment**, **Information seeking**, Meeting new people, **Social interactions**, Social support, **Sense of community**, Social anxiety, and External support.
Online Sports	Seo & Green (2008)	Mixed	**Information**, **Entertainment**, Interpersonal communication, **Escape**, Pass time, Fanship, **Team support,** Content, Economic and Technical knowledge
Online Games	Yee (2006)	Quantitative	**Achievement** (advancement, mechanics, **competition**), **Social** (**socialising**, **relationships**, **teamwork**), and Immersion (discovery, role-playing, customization)
Online Games	Wang et al. (2021)	Quantitative	**Escapism motivation** (one of the 4 components of Immersion along with discovery, role-playing, customization) **Social motivation** (**socialising**, **relationships**, **teamwork**) **Achievement motivation** (advancement, mechanics, **competition**)
Social Media	Chang et al. (2021)	Quantitative	Role-playing, **Competition**, **Relationships**, Mechanics, Advancement, **Teamwork**, **Escapism**, **Socialisation**
Social Media	Whiting & Williams (2013)	Qualitative	**Social interaction**, **Information seeking**, Pass time, **Entertainment**, Relaxation, Communicatory utility, Convenience utility, Expression of opinion, **Information sharing**, and Surveillance/Knowledge about others.

Social Media	Sundar & Limperos (2013)	Qualitative	Social identity, Interpersonal communication, Parasocial interaction, Companionship, **Escape**, **Entertainment** and Surveillance
Social Media	Gan & Li (2018)	Quantitative	Hedonic gratification (enjoyment and **escapism** obtained from interacting with an **entertainment**), **social gratification** (**interaction with others**), Utilitarian gratification (**information sharing** and self-presentation), and Technology gratification (the extent that technology helps its users to express and communicate with each other).
Video Games	Yee et al. (2012)	Quantitative	**Achievement**, **Social** and Immersion were the driving factors
Video Games	Sun et al. (2006)	Quantitative	Diversion, **Competition**, **Interaction**, Meeting strangers, and Self–expression
Video Games	Sherry et al. (2006)	Quantitative	**Competition** (playing to impress friends), Challenge (playing for challenge), **Social interaction** (to interact with friends), Diversion (to pass time), Fantasy (to do things that cannot be done in real life) and Arousal (for excitement)
Video Games	Kim & Ross (2006)	Quantitative	Knowledge application, Identification with sport, Fantasy, **Competition**, **Entertainment**, **Social interaction** and Diversion
Video Games	De Schutter (2011)	Qualitative	**Competition**, Challenge, **Social interaction**, Diversion, Fantasy and Arousal

The table was developed by the authors based on existing literature using the U&G theory and exploring various motivations related to the theory.

2.4 Motivations and Benefits

The following part will present ten motivations chosen to explore gamers' motivations. The chosen motivations are adapted from (**Table 1**) and modified due to the intertwinement in the articles. Thus said, in some articles, the motivations are presented as sub-motivations and vice versa. The chosen motivations were deemed fit for the purpose of the research based on the availability of information and comprehensive description in the literature. However, the study excluded some motivations due to a lack of thorough information and descriptions. Further, the chosen motivations are described in studies using U&G theory, which makes it applicable for this study to explore the motivations to attend a LAN from a U&G perspective.

The explored motivations revealed critical benefits participants get out of their attendance at a LAN. The explored motivations are the input that influences gamers to attend a LAN. However, the perceived benefits are the output gamers get from their LAN attendance and experience. The benefits are tied to motivation and vice versa, meaning there is an interrelated connection. Therefore, defining and understanding gratifications is challenging because they are user-centred (Becker, 1979). The perceived benefits will be presented in **Chapter 4** and critically analysed in **Chapter 5**.

2.4.1 Competition

Competition is identified as the urge to compete with others in a game, where winning can satisfy the need to be competitive and bring a sense of power (Barnett et al., 1997; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Yee, 2006). Thus, gamers always expect esports, in general, to have a competitive nature in the games which is perceived by gamers as a possibility to gain and achieve power and capability in the games (Sherry et al., 2006; Yee, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Jansz & Tanis, 2007; Weiss, 2011; Wang et al., 2021).

Competition can be seen as a major reason gamers play video games (Kim & Ross, 2006; Sepehr & Head, 2018). LANs are usually organised around multiplayer competitive games between different teams attending, and often, there are rewards for the winning team. Therefore, gamers who attend LANs regularly desire to compete in games and win to enhance their image and position among the other gamers (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Chang et al., 2021).

The presence of adequate game skills is an important factor influencing gamers to compete in LANs. Skill improvement is a motivation specifically applicable in the esports context. Gamers compete in various games driven by the need to advance, and that need reinforces the motivation to acquire competent skills (Qian et al., 2020).

2.4.2 Skills

This motivation is considered important for gamers who want to learn and advance their gameplay and therefore watch how the professionals do it. Barney (2021) identifies skills as one of the reasons why people watch esports. Skill motivation is highly valued by spectators of esports thanks to the visual presentation provided online and the skilled gameplay of gamers. By comparing the virtual and physical game settings, a study by Neus et al. (2019) explored the motivations of esports audiences to engage in and spectate esports. The study's findings suggest a difference in the appreciation of skills between online game spectators and game spectators at a LAN. Online spectators have a better position to watch the esports event because they are usually streamed online and have the option to watch at home on a big screen or their PC.

On the contrary, the spectators at a LAN who watch the esports event are at a disadvantage in appreciating the gaming skills because the screens are far away, and there is a high chance of missing out on parts due to the fast pace of the game (Neus et al., 2019). The enjoyment of the skillset states that the availability for users to enjoy the event entirely is somewhat limited. Thus, the online spectators' enjoyment and immersion are higher due to the option of switching through channels and following a certain gamer at a slower pace, where all the detailed tactics are more visible and clearer (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Neus et al., 2019). The skillset of gamers is more beneficial to online users due to the difference in the online and offline dimensions of experience (Neus et al., 2019). The motivation behind the skillset category is rooted in the human need for prosperity, capability, and the ability to be competent (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Qian et al. (2020) outlined two types of skills in their research. Skill Improvement is described as the range of acquiring new knowledge regarding various skills, tactics, and strategies while watching esports. On the other hand, skill appreciation is the ability to acknowledge other gamers' skills, tactics, and strategies while watching esports. Qian et al. (2020) suggest that skill improvement is the main motivation for spectators involved in gaming themselves who want to

learn and improve their gameplay. However, skill appreciation was a new motivation in the esports context, already known in traditional sports. This motivation is a valuable one prone to influencing spectators into committing to the game (Qian et al., 2020). Gaming skills are a vital factor for gamers, as Barney (2021) discussed. His research focuses on how competitive gamers who retired from their gaming careers of pro gamers have instead turned to a streaming career where they can still show off their gaming skills to the people watching their streams. Those streams by professional gamers are highly appreciated by spectators who want to learn and turn for information from gamers with knowledge and experience in the esports field (Barney, 2021). Skills are an important gameplay component for gamers as they try to mimic the tactics and strategies they see on streams. Therefore, the appreciation of skills is an important motivation for spectators and gamers who want to acquire relevant knowledge (Wang et al., 2019). The findings of Barney (2021) show that people who have skill-based motivations to spectate esports did not have specific preferences for online or offline presence mode.

2.4.3 Escape

Escape has shown to be a strong motive for gamers within previous research on motivations and gratification related to esports and gaming (Trail & James, 2001; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Neus et al., 2019).

Escapism refers to how media provides an escape and distraction from daily routines and ordinary activities, responsibilities, or problems (Gantz & Wenner, 1995: Yee, 2006). The escape motivation for gamers is not dependent on the game outcome; whether they win or lose, it is more about the sense of escape from real life (Wann et al., 2008; Neus et al., 2019). Since gamers need a sense of escapism, esports events, in general, should make it possible for gamers to feel the escapism experience. However, it is argued that the settings of esports can influence the escapism experience (Seo & Green, 2008; Seo, 2013). Hence, playing games or watching streams at home, e.g., using the same computer or television in the same room, which is considered a daily routine, will not create the same escape experience as attending events or changing the surroundings. The gamer's environment will give more of an escape experience and deliver unexplored feelings (Neus et al., 2019).

2.4.4 Entertainment

Entertainment is essential to gamers because they expect that they will enjoy the game and its results, such as winning, which will cheer them up and entertain them (Griffiths & Wood, 2000; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Tang, 2018; Gan & Li, 2018; Qian et al., 2020). In addition, gamers play games because it provides entertainment and enjoyment, specifically when regularly playing with peers and friends (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Therefore, we argue that gamers at a LAN will play games to entertain esports spectators on social networking events (Ko et al., 2005; Pons et al., 2006; Kerr & May, 2011; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017).

In the context of LANs, information and communication technology is an important factor contributing to gamers' entertainment. A quality LAN is when computers are connected to a local area network without internet connection troubles (lag[2]). It gives the internet a high speed, which allows the gamers to enjoy their game and communicate within the game. As a result, LANs can be pleasing and entertaining for gamers because they can enjoy high-speed Internet access to engage in other activities like updating their games or watching streams (Jansz & Martens, 2005). It is argued that even watching esports activities is a form of entertainment where it can also contribute to learning new skills because it provides information (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020).

2.4.5 Information

Information is important due to the availability to access data and the opportunity to find and learn a wide range of information to keep one updated with the current events in their area of interest (Seo & Green, 2008). Whiting & Williams (2013) identified two aspects of information: seeking and sharing of information. Information seeking is referred to as a way to improve by learning new information ("*self-educate*") or gaining new knowledge by seeking information (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Chang (2019) conducted a study exploring the motivations of esport audiences and found that information seeking is done online rather than using traditional information channels such as TV or radio. The main reason for that is the convenience factor.

[2] **Lag** - "Lag is a slow response from a computer or any device that responds slower than expected. Video game lag is generally caused by either a slow computer or a slow Internet connection" (TechTerms, 2021).

The esports audience prefers to seek information online by using Twitch, YouTube, and smartphone applications that automatically send notifications when there is news in the esports field and update all the news to keep the information source up-to-date.

According to Whiting & Williams (2013), seeking information is considered a facilitator in managing communication and initiating socialisation with others. Information is further explored as motivation and the main reason why gamers engage and spend time on the Twitch streaming platform. The results found that the desire to learn more and gain knowledge leads gamers to spend more time engaging on Twitch (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018).
Information sharing was described as how "*interpersonal communication*" is achieved (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Gamers acquire their information by interacting with friends. The importance of information sharing is particularly evident in the esports field. It is a fundamental part of the esports culture and is highly valued by gamers, encouraging them to continue engaging in esports (Chang, 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that events are a great source of information for gamers. A LAN is perceived to be a platform to exchange information where gamers expect other professional gamers to attend the LAN to seek information about new gaming tactics and new gaming updates to learn new things (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Neus et al., 2019).

2.4.6 Achievement

Yee (2006) describes achievement as a personal motivation that gamers are driven to play games to advance in the game and improve their character. However, the achievement is also described as a socialising motivation tied up to the subcategory of teamwork. Achievement as a social motivation is when one thinks about achievements as a group and works together in collaboration to attain the goal (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012).

Achievement motivation is often cited in relation to competitive offline gaming and frequently attributed motivation that refers to the gamers accomplishing goals within their chosen game (Weiss, 2011). Achievement is one of the major motivations for gamers to play video games, along with social interaction and escapism. Yee (2006) has suggested that those motivations with a combination of prolonged hours playing can cause online game addiction. However, Wang et al. (2021, p.1) suggest a coping strategy for the online gaming addiction and propose that gamers susceptible to this addiction engage in "*outdoor activities, such as sports competitions and*

offline cosplay games to address the need for achievement and escapism". Furthermore, Yee et al. (2012) found that gamers driven by achievement motivations are not interested in-game activities that do not provide instant or direct rewards and therefore suggest better tailoring of games to the users' needs and interests.

Moreover, there is a share of experience when a favourite sports athlete wins a game and shares the achievement online and offline. The satisfaction of observing a favourite gamer's success and celebrating a triumph is considered a key motivating factor for all esports spectators and thus suggested to have the same value in the online and offline esports context (Neus et al., 2019).

2.4.7 Community

Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018) researched the community as a motivation in the context of Twitch and the engagement of live streams. During a LAN, gamers like to watch live streams together in a group (Scholz, 2012). The results concluded that a sense of community in the users of Twitch is one of the main drivers gamers engage with the streaming platform and the driver that engages users to continue their usage and consumption of the live-streaming content. Users are highly appreciative when they have a sense of belonging to a community "*live-stream viewers are attracted to channels where they feel noticed, important, and influential*" (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018, p.59). Spectators of live streams are subscribing to channels on Twitch to expand their social circle, improve connections and integrate themselves within the community. The sense of community is maintained by continued participation and engagement from both spectators and streamers. Smaller channels are more likely to provide spectators with attention (being noticed), acknowledgement (reward participation), and engagement (creation and preservation). All those benefits a small channel provides are necessary to maintain the sense of community and provide a sense of belonging to the community, which is very important for spectators (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018).

According to Eklund (2015), members of online communities tend to connect with other members in the offline setting because offline connections are crucial for online interaction. Further, online interactions are an extension of offline social relations (Castells, 2001).
When it comes to establishing offline connections, a LAN allows gamers to connect with like-minded people while engaging in video game play and building a community (Jansz &

Martens, 2005). The practice of gaming with other like-minded individuals creates a strong social bond for the community. Those communities are called gaming communities formed around a specific video game where people engage with other members to enhance their playing experience (Stanford University, n.d; Gee, 2008).

The connections established in a community are based on common characteristics to enhance the game-play in the community, create norms and regulations and bolster the companionship within the community. Therefore, as a result, online and offline relationships become interconnected (Eklund, 2015). Thus, a sense of community is fostered by engaging the gamers within the gaming community's experiences, engaging with streamers, participating in chat discussions, and socialising (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018).

2.4.8 Social Interaction

Socialising with peers is of great importance within esports (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Hamilton et al., 2014; Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). The multiplayer option in games can be gratifying to sociality, where gamers need to play together (Jansz & Martens, 2005). Multiplayer games can occur when peers get together to play and achieve (Orleans & Laney, 2000) or when other unknown gamers compete with others online (Griffiths et al., 2004). Maslow's hierarchy of needs implies that social interaction between individuals can satisfy the needs of belonging and love (Maslow, 1943).

Social interaction is an experience created by playing games with others. Consequently, one achieves a sense of understanding as it revolves around an interest and shared experiences (Eklund, 2015). Socialising can be seen as a major part of attending events. People usually go to events to socialise and interact with people who often have the same interest or share something in common. Therefore, they attend the same event in the first place and use that interest or common things to interact and keep up with each other socially (Ko et al., 2005; Pons et al., 2006; Kerr & May, 2011**;** Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). However, in esports, gamers can still interact online through streaming platforms, not only in events which means gamers can interact online or offline (Scheibe et al., 2016; Bründl et al., 2017). Regardless, attending LANs provides a higher sense of social interaction because gamers can physically come together (Neus et al., 2019). Moreover, it is argued that digital interaction can never replace authentic real-life social

experience and interaction (Scheibe et al., 2016; Bründl et al., 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). Socialising is also a key factor impacting gamers' engagement and continuous usage of games (Chen et al., 2006; Hamari & Koivisto, 2015).

2.4.9 Relationship

Some studies contradict the importance of socialisation while spectating esports, even though communication tools are available to initiate socialisation in the virtual space. Not all research supports the relevance of relationships as a motivation in the gaming literature (Weiss, 2011). This contradiction comes from the fact that online communication is not considered as effective as communication and relationship formation in a real-life context (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Xiao, 2020).

However, relationships are part of the social motivation category. According to Wang et al. (2021), it is related to building and maintaining relationships with others which further includes helping and supporting. In online games, relationships help gamers further improve in games and continue the game storyline (Przybylski et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2021). Relationships are based on collaboration between individuals. However, establishing this connection can satisfy the need for belongingness and love (Maslow, 1943). Gamers with the best game performance are the ones that cooperate and communicate (Badatala et al., 2016). The presence of a relationship provides them with better ideas, more knowledge, and consequently, best game results. In situations where there are challenges in the game, gamers tend to put in a team effort to pass the obstacles and hardships (Chang et al., 2018).

Gamers can be highly motivated to watch esports because of socialising, engaging with others and the feeling of connection with specific teams or gamers. Those aspects can influence spectators to continue engaging in esports (Qian et al., 2020). In addition, esports can be regarded as a social activity that creates a feeling of belonging to a group or being part of a community. Chang et al. (2021) describe social relationships as a need to relate with people, feel part of a group, need for belonging, or engage, connect, and socialise with others. The importance of building and maintaining long-lasting relationships in the gaming world is discussed by Trepte et al. (2012), describing cases in which gamers leave a game. The prior built relationship in the online game provides a greater chance for the gamer to maintain a strong

relationship offline. Furthermore, Chang et al. (2021) suggest that long-term relationships in online games may be able to transform into offline relationships in the offline world. The ability to socialise and communicate with others is valued highly by people, with a particular emphasis on ones that engage in LANs (Sjöblom et al., 2019). Social relationships drive gamers to engage in video games to gain social recognition regarding social interactions and build long-term relationships. Barney (2021) explored gamers with relationship-based motivations and found that people driven by that motivation prefer to watch esports in person rather than online.

2.4.10 Teamwork

Teamwork is a social activity acquired by actively cooperating with other teammates (Yee, 2006). Teamwork is used to describe a group effort sharing the same collective purpose, where gamers collaborate to help each other, team up, or learn new skills to help the team reach in-game goals and win the game (Decortis et al., 2010; Kang et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2021). At its core, gamers interact and communicate with others to achieve goals such as winning a game or completing a task successfully. In the hierarchy of needs, Maslow proposes that interactivity between people serves as a course of action that satisfies individuals' need for love and belonging (Maslow, 1943; Wang et al., 2021). The presence of good teamwork is described as when the team sets common rules, tactics, and strategies to be followed in the game by everyone in the team, which is built on communications and collaboration (Decortis et al., 2010). There are diverse stages in gaming where teammates provide help and support for their alliances to mutually achieve goals within a game, such as levelling up characters, finding treasures, fulfilling quests, entering dungeons, and fighting bosses (Hassouneh & Brengman, 2014; Teng & Chen, 2014; Chang et al., 2021). The effort done by the team collaboration and the group achievement will make teammates satisfied (Yee, 2006). Becoming part of a team in-game provides gamers with benefits such as connecting with like-minded people who have similar interests and building loyal relationships with other gamers. Teamwork helps gamers build long-lasting relationships that can be held and continued in the offline setting (Kang et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2021).

2.5 Conceptualisation

The following model is a visual representation of the motivations to attend a LAN. The model sums up the motivations discussed in (**Chapter 2.4**) and provides an easier comprehension of the motivations chosen for this research based on the available literature on the topic. The authors have developed the model to present the most applicable motives based on the current literature research presented in (**Table 1**) that will be explored in the LAN context.

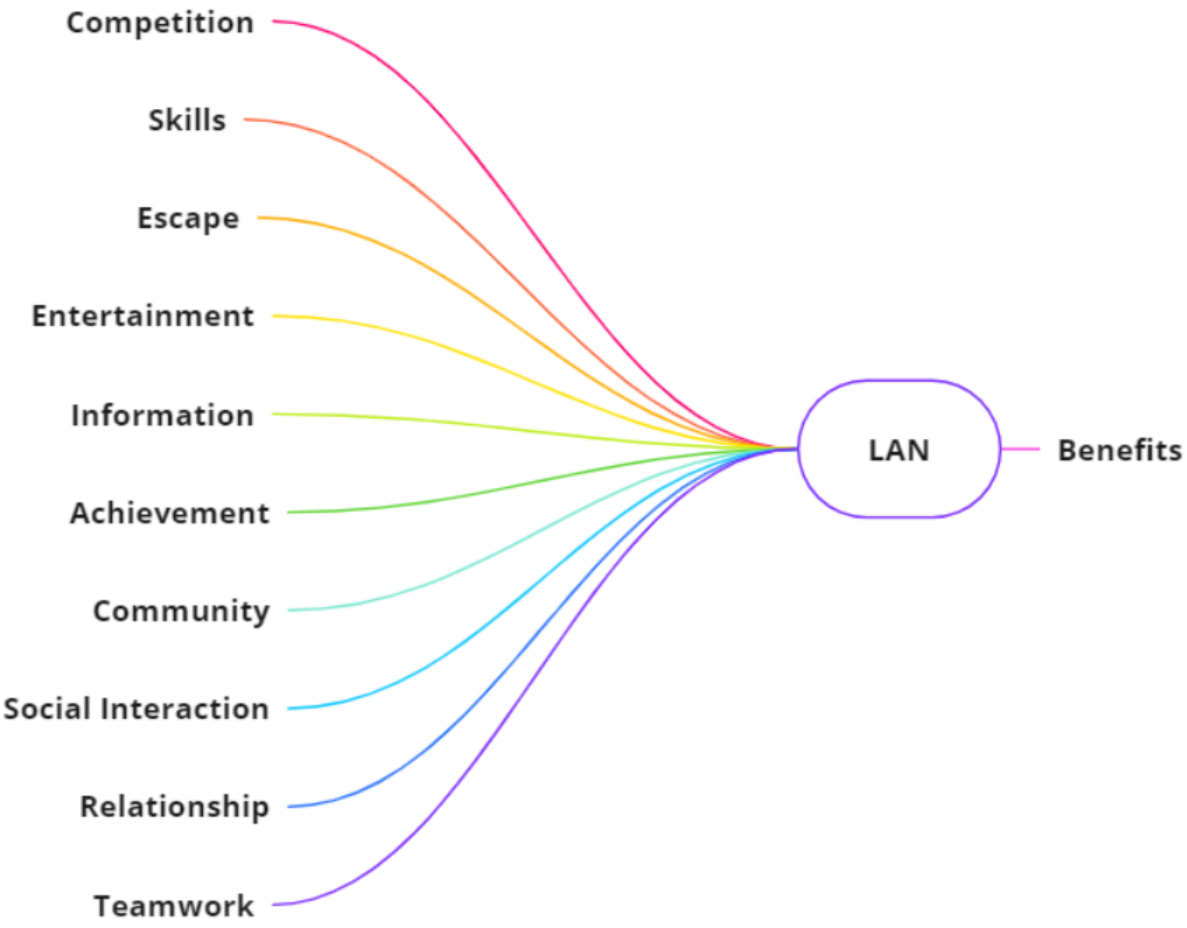

Figure 6 *List of Motivations to attend a LAN* (own representation).

3. Method

This chapter presents the methodological choices of the method at different levels connected to the research purpose. This chapter discusses and rationalises the basic philosophy of science as it pertains to the interpretivist research paradigm. Afterwards, justifications of the exploratory design and the reasoning for pursuing an abductive approach are presented. Subsequently, an explanation of the decision to undertake a qualitative study and conduct semi-structured interviews as a data collection method follows. Then the different steps that have been taken to collect and analyse the data are presented. The section is concluded with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Philosophical assumptions and standpoints are necessary to guide any research to collect, analyse and interpret data and justify the overall methodological choices (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Saunders et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). The clarification of the research philosophy contributes to enhancing the quality of the research and producing valuable knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Nunan et al., 2020).

There are two different considerations in research philosophy, ontological and epistemological (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The ontological assumption is the philosophical study of the nature of reality and existence, including social actors; human beings (Popper, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). The epistemological assumption is the philosophical study of the sufficient basis of knowledge or logic in a discipline and its connection to the researcher (Popper, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). This study is interested in uncovering new knowledge and learning about reality which is why the **epistemology** assumption is used.

A paradigm can be chosen from the four research paradigms, interpretivism, pragmatism, positivism, and realism (Saunders et al., 2016). The **interpretivist** approach is applied because this research is focused on capturing and understanding the motivations of individuals in a social context (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). The interpretivist approach will help this research understand and interpret participants' motivations from their view, which will give a subjective understanding of the phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Results will differ

among participants because understanding the subjective reality of different participants cannot be generalised to everyone within a social world. In a social encounter like a LAN, everything will always change according to the different participants interacting with it. Therefore, an interpretivist approach does not aim to generalise results, and it is suitable for this study since it will capture different personal motivations (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016; Nunan et al., 2020).

3.2 Research Design

Following the chosen research philosophy, a proper research design is needed to answer the research questions. Two research designs can be chosen exploratory and conclusive. Conclusive research is usually conducted to quantitatively measure or test hypotheses and relationships to make conclusions (Nunan et al., 2020). In contrast, exploratory research provides a deeper understanding that cannot be quantitatively measured for topics not entirely explored (Nunan et al., 2020).

After reviewing the existing literature, there is available research on gamers' motivations in different contexts, but not enough research in a LAN context. Due to the limitations and gaps in the research, an **exploratory research design** is suitable to understand the phenomenon of motivations to attend LANs because the existing literature has not been studied in-depth previously (Michailidis, 2019; Lui, 2020). The exploratory nature will help clarify concepts precisely, gather new insights, form a better understanding of the phenomenon, and eliminate the inoperable concepts concerning the phenomenon of LANs (Malhotra, 2010).

A literature review was conducted exploring the phenomenon of LANs to understand what exists in the research and identify what is missing and ambiguous that needs to be explored through interviews and get varieties of perspectives and opinions (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Nunan et al., 2020). Moreover, the motivations studied are intertwined between the online and the offline settings, and it was hard to find motivations that apply only to the LANs. Therefore, the motivations examined can be applied to both settings. However, the exploratory study will help understand the motivations to attend a LAN only, and the research is not interested in the motivations of online settings.

3.3 Research Approach

There are three research approaches to consider, deductive, inductive or abductive, and they have an essential role in the research process (Saunders et al., 2016).

The deductive approach aims to test existing theories by forming hypotheses. In contrast, the inductive approach aims to build theories or draw conclusions from observations (Saunders et al., 2016). The abductive research approach combines inductive and deductive approaches. An abductive approach signifies that the study can be dynamic by using theory to collect empirical data and using empirical data adjusted to the existing theories, which will generate new research (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016).

This study uses an **abductive approach** to explore a phenomenon that has not been explored well. Previous research has been examined and used to collect empirical data, resulting in new assumptions or unexplored theories (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Kovács & Spens, 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). The existing literature on offline LANs is inadequate (Michailidis, 2019; Lui, 2020). Therefore, the authors have identified relevant literature to be examined analytically, including literature on online settings. Utilising the abductive approach helped incorporate the limited theory and gaps in the literature with the gathering of empirical data, giving meaningful results and discovering unexplored connections (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.4 Qualitative Research

Researchers apply quantitative or qualitative methods according to the research purpose (Saunders et al., 2016). Quantitative methods aim to quantify, measure, form hypotheses and analyse statistical data, which is unsuitable for this study (Nunan et al., 2020). In contrast, a qualitative study collects information that cannot be expressed in numbers but expressed and captured (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Esports is an emergent field of academic research where the theoretical frameworks used are adapted from other academic fields (Neus et al., 2019; Michailidis, 2019). Moreover, there is a scarcity of qualitative studies about gamers' motivation in esports; most of the available studies have been done quantitatively. Consequently, conducting a qualitative study can provide a better understanding of a phenomenon and can be beneficial for the research area of esports (Hamari &

Sjöblom, 2017; Neus et al., 2019). Qualitative research is involved in understanding individuals more profoundly by capturing their thoughts and views due to the lack of qualitative research on gamers' motivations in relation to LANs. In-depth knowledge is required to understand the phenomenon that quantitative methods cannot achieve (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Barnham, 2015; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Michailidis, 2019). Therefore, **qualitative research** was used to reach gamers who have attended a LAN, to explore their motivations and thus help understand the phenomena of LANs (Saunders et al., 2016; Michailidis, 2019).

3.5 Data Collection

The process of data collection for this study was both from primary and secondary data sources. The data was gathered, reviewed, and analysed to find relevant materials and information about theory, motivations to attend LANs, and further resources and materials that can help answer the research questions posed in the paper.

3.5.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data was vital for this study, and it helped in exploring the existing literature, identifying the gaps in it, and building a strong theoretical framework to help in generating new knowledge through the conduction of interviews (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

The secondary data were collected from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, gaming websites and articles. Google Scholar and Primo were the main databases from which the literature was gathered. Moreover, the snowball method was applied because the existing literature on LANs is scarce. It helped identify relevant peer-reviewed journal articles by examining the reference lists of each article, which led to finding more relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. That resulted in constructing a solid theoretical framework from academic references. Nevertheless, some articles were eliminated from this study because of the lack of thick descriptions of the motivations. In addition, gaming websites, blogs, and reports were used to collect other relevant data that helped explain the topic further due to the conundrum faced when looking for up-to-date information on a contemporary fast pace phenomenon that changes continuously.

3.5.2 Primary Data

In a qualitative study, primary data is collected when the available secondary data is not sufficient to answer a specific research question and to understand a social phenomenon, specific data is needed (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Adams et al., 2014; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Additionally, "*an interview study seems best suited to disentangle the details of the motivational network of LAN gamers"* (Jansz & Martens, 2005, p,351). Therefore, a semi-structured interview was used for its flexible two-way communication to explore personal insights (Howitt, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Further, the informal nature of semi-structured interviews allowed the authors to ask more probing and follow up questions, which helped enrich the data gathered (Saunders et al., 2016). In addition, a semi-structured interview was the most appropriate for the selected samples because gamers love to have conversations, not formal discussions. Talking about their favourite games is what they prefer (Satellite Gaming, 2019). In the conducted semi-structured interviews, gamers were encouraged to express their opinions and thoughts through conversations about a topic they like and enjoy, while extensive data were captured and in-depth information about the gamers' motivations was gathered (Howitt, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.5.2.1 Operationalisation

Operationalisation is a technique used to convert theoretical concepts into measurable items to facilitate an effective empirical data collection and analysis method, which can also help formulate relevant and critical interview questions to cover the topic thoroughly (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Saunders et al., 2016). Further, the operationalisation techniques have assisted the authors in understanding the research problem and, as a result, drawing evident conclusions (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The operationalisation of the selected motivations from a U&G perspective is presented in (**Table 4**) to be explored further in the interviews. The operationalisation supported a better understanding of the ten motivations because they are intertwined. Therefore, Items were gathered by breaking down the motivations into measurable concepts to cover each motivation's important aspects. Furthermore, the items helped develop relevant and applicable questions to collect the required information in the interviews. Finally, items helped in the coding process of the empirical findings as they worked as theoretical codes.

Table 2 *Operationalisation Table*

	Motivation	Items	Interview Questions
U&G Theory	Competition	Competitive Nature	Do you think it is important to compete at a LAN?
		Winning	How does winning or losing affect your experience at a LAN? Have you ever competed at a LAN and lost? Follow up if Lost: What were the emotions you went through?
	Skills	Learning	Would you be able to give examples of skills needed to be a successful competitive gamer? How do you learn and adapt to the new META?
		Improvement	Do you consider a LAN a place where you can improve and learn new skills? Do you want to improve your skills and why?
	Escape	Unexplored Feelings	How do you feel when attending a LAN and playing games? Can you describe it?
		Escapism Experience	How does attending a LAN differ from playing games or watching streams from home?
	Entertainment	Enjoyment	What kind of activities do you like to see and do at a LAN? What makes a LAN enjoyable to you and makes you want to come back?
		Quality Network	Besides playing games do you see any other benefits to the local area network (high-speed internet)? Have you ever experienced an internet lag in a LAN? Follow up if Yes: How did it make you feel?

U&G Theory	Information	Self-educate	How do you keep yourself updated about upcoming LAN events? Follow up: Is there a community that informs you?
		Up-to-date	How do you keep yourself up to date with what is new in esports (new games, new game hacks or tactics, offers or discounts in the game)?
		Value/ Interpersonal Communication	How important is information sharing for you in a LAN and why?
	Achievement	Rewards	What do you get from attending a LAN? Follow up: Do you get any rewards? How do the rewards you get from attending a LAN affect your opinion about participating again?
	Community	Sense of belonging	Are you part of a gaming community? Follow up: Does that affect your motivation to attend a LAN?
	Social Interaction	Socialising	Do you go to a LAN to make new connections? Follow up if Yes: Is this important to you?
	Relationship	Communication & Collaboration	How can communication and collaboration with others affect your willingness to get involved in a LAN? How does being together physically influence your game experience?
	Teamwork	Group Effort	Do you play single player or multiplayer games? Follow up for multiplayer: What makes a strong team composition? Do you meet new teammates at LANs? Does your team change over time? What individual skills make a strong team composition?

3.5.2.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide (see **Appendix 1**) was developed to follow the nature of a semi-structured interview which consists of a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions serving as a guide but can be tailored based on the respondent. The guide covered the key elements of the U&G theory to direct the interview flow in a more flexible way, but within the topic where more in-depth discussion is allowed (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Due to the interconnectedness of motivations and benefits, it is challenging to ask questions directly separating out the motivations from the benefits, since that does not allow the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding about the topic. Thus, the answers were intertwined for both motivations and benefits, and it was hard to have separate questions for them. This allows for the coverage of major themes while allowing for new topics and ideas to emerge which can add to existing findings (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001) as well as lead researchers down important paths they would not have imagined.

All questions in the interview guide were covered in a different order or format according to conversation relevance. The interview guide helped collect as much information as possible while sticking to the main theme of questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

As part of the interview process, additional (probing and follow-up) questions were asked based on the atmosphere and how predisposed participants were. Due to the study topic being subjective according to gamers' own experiences, the understanding of the question varied among participants. **Probing questions** were used to ask direct questions to build on an interesting point mentioned by the participant or to give examples. **Follow-up questions** were asked when more elaboration was needed (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Therefore, it was necessary to use probing and follow-up questions to ensure the quality of the answers (see **Appendix 2**).

3.5.2.3 Pilot Test

Before reaching out to the participants to conduct the interviews, the authors performed a pilot test to verify the instrument, enhance the interview questions, and make them easy to follow and answer (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; Gani et al., 2020). The authors conducted two pilot tests to verify the interview to contribute efficiently to this study (Turner, 2010). Thus, questions were paraphrased and adjusted to fit into a casual conversation style. Also, gamers who are the sample of this study find it confusing to have a full academic format and style of the questions and thus feel pressure to provide too sophisticated answers. Many questions were repetitive and consequently were found confusing for the participants. As a result, the authors have fixed the order of questions to make them easier to follow and have a logical flow of thought. The language and style of the questions were also optimised, providing the respondents with casual questions to remove the pressure of high/academic language expression expectations for them. The pilot test helped measure the approximate time the interview might take, so when informing the participants, they could be prepared for that time.

3.5.2.4 Participant Selection

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used to choose a fitting sample according to the research's purpose, which will support answering the research questions of this study (Mack & Woodsong, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016).

Purposive sampling was used to get relevant and experienced participants with the topic, which will enrich the research with quality results (Howitt, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). This research selected gamers who have attended a LAN. The sample seems fit for the research and can contribute with fresh and valuable insights regarding their motivations to attend a LAN.
Some participants were chosen in a LAN organised by the student gaming club at Jönköping University, called Justice[3], at Science Park, on the 26th of February 2022. The authors attended the event as well. The LAN was a good opportunity to meet potential participants. Also, the Snowball sampling technique was used. This sampling technique works in a chain process where the researcher can contact their acquaintances who are relevant to the research topic and can be

[3] **Justice** - "A student association from Jönköping University that caters for competitive esports players, but also to the casual gamer" (Justice, n.d).

used to get other people they know to participate, and they can help in connecting with more people (Mack & Woodsong, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). More participants who were close friends or acquaintances of one of the authors were also contacted via a snowball technique. Those participants were further asked for contacts of other gamers who have attended in a LAN. This part of the sample was contacted via Facebook Messenger. Thus, the snowball technique helped gather more relevant interview samples (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In this study, the sample size was determined by theoretical saturation. The researchers conducted 15 interviews, resulting in 9 hours (540 minutes) of conversation time and 214 pages of transcribed text. After transcribing and coding the data, patterns were identified, the data became evident, and apparently, no new codes appeared (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Boddy, 2016). Therefore, due to the theoretical saturation becoming evident in 15 interviews, it was irrelevant to spend additional time conducting more interviews because no new knowledge or data was being uncovered or emerging (Mack & Woodsong, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A website called Plarium was used to generate random nicknames for the participants who decided not to choose one but instead asked the interviewer to pick one for them (Plarium, n.d).
In the participants overview (**Table 3**), the "priority game" category refers to participants' most played or favourite game. There was no specific question in the interview asking participants for their favourite or most played game. However, during the interviews, participants provided data about their most played or favourite game.

Table 3 *Participants Overview*

Participant	Nickname	Gender	Priority Game	Interview Duration
1	KazzardiusTheTomato	Male	League of Legends	70 minutes
2	Regicide	Male	Counter Strike	35 minutes
3	Paka	Male	League of Legends	40 minutes
4	Buick	Male	Rocket League	35 minutes
5	SlothBear	Male	Grim Dawn	30 minutes
6	Palpebral	Female	TFT	40 minutes
7	Alexy	Male	Dota 2	45 minutes
8	Senri	Male	World of Warcraft	25 minutes
9	Vazzor	Male	Apex Legends	25 minutes
10	MasterBone	Male	Skyrim	20 minutes
11	MazihY	Male	Apex Legends	35 minutes
12	OracleOne1	Male	Rainbow Six Siege	30 minutes
13	Bella	Female	CS:GO	25 minutes
14	Narsa	Male	League of Legends	40 minutes
15	Valeria	Female	Valorant	45 minutes

3.5.2.5 Execution of Interviews

After gathering contacts of potential participants, an email or a text message was sent to 13 participants, asking them about their preference of the interview location and time. Once the participants agreed to be interviewed, the researcher scheduled the interviews according to the participants' preferences.

At the beginning of each interview, the "GDPR Thesis Study Consent Form" provided by Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) was introduced thoroughly to make the process easier for participants. A verbal confirmation was granted for recording the interviews to save time and effort for the participants and make the whole process more convenient (this is discussed further in **Chapter 3.9**). Participants were informed about how the data will be handled, that no privacy invasion would happen, and that the interview would be recorded for transcribing purposes and destroyed afterwards.

All interviews have been conducted through the Zoom meeting platform for many reasons. First, the platform is highly preferable to the participants because it is more convenient and easy for interviewees to participate in the interviews. It saves time and money because no one needs to pay for transportation and spend extra time on transportation to attend the interview; also, not all participants were physically available for interviews (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020). Generally, online interviews have facilitated a suitable environment because participants feel more connected and supported (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019).

3.5.2.6 Recording and Transcription

It is challenging to maintain a balance between asking questions, writing notes, and observing body language during interviewers. Therefore, all interviews were recorded after informing the participants to keep track of necessary data gathered from the interviews. Likewise, recording helped reduce the risk of skipping useful details and staying objective (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Matheson, 2015). Each interview was recorded carefully through Zoom, and after each interview, transcribing was done on Word360. Then, the authors reviewed the data by matching the original recordings with the transcribed text to avoid any incomplete data or errors to ensure the quality and reliability of the data collected (further discussion in **Chapter 3.9**) (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.6 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was done to find patterns and relationships in the accumulated data (Martin & Gynnild, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). Analysing the collected data from interviews followed four steps of open coding to reach final themes.

The first step started with getting familiarised with the data, where all the transcribed interviews

were read critically after each interview with an open mind to generate an impression of the data and notice any possible interesting patterns or codes in connection to the research questions (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Then, every interview was transcribed and coded separately, which gave an initial understanding of the data and what the analysis process will be like to avoid losing rich and vibrant results, including valuable insights and participants' emotions (Saldaña, 2021).

The second step was rereading the interviews comprehensively to start generating first-level codes while keeping in mind the notes from the first step (Bryman, 2016). A code is a word or phrase that aggregates, summarises, and stands for a set of data (Saldaña, 2021), where a group of codes that can describe the same concepts or meaning were placed in the same first-level code (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The authors did the initial coding individually for each transcribed interview and then went through the whole coding process together to ensure having the same understanding to confirm the quality and objectivity of the selected codes to proceed to the next step (Campbell et al., 2013). Many codes connected back to the items developed in the operationalisation table, which also supported the objectivity of the results.

This leads to the third step, organising codes under categories called second-level codes, holding a similar set of codes presenting or describing the same concept, pattern, or phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Bryman, 2016; Saldaña, 2021). All codes were put together in one document to combine and group them according to the resemblance in their meaning or hold something in common (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saldaña, 2021).

The fourth step of data analysis was identifying themes, where data need to generate meaning and make sense to produce knowledge for the study (Smith & Firth, 2011; Richards & Morse, 2012). Themes emerge from the second-level codes created, where all the different second-level codes were compared to find a way to integrate them and show connections (Saldaña, 2021). Identifying themes implies that the data is theoretically conceptualised and comprehensive. Themes are presented in **Chapters 4** and analysed in **Chapter 5** with the help of theories to interpret and make results out of them.

An illustrative example of the thematic analysis coding process is provided to clarify the process. First, a set of initial codes were identified from the first step as, (have clear structure, know your

role and responsibilities within the game and the team). Second, those codes were gathered under the first-level code (collective skills) because it describes the same meaning of the initial codes gathered in it, and the initial codes were mentioned and elaborated in the findings to give a better understanding of each first-level code.

Moving on, another set of initial codes were (respect, communication, teamwork, emotional stability) those codes were gathered under the first-level code (individual skills). Third, both (collective and individual skills) were collected under (team composition) which is second-level code, because it describes the same concept. Finally, a group of second-level codes (improvement and team composition) were grouped under a final theme (skills) that give them a meaning and show a connection.

Table 4 *An illustrative example of data structure of the skills theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
LAN competence	**Improvement**	**Skills**
Competitive skills		
Refine abilities		
Collective skills	**Team Composition**	
Individual skills		

3.7 Ethical Issues

In all the conducted interviews, the authors of this thesis who conducted the interviews were ethically responsible for treating the interviewees with respect and care while making them feel comfortable (Liedka, 1992).

All participants were informed of the purpose of the interviews and all other necessary information about this thesis research which allowed them to reach out to the interviews without forcing anyone to participate (Allmark et al., 2009; Nunan et al., 2020). In addition, before the interviews, participants were informed of the GDPR Thesis Study Consent Form by Jönköping International Business School (JIBS). The form discussed the participant's right to skip any question they do not feel like answering, leave the interview whenever they feel like it, or ask for further explanation and clarification of the questions. This allowed for making the conversations natural, friendly, and respectful to their preferences without making the participants feel forced or obliged (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Nunan et al., 2020).

The authors informed participants that their identities would be anonymous and processed following the GDPR form signed by the authors of this thesis. Furthermore, no personal information will be shared with third parties, distributed for any other purposes or misused, and all the material and recordings were done will be destroyed after the final work is done, submitted, and graded (Oliver, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Nunan et al., 2020). Therefore, all the data will be kept until the final grades of the thesis course to make sure the data is available upon asking from the supervisor or other legal authorities in Jönköping University in case of accuracy, reliability and validity checking. However, participants were asked to pick nicknames, considering that they are gamers, to allow them to be presented in the thesis rather than referring to them in numbers. That effort was appreciated by the gamers who took part in this study.

The interviews were conducted online via Zoom to make them suitable for the preferences of the interviewees. The authors were careful to treat participants with respect and avoid deception or biassed opinions throughout the process. All the participants' wants were satisfied and respected during the interview, for example, some participants did not feel comfortable having their cameras on (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.8 Trustworthiness

The research quality is measured by the trustworthiness of this research, and it can be assured by confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.8.1 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the measures taken to hold meaning, value and still be objective in the research (Tracy, 2010; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this research, recording interviews was done to help present the real opinions of participants and avoid bias or subjectivity in presenting the accumulated data. Then after checking and matching transcribed text with original recordings, a coding process was performed to analyse all the data while keeping in mind the theories of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The authors' different backgrounds, interests, and perspectives regarding gaming and esports helped keep the objective overview of the research and keep an open mind towards the study (Denscombe, 2017). One of the authors is practically immersed in the researched topic and has a gaming experience of 12 years and currently plays video games as well as attending LANs while keeping updated about the current events in the esports field. Whereas the other author has been around gamers but is not actively interested in esports or keeping up to date with the topic. Therefore, both authors combined create a balanced team with opposing perspectives that put into question one another's perspective. Thus, balancing the objectivity of the study and removing any doubt of existing bias in the research. Further, the interviewees were using gaming terms or jargons not widely known for people with interests outside of the gaming field such as: jungler[4], patch notes[5], MMORPG[6], etc. Thus, having a gamer as an interviewer predisposes the participants to feel comfortable in the topic while using certain terms to express themselves and feel understood.

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[4] **Jungler** - refers to a role in League of Legends (LOL) "Jungling is a powerful option for any team, and mandatory for a premade team". A jungler helps the team gain advantage and experience (Mobafire, n.d).

[5] **Patch notes** - "Also called a change log or update history is a text file describing and justifying the changes in game" (Švelch, 2019).

[6] **MMORPG** - (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games) are "the most prominent genre of online games" (Chen et al., 2006) played in "virtual environments in which players can interact with each other through customizable avatars, co-operating, role-playing, and competing with millions of players around the world" (Blasi et al., 2019).

3.8.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to how clear and transparent the data analysis process is and whether future researchers will perform the same actions taken in this current research, they should end up having identical results and findings (Tracy, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To keep this research objective and trustworthy for potential future researchers, a precise data analysis and collection are described and rationalised thoroughly to showcase the process and confirm the objectivity of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saunders et al., 2016).

3.8.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to transferring the accumulated empirical materials to be utilised in future research. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily that future research will be on the same topic, but the empirical material can help develop that study (Tracy, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Nevertheless, the transferability of a qualitative study is quite challenging since each study focuses on its participants' knowledge about a specific social phenomenon because the participants' understanding can vary (Carcary, 2009; Hennink et al., 2020). Therefore, a thick and rich description is provided as interview questions are presented (see **Appendix 1**). Also, the data structure of thematic analysis, including first and second levels codes, is presented in (**Table 6**). Additionally, the process of finding secondary data is presented to guide future researchers in getting a better understanding of how the empirical material was gathered and produced to support generating new results if they wish to reuse this study's data (Brink, 1993; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

3.8.4 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in how valid and reliable results and findings are without personal influence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tracy, 2010; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, a review of the existing literature was done to understand what is available in the research area (**Table 1**). Then, relevant data was gathered from peer-reviewed journal articles and reliable textbooks to increase the study's credibility. The theoretical framework was built on credible scientific articles that have been cited many times and reused in many studies, which indicate their credibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denscombe, 2017).

4. Empirical Findings

This chapter summarises the empirical findings of the interviews to answer the research questions of this study. The data structure of thematic analysis of the five themes from the first and second level codes is presented, along with representative quotes for the first level codes. In conjunction with this, the final themes are presented in ***Chapter 4.1 - 4.5****.*

The findings represent the motivations and the benefits of attending a LAN. The study initially started with ten motivations which were presented in **Chapter 2**. However, after conducting all 15 interviews, there was evident intertwining between the motivations based on the answers participants provided. Therefore, the authors have merged the motivations due to the similarity of answers provided for different motivations. As a result, the ten motivations are categorised into either first-level codes, second-level codes, or themes resulting in five final themes.

To better illustrate the findings and due to intertwinement, **Table 5** presents the data structure of thematic analysis where the left column shows the first-level codes originated from participants' statements. Then they were further developed to connect the same set of concepts, presented as second-level codes. Both theory and second-level codes contributed to the emergence of themes.

The following layout is presented to provide a better visual representation guiding the reader logically throughout the findings. First, the data structure of the thematic analysis is presented at the beginning of each respective theme (**Table 6, 8, 10, 12, 14**). Then, representative quotes are presented at the end of each respective theme (**Tables 7, 9, 11, 13, 15**).

Table 5 *Data structure of thematic analysis*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
Urge to compete	**Competitive Nature**	**Competition**
Win/lose emotions		
Tangible rewards	**Rewards**	
Intangible rewards		
LAN competence	**Improvement**	**Skills**
Competitive skills		
Refine abilities		
Collective skills	**Team Composition**	
Individual skills		
Positive feelings	**Escape**	**Diversion**
Negative feelings		
LAN experience		
Home experience		
Enjoyment	**Entertainment**	
Network benefits		
Technical issues		
Game META	**Learning**	**Information**
Esports updates		
Share & exchange	**Sharing**	
Sense of belonging	**Community**	**Social Interaction**
Motivation to attend		
Socialising	**Relationships**	
teammates		
Team dynamics		

4.1 Competition

The motivations 'Achievement' and 'Competition' from **Chapter 2.4** have been combined. Competitive nature represents the ‘Competition’ motivation, and rewards represent the ‘Achievement’ motivation. Moreover, those motivations were interrelated in the interviews and merged under the competition theme.

Table 6 *Data structure of the competition theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
Urge to compete	**Competitive Nature**	**Competition**
Win/lose emotions		
Tangible rewards	**Rewards**	
Intangible rewards		

4.1.1 Competitive Nature

The **urge to compete** at a LAN differs among participants. The minority go to a LAN to compete because they find it an important and more pleasing experience than competing from home. Playing competitive games at a LAN is more entertaining and cool because the participants are around other people who share the same interest. Palpebral thinks it is important to compete at a LAN:

“[...] it is one of the main reasons you would go to one [...] I feel like the competition within these events is also quite important.”

On the other hand, the majority think it is not important to compete at a LAN and prefer to do other activities instead because they are casual gamers who do not invest much in certain games and do not have the urge to compete. Therefore, they do not want to carry their PC to the LAN. Those participants prefer to socialise instead when going to a LAN. Narsa expressed his interest in mingling with his friends rather than competing:

“[...] I do not need to compete on LAN. I usually only go to LAN because I meet up with the people I play with. I do not need to compete with them.”

Participants expressed their **emotions about winning or losing** at a LAN. The majority feel lucky and happy to win when they celebrate in groups and have fun together. However, some referred to losing as a happy feeling, as Bella elaborated further:

"I was still happy because I went against somebody I have looked up to. So, I did not really care if I was losing."

However, the minority feel unlucky, sad, annoyed, and disappointed when losing at a LAN as it affects participants' mood. Those feelings were described as irritation, mentally crushing, overall anger and physical anger. After much effort put into training in a game, it is frustrating and disappointing when faced with a loss. Paka presents an example of that:

"[...] if it would be a game, which I like and play all the time, and I have been practising for the upcoming LAN, then that would be a bit more crushing."

4.1.2 Rewards

Participants expressed how **getting rewards** affects their motivation to attend a LAN again. The minority said that **tangible rewards would** affect their motivation to attend a LAN again. These rewards can be free merchandise (t-shirts, graphic cards, headsets, keyboards, mouses, computers, underwear, hoodies, keychains, bags). In addition, items they get from giveaways (DreamHack tickets), food and beverages (limited-edition Monster). There are also monetary rewards or discounts in hardware stores. Moreover, the size of the LAN and the amount of money spent on tickets affect participants' expectations of receiving tangible rewards. Those participants who received these rewards expressed that it made them feel lucky and awesome. Paka provides such an example:

"[...] I got a DreamHack ticket [...] really happy [...] giveaways are a good thing that really adds to the experience."

The majority shared that the **intangible rewards** affect their motivation to go to a LAN. These rewards were expressed as meeting new people, socialising, building relationships, finding new teammates, doing your hobbies, playing video games, competing, and advancing gameplay. Furthermore, they appreciate the pleasant memories and experiences created from the enjoyment a LAN brings expressed by Narsa:

"[...] it is like going to a concert or festival because I get the same feeling of the festival as on a LAN."

Table 7 *Illustrative quotes of the competition theme*

1. Competition Theme	
First Level Codes	**Representative Quotes**
Urge to compete	**Paka:** *"[...] that's a big attraction of why you go to a LAN. It's like having competitions in an offline setting where everyone is there and you compete with them. It's really different from when you compete online, [...]competing at a LAN is special and that is an attractive reason to go."*
Win/lose emotions	**MazihY:** *"[...] if I'm also losing it, it is kind of bad. But if you don't lose, you can't upgrade yourself to be better. Losing matches is needed. You learn from them. And winning is probably the best feeling you ever feel [...]."*
Tangible rewards	**Palpebral:** *"[...] obviously, the reward is going to make me more interested. [...] if you get merchandise from an event, obviously, it's just going to be like a memory and it is very nice to keep a memory. So, if you get the merchandise, you also feel more likely to go again."*
Intangible rewards	**MasterBone**: *"When people swear roughly or when I play with fondness, and we call each other names, that is my reward from it. I like to be called names, and I like to call names. And when you get called a name [...], that means you are better than the other person."*

4.2 Skills

The motivations ‘Skills’ and part of ‘Teamwork’ from **Chapter 2.4** have been combined. Improvement represents the ‘Skills’ motivation, and team composition represents part of the ‘Teamwork’ motivation. Moreover, those motivations were interrelated in the interviews and merged under the skills theme. Refining abilities are the first-level code that has emerged from the coding process which provides a comprehensive name for a collection of codes that refer to advancing and improving skills.

Table 8 *Data structure of the skills theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
LAN competence	**Improvement**	**Skills**
Competitive skills		
Refine abilities		
Collective skills	**Team Composition**	
Individual skills		

4.2.1 Improvement

Many participants think a LAN is a place to learn and improve social skills to gain **LAN competence.** Examples of those skills are communication, socialisation with others, and exchanging knowledge. Some participants shared that going to a LAN helps them become more extroverted by socialising. Other participants think a LAN is a place to learn new skills by getting tips from coaches and ideas from other gamers by learning how they play, which improves overall skills. However, participants also think a LAN can teach important skills but not improve them, further presented by MazihY:

“A LAN doesn't provide you with enough time to improve your skills. You can learn new ones for sure. But improving is kind of out of the question.”

A new perspective was presented by Vazzor, where gamers go to a LAN to demonstrate their skills:

“[...] a LAN party is a place where you show off your skills, not where you learn anything.”

When it comes to being a successful **competitive** gamer, specific **skills** are needed. The majority of participants emphasised the importance of having sportsmanship conduct[7], good communication within the team, risk-taking, and encouraging others. Vazzor provide such an example:

> *"Communication, teamwork, listening to your shot caller or if you're the shot caller that you make the right decisions, and trust your teammates that they can handle their assignments."*

Further, being a good person, having patience, logical thinking, handling distractions, learning from mistakes and ignoring ego. Additionally, they believe that having steady emotions, calmness, determination, and acknowledgement of their mistakes will help one focus during competition and manage the emotions whether the outcome (winning or losing). Palpebral elaborated:

> *"[...] have the mentality of healthy competition in a way, not being aggressive towards other players, that is the most important and always trying to have that healthy competitive spirit."*

Besides, participants outlined other important competitive skills such as practice, good decision-making, map awareness, good reflexes (fast adaptation), target aim, ahead planning, knowing game technique and mechanics. SlothBear further supports it:

> *"[...] could be useful and good to have a good memory for memorising move sets [...]."*

When it comes to **refining abilities** is not as important for all participants. Some participants want to improve their gaming skills, keep getting better in games and feel comfortable in a social setting around people. Refining abilities provides satisfaction, enjoyment, and pleasure for the gamers. An example of that is Senri:

> *"You know, I always want to improve [...], it is satisfying to know that you are getting better at something."*

[7] **Sportsmanship** - "A conduct such as fairness, respect for one's opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing. Referred to a person participating in a sport" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d, a).

However, MasterBone as one among the three participants were satisfied with their current skills level and did not want to improve them because they are not competitive gamers:

"No, because I am not a competitive player. So, I do not think I should improve my skills."

Nevertheless, the minority wanted to improve their skills but had certain obstacles preventing them. Examples mentioned by participants are that improving skills is time-consuming and for many work and studies are a priority, so they cannot spend enough time playing their game. Further, Palpebral shared her experience being faced with toxicity in the gaming community and how that prevented her from improving her skills:

"When I get some negative feedback, some comments about how I play it just kind of discourages me. I feel it is not worth it. "

4.2.2 Team Composition

Participants indicated whether they preferred to play single-player or multiplayer games. The majority shared that they play both types of games with multiplayer as the main one. However, Alexy shared that he switches game types based on his mood:

"[...] there are times when I just do not want to play with people, I like single player games when no one is shouting in my ear, rushing, or talking constantly, when you want to have some silence time. So it really depends on the mood."

The ones who listed multiplayer as the type of game they play were asked what **collective skills** are needed to have a strong team composition. According to respondents, having a clear structure in a team, knowing your position in the game, and determining responsibilities were the most common answers. Further, having a leader who calls out the big shots in the game (shot caller) and support is important for the team to have a strong composition. Participants shared that anticipating and counteracting the other teams' actions is a necessary skill for the team to learn to be successful. Regicide shared that understanding is an important skill for teams to have:

"[...] playing in a team and trying to work together is a challenge. And so, the first thing would be to learn how to work together and understand each other's tendencies and [...] the general chemistry, and how you guys are getting along."

Finally, participants were asked to name **individual skills** that make a strong team composition. The most common answers were knowing game tactics, having map awareness, execution of strategies, having dexterity, good reflexes, and being able to multitask. Participants shared other good individual skills, such as restraining yourself from blaming others, taking criticism, not being toxic, arrogant, narcissistic, egoistic, or micromanaging when playing along with having the same goals. Respect, communication, teamwork, emotional stability, patience, positivity, calmness and lack of ego are viewed as skills necessary for fostering good synergy in a team by most participants. This is further supposed by Regicide:

"[...] still, keep their calm, if they are frustrated, not letting it show through how they speak, [...] we should be as stable as possible. [...] because there is a main goal of winning the game, not just arguing [...]."

Table 9 *Illustrative quotes of the skills theme*

2. Skills Theme	
First Level Codes	**Representative Quotes**
LAN competence	**Regicide:** *"Playing under pressure. So, everybody could see that playing under that level of pressure takes a great amount of skill."*
Competitive skills	**Alexy:** *"Teamwork, leadership, obviously, maybe sometimes even taking risks because it gives you the right high reward."*
Refine abilities	**OracleOne1:** *"No, because, to be honest, I'm in that phase where I'm kind of done with the competitive thing [...] I have much more stuff to focus on and I don't really have time [...]."*
Collective skills	**Narsa:** *"Communication and the willingness to adapt to others as well. [...] being able to adapt and play a different role, [...] makes it a lot better. So, I think that being able to adapt to your teammate is quite important."*
Individual skills	**Senri:** *"Being an easy learner, [...] having good patience and being able to take criticism because in a competitive team, you will be taking a lot of criticism, both constructive and sometimes non constructive."*

4.3 Diversion

The ‘Diversion’ theme has emerged from identifying patterns and meaning from the motivations ‘Escape’ and ‘Entertainment’ from **Chapter 2.4**. Moreover, those motivations were interrelated in the interviews, thus integrated under the diversion theme providing a comprehensive meaning.

Table 10 *Data structure of the diversion theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
Positive feelings	**Escape**	**Diversion**
Negative feelings		
LAN experience		
Home experience		
Enjoyment	**Entertainment**	
Network benefits		
Technical issues		

4.3.1 Escape

A mix of **positive and negative feelings** was reported regarding playing games at a LAN. The majority associated attending a LAN with positive feelings such as excitement, happiness, and relaxation. LANs can be enjoyable if you find a group of people to play and spend time with. Alexy expressed other special feelings:

“[...] LAN parties always bring something [...] some kind of very weird happiness. It's like four grown dudes just come with a laptop and then for some reason they turn into children for three hours.”

Nevertheless, a minority of participants expressed negative feelings when playing games at a LAN. A challenging situation can arise due to the unpleasant conditions (screaming, loud noise), lack of personal social skills, long distances and in line waiting for essentials (drinks, food, toilets) because there are many people at a LAN. SlothBear shared his own experience of how awkward, frustrating, and stressful a LAN can be:

"[...] it depends on how much sleep and how much you eat and stuff, your energy levels, it could get really frustrating after a couple of days [...]."

Participants discussed how their experiences vary at LANs or home. Most participants described their **experiences at LANs** as out of the ordinary, magical, and cosy. They perceived it as a vacation from daily life. At a LAN, gamers get together with other people sharing the same interest where they can have interesting conversations on a deeper level of interaction. The social atmosphere motivates gamers to play, and thus a sense of community is fostered. Moreover, a couple of participants connected the experience of a LAN as nostalgic, bringing back their childhood memories of Internet cafés. Nevertheless, participants mentioned that going to a LAN is not only about playing games but doing other activities too. These activities are table tennis, retro gaming, old-time consoles, cooking/getting food together, going for fresh air walks, and watching streams together. Finally, participants said that a LAN is a connection point where people get to know each other. Bella even met her idol:

"[...] I am happy when I get to meet an idol or like a person that I have looked up to."

The other half of the participants described their game **experience at home** as more relaxed, focused on playing the game (watching streams to learn), more comfortable (better utilities at home - bathroom, food, beverages,) and having no physical interaction or background noises. However, playing online at home was described as a feeling of a chore that forces gamers to engage in gameplay. Further, some participants said that being at a big LAN such as DreamHack, it is hard to focus on playing games because there are many people around. Vazzor shared his reasoning:

"You'll probably sit more comfortably and play better when you're at home, then you do at a LAN [...]."

4.3.2 Entertainment

The majority of participants listed **enjoyment** would make them come back to a LAN. Reasons for that are meeting new people or friends that share the same interests, doing something different from daily life or staying at home. Therefore, participants go to a LAN to unwind, chill and relax. MazihY shared his experience:

"Watching the games live is probably one of the things I really enjoy. [...] it is really cool. It gathers people from around the world and brings them together which is really fun and enjoyable."

Other activities beyond gaming are liked to be seen by participants, such as offline activities, watching streams, movies, live events, attending a concert at the LAN, having cosplayers, and participating in tournaments and challenges. Brands related to games are highly appreciated when at a LAN, where participants can learn what is new in the game, buy rare game edition products, get free merchandise, food and beverages. Game related decorations make a LAN more enjoyable and pleasing to the eye. Nevertheless, MasterBone shared his opinion that everything besides playing video games is futile:

"[...] all the activities are pointless, [...] if you want to add activities, you don't go to the LAN."

The majority see many **network benefits** from the local area network as they can do multiple things at a time faster than at home. Those benefits are sharing data, transferring files faster, streaming, watching, and chatting with other people using interactive platforms. Participants explained that games have more possibilities when playing at a high-speed local area network because internet cables are connected directly to computers than a wireless connection at home. MazihY expressed his opinion:

"[...] the high-speed internet for gamers is good for downloading games fast, and the ping[8] is way lower, which gives you a lot more possibilities, especially in shooter games."

When it comes to **technical issues** at a LAN, participants described how the occurrence of internet lag would make them feel. They expressed that they trust the local area network and assume it should have a stable and fast connection because the cables and routers are nearby and connected directly to computers. However, if a lag occurred, it would negatively affect their LAN experience, and they would label the LAN as poorly organised. The emotions described were frustration, disappointment, and annoyance because lags could affect the game, causing participants to have a negative mood, as shared by Regicide:

[8] **Ping** - "In gaming ping is used to describe the time delay or latency between a player's input and the server's response to those inputs." (Saldana & Suznjevic, 2015; Esports.Net, n.d).

"That would be pretty frustrating, because there is nothing I can do about it."

However, the majority feel that the internet is not the main thing on a LAN. However, in case of any technical issues, participants will have a backup plan while the technicians' team is fixing the internet issue quickly. Senri is among those participants:

"[...] when we are on a LAN, we have games that you can play offline, so we just switch games if that happens."

Table 11 *Illustrative quotes of the diversion theme*

3. Diversion Theme	
First Level Codes	**Representative Quotes**
Positive feelings	**Bella:** *"I feel happy. I am in my zone. I can talk about things we all have in common."*
Negative feelings	**MazihY:** *"It is really stressful because people are watching you when you're playing in a tournament with your team and you are trying to prove how good you are in the game, prove yourself and the stress is just enormous."*
LAN experience	**Regicide:** *"[...] there's this feeling that everybody around you is playing and you're kind of doing the same, instead of taking a break, it's motivating you to just keep on playing."*
Home experience	**Paka:** *"Watching streams at home is [...] kind of like a podcast [...] it feels a lot more personal."*
Enjoyment	**OracleOne1:** *"I would say the decorations play a really big part. Because when you're at a LAN party you would have been just sitting at your stationary computer for most of the time or just walking around and decorations make it enjoyable and pleasing to the eye. And it's always nice to see a nice decoration related to games that you're actually playing, and that makes you like, wow, that's really nice and I would come back here [...]."*
Network benefits	**Narsa:** *"[...] I can download a game and play at the same time."*
Technical issues	**Palpebral:** *"Frustration most probably, [...] in some games, obviously if you're going to experience lag, it is going to affect your score or your leadership [...]."*

4.4 Information

The motivation 'Information' from **Chapter 2.4** remains the same.

Table 12 *Data structure of the information theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
Game META	**Learning**	**Information**
Esports updates		
Share & exchange	**Sharing**	

4.4.1 Learning

For competitive gamers, **META**[9] is one of the most important factors that gamers need to consider. There are different types of learning and adapting to the META as shared by the participants. The participants have shared different ways of learning and adapting to the META. Half of the participants described themselves as self-learners because they like to try out various things in the game by trial and error. Because they are driven to compete on a higher level, they put a lot of time and effort into game practice and are determined to adapt fast and usually take part in pre-beta[10] releases of games. This was represented by OracleOne1:

"[...] the easiest way is to experience it in a pre-beta release (PB), what changes have been done."

The other half shared that they learn by watching others and like being inspired by others. They watch streams online (Twitch and YouTube) or at a LAN. While some participants find detailed information in books, forums, and websites, others look to professional or casual gamers for advanced game knowledge (tactics and skills). They can also become acquainted with the revised

[9] **META** - "Most Effective Tactics Available" is a gaming terminology referred to a strategy in game and "is considered to be the most optimal way to win/ has the best performance at a specific task" (Ho, n.d).

[10] **Beta** - "During beta testing, the game is almost production ready with all the major issues being fixed. In this phase, the game testers are required to extensively find all the possible ways to break the game along the lookout for all minor issues" (iXie Gaming, 2017).

META by looking at specific game information such as nerf[11], buff,[12] patch notes, and theorycrafting[13]. Vazzor shared that maths and statistic skills are used to compensate for the lack of competitive game skills:

"There are a lot of people that are terrible at games, but they know mathematics and statistics so everything they do is just crunching numbers."

Multiple channels keep participants **updated about esports** and upcoming LANs. In addition to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok), streaming platforms (Youtube and Twitch), word-of-mouth (friends and family), online game communities (Discord groups), websites (game publishers), examples are given of forums (read patch notes, Reddit), and newsletters (emails and notifications). Furthermore, participants learn about game discounts through gameplay, on Steam, online shops' wish lists, Googling information, watching and following top streamers, or physical advertisements (street posters and flyers). OracleOne1 shared how he keeps up-to-date:

"[...] social media mostly [...] I would day from influencers as well. I have seen a lot of influencers, especially on Tik Tok nowadays, who were promoting different LANs through their accounts."

The ticket price, however, determines whether Alexy thinks it is important to stay updated on forthcoming LANs:

"[...] LAN parties are never for free [...] especially those that are linked to tournaments, the prices [...] can go up to like 150 euros [...] so I just prefer to open Twitch and watch it."

4.4.2 Sharing

At LANs, most participants consider **information sharing** essential because they want to improve their gameplay (become better at a game) by learning new skills and tactics. As a result of **exchanging information**, participants can hear other opinions and perspectives, which is

[11] **Nerf** - "Nerf patch decreases the strength of a champion" (Wang et al., 2020).

[12] **Buff** - "Buff patch increases the strength of a champion" (Wang et al., 2020).

[13] **Theorycrafting** - "Used to refer to data analyses made by the players of massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) as an important means to understand and control the game and to improve their own gameplay" (Wenz, 2013).

beneficial in a dynamic game environment where keeping up with everything yourself is challenging. Participants who are competitive gamers actively look for better gamers and professionals at LANs to learn from them. Furthermore, LANs facilitate the development of relationships and build strong bonds by sharing information about new games and events. As Narsa points out, at a larger LAN, participants value safety information to be shared, such as exit locations (for emergency) and the layout of facilities (entrances, exits, bathrooms):

"[...] I also need to know what kind of people I have around me, because of the risk of people stealing [...]."

Conversely, the minority do not see sharing information at a LAN as essential. They think sharing information at a LAN is time-consuming because people will have many questions, and when provided with the answers, there is a chance they will not fully understand the information. KazzardiusTheTomato described why he does not want to share information at a LAN:

"[...] if you have very personalised strategies [...] I do not really want to share it, because I made it myself and if it comes up I want the credit [...] it is just an unnecessary risk."

Table 13 *Illustrative quotes of the information theme*

4. Information Theme	
First Level Codes	**Representative Quotes**
Game META	**Vazzor:** *"[...] if you're a professional player, you have coaches. So, it's up to them to learn and teach you what you should be doing. And if you are not a competitor, you can use YouTube, you can use Twitch, you can use any site or guides on the internet that has to do with games."*
Esports updates	**SlothBear:** *"Usually just follow the top streamers about the game. Watching the teams play and seeing how they do in the game."*
Share & exchange	**Alexy:** *"Information sharing is very vital because you help people notice some stuff that they haven't noticed by themselves, which happens very often."*

4.5 Social

The motivations ‘Community’, ‘Social Interaction’, ‘Relationship’, and part of ‘Teamwork’ from **Chapter 2.4** have been combined. Community represents the ‘Community’ motivation, and ‘Relationships’ represents the ‘Social Interaction’, ‘Relationship’, and part of ‘Teamwork’. Moreover, those motivations were interrelated in the interviews and merged under the ‘Social Interaction’ theme.

Table 14 *Data structure of the social interaction theme*

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Themes
Sense of belonging	**Community**	**Social Interaction**
Motivation to attend		
Socialising	**Relationships**	
teammates		
Team dynamics		

4.5.1 Community

Participants varied in answers to whether they belonged to a gaming community in three different ways. Participants who belong to communities have distinguished between different types of gaming communities. Some communities are clubs where members play various games, and game communities are based on a particular game (Dota2, Counter-Strike, League of Legends, World of Warcraft). Participants expressed that **belonging to a community** could be a rewarding experience because of the presence of veteran gamers (experts) and the fact that everyone is focused on the game. KazzardiusTheTomato reported that small communities are typically composed of people who are passionate about the game and motivate others to attend:

“[...] the fewer people are in the community, [...], the better it becomes”.

Several participants consider the group of friends they play with as their gaming community. In contrast, some participants said they have been part of gaming communities before but are no longer active due to a lack of time. Palpebral gave an example:

"Because of my studies, I take my time [...]. So, I do not feel that I have the time to interact with the gaming community [...]."

Nevertheless, there were a few participants who had not been part of any communities since they switched games frequently, played occasionally, or preferred to speak with friends via Discord, as explained by MazihY:

"I do not spend most of my time playing one game. I like diversity in games."

The majority of participants shared that being part of a community affects their **motivation to attend** a LAN. Therefore, going with other community members to a LAN is more motivating for them than going alone. However, the minority do not go with a community because they are not part of any, instead, they go with their friends to LANs. MazihY describes it as a fun time with friends and because of the interaction which motivates him to go to a LAN:

"I have friends that I play with and if we decide to go there, it will motivate me more to go with them rather than just going with myself."

Some participants expressed a desire to attend a LAN with other gaming community members. However, they cannot do so due to the distance between the gamers who are part of the gaming community but are not situated within the same country or city. Participants indicated that they would be motivated to attend LANs if their gaming community was local. Nevertheless, LANs such as DreamHack offer gamers from around the world to meet IRL for the first time. Due to the magnitude of such events worldwide, many gamers have expressed their willingness to attend. Vazzor explains that:

"[...] people that live 150 miles away, or even from different countries, and they heard of example, DreamHack, and they want to go, that might be your only chance in your life to meet them in real life. So, if they are to go in, you're more likely to go there yourself."

Howbeit, MasterBone shared a different opinion if being part of a gaming community affects his motivation to attend a LAN:

"No, I do not think so."

4.5.2 Relationship

Socialising with others affected participants' motivation to attend LANs. **Socialising** enables gamers to have good communication and understanding, which leads to sharing tactics, contributing to better teamwork, fostering a bond between gamers, helping and motivating each other, resulting in better game outcomes. Narsa returns to LANs because of good communication:

"[...] if it is positive it would motivate me to want to go back sooner [...]."

However, the minority said that if everyone at a LAN is communicating, they will lose focus and become distracted. Furthermore, participants' willingness to return to a LAN was negatively affected by **socialising** with rude, toxic, and negative gamers. At a LAN, Valeria explained that there is the chance to interact with different people, so it would be unpleasant if the communication is poor:

"[...] it is so difficult to play with people that do not communicate at all [...] everybody needs to be more or less on the same page and the only way that you can do it is talking with each other."

Participants expressed that being physically present with their teammates at a LAN is an advantage to their gameplay since they have better map awareness (thanks to communication with their teammates) and they are more relaxed (since they see facial expressions, moods, body language of their teammates) as well as being more focused on enjoying the game rather than winning, so they are less likely to get mad and they mind their language when speaking to each other. In addition, attending a LAN with teammates is considered more fun and efficient because it provides a stimulating environment where participants become more engaged in the game and think deeply about their actions, as described by Palpebral:

"[...] you see people and their emotions, interact with them in real life, it feels more natural, more relaxed and engaged when gaming, but also, I might be less focused on the game or on the fact of winning the game."

On the other hand, being physically together at a LAN affects participants' experience. A participant found it restraining because he could not use insulting language as usual. Another participant shared his unpleasant experience at a LAN when playing with less skilled people

because they drag the whole team down. Furthermore, being at a LAN was described as frustrating and nervous because of the distraction and the people watching you play. Hence, as MazihY shared, one needs a strong mentality to avoid that:

"You will get distracted by the people, especially as a player, because you have to have a really strong mindset for them not to get in your head because [...] people are watching and it gets on your nerves."

However, some participants expressed that being physically together or having good or poor communication and collaboration will not affect them or their focus, as MasterBone shared:

"[...] if I sit alone or with other people it is the same focus anyway [...] it does not affect me personally."

Participants shared their **team dynamics** and if they had met a new team member at a LAN. Most participants stated that they had never met anyone at a LAN who became part of their team because of Covid-19 or did not need more teammates. Regardless, participants said it was highly probable to meet a new team member at a LAN who might join the team, especially in lower-ranking or professional competitive teams where gamers want to advance in the game rank, become better gamers, and find better teams to compete with. However, Narsa shared his special experience:

"I met a guy on DreamHack [...] we went to support this little streamer and then we started to play with him afterwards."

Participants shared if their teams changed over time. Some participants shared a different team dynamics perspective where professional gamers change teams depending on their contracts and game performance. The minority of participants play with the same people and have not experienced any changes within the team. However, the majority have experienced a change in their team over a certain period. Alexy explained the change as a dynamic process by substituting inactive gamers based on their external obligations, such as work or studies:

"[...] it is the circle of people having a lot of stuff to do, so they disappear and then they have less stuff to do and reappear again. It is like the bubble of your friends changes every couple of years."

Table 15 *Illustrative quotes of the social interaction theme*

5. Social Interaction Theme	
First Level Codes	**Representative Quotes**
Sense of belonging	**Bella:** *"[...] I would love to go to support the community and show up, maybe we can grow together."*
Motivation to attend	**Buick:** *"[...] I'm a pretty social guy, even though I would say I'm quite shy. But I always like to meet new people and create new connections through experiences like that. [...] I make an effort to socialise, it is kind of my thing."*
Socialising	**Regicide:** *"I've made connections every single time I've been to a LAN [...] for example, last DreamHack, I made friends with the journalist at the scene [...] this is one of the appeals of LAN parties, you meet new people and it's always a great thing."*
teammates	**SlothBear:** *"If it's a competitive game, where you play as a team, you must be talking and engaging with each other, talking tactics and stuff. [...] that's the only time when I do not completely disappear into the game."*
Team dynamics	**Paka:** *"[...], you go through a lot of new members really quickly until you find someone that sticks into the team [...] until they get noticed by a team that is more known. [...] people always try to get to a better place, [...]."*

5. Discussion

*This chapter presents a critical in-depth analysis of the results and their relationship to the U&G theory to answer the research questions. First, a critical analysis of the motivations that drive participants to attend LANs are presented in (**Chapter 5.1 - Chapter 5.3**). Then, the benefits of attending connected to it are presented under each motivation. Finally, the revised model of the study is presented.*

5.1 Competition

The relevance of competition as a **motivation** differs between casual and competitive gamers because they are aware of the reasons to attend a LAN to satisfy specific needs and wants (Ruggiero, 2000). From a U&G perspective, this can be seen as casual gamers have other needs to satisfy so they do not have the urge to compete but have other needs and wants to satisfy and therefore they attend a LAN (Lowery & De Fleur, 1988; Ruggiero, 2000).

From the findings, the urge to compete was the main reason competitive gamers attend a LAN, where they can compete with others who share the same interests and competitive needs (Kim & Ross, 2006; Sepehr & Head, 2018). They put much effort into the game to satisfy their competitive needs (Rubin, 2002; Cummings, 2008). Certain types of skills are needed when one comptes at a LAN such as emotional stability (without projecting negative emotions onto others), sportsmanship conduct and being responsible for your actions. As a result, the gamers with this skill set are motivated by the urge to compete at a LAN to enhance their reputation and position among their peers (Barnett et al., 1997; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Sherry et al., 2006; Yee, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Jansz & Tanis, 2007; Weiss, 2011; Chang et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Nevertheless, when experiencing a loss, feelings of annoyance and disappointment occur because of the time and effort invested into practising the game. Whether a participant is a casual or competitive gamer, the motivations differ. Therefore they judge the value and importance of competing at a LAN through their own perception (Katz et al., 1974).

Attended LANs were regarded as **beneficial** if a reward was available when competing because it satisfied the needs of achievement (Yee et al., 2012). Therefore, most participants expected **intangible rewards** as a benefit of attending a LAN which influenced participants' motivation to

attend. Social inclusion, video gameplay and new memory formation were the most common intangible rewards. Another benefit of competing is showing off game skills in front of other gamers at a LAN (Qian et al., 2020).

In contrast, few shared that **tangible rewards** are expected at a LAN among the participants. As a result, their expectation of rewards as payback for attending a LAN increases when they pay a high-priced ticket to a big LAN. In addition, they will expect rewards such as free merchandise, giveaways, discounts in hardware stores, food and beverages. From the findings, it can be assumed that if participants spend much money on a LAN ticket and end up getting no rewards, there is a high chance their motivation to attend a LAN will decrease because they are not getting their desired benefit. Therefore, they might find an alternative solution, such as going to CoreHack or a free LAN.

However, it was evident that the casual gamers did not find competition a motivation to go to a LAN because they were motivated by social interaction (further elaborated in **Chapter 5.3**) (Lowery & De Fleur, 1988; Ruggiero, 2000). They also expressed that winning or losing will not affect their motivation to go to a LAN, but if they win, happiness will follow. Nevertheless, there was an outstanding opinion pointing out that some gamers possess little or no competitive game skills but are good players solely because they possess mathematical and statistical knowledge which allow them to compete in games such as League of Legends.

5.2 Diversion

The findings indicated that diversion is a strong motive to attend a LAN because it can gratify the needs to relax, escape stress, and responsibilities (Sherry et al., 2006; Sun et al., 2006; Yee, 2006). Instead of playing games or chatting at home, gamers are motivated to attend LANs based on the diversion they will get there and all the experiences associated with it, which include people not isolated at home (Seo & Green, 2008; Seo, 2013; Neus et al., 2019). It is argued that gamers seek diversion from life which can be satisfied by attending a LAN and being around people, and this motivation is not about the diversion from people (Sherry et al., 2006). From a U&G perspective it is argued that gamers are motivated and actively seeking to attend a LAN because it can gratify the need to relax and escape (Katz et al., 1973; Severin & Tankard, 1997; Ruggiero, 2000; Rubin, 2002; Cummings, 2008; McQuail, 2010).

The **benefits** gamers gain from attending a LAN connected to diversion motive are, **escape** and **entertainment**.

Where **escape** is about experiencing excitement, happiness, and relaxation. Unique exciting feelings are being explored, such as weird happiness when gamers turn into children while being at a LAN, giving nostalgia by bringing back their childhood memories of Internet cafés (Neus et al., 2019). The experience can be enjoyable and bring happiness because they can find a group of people sharing the same interest to spend time with and have engaging conversations on a deeper level of interaction. Happiness and satisfaction was also tied to LANs as it is a place to meet role models and idols because it acts as a social connecting point (Neus et al., 2019).

Gamers feel relaxed at LANs and connect it to being extraordinary, magical, and cosy experiences where they feel that they are on vacation from daily life. They can also do more activities beyond gaming that will allow them to relax and escape all daily routines, such as engaging in retro gaming, playing on old-time consoles, or even cooking/getting food together, going for fresh air walks, and watching streams (Wann et al., 2008; Neus et al., 2019).

The other benefit is **entertainment** which is essential to gamers, and they expect that a LAN should give them enjoyment and entertainment (Griffiths & Wood, 2000; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Tang, 2018; Gan & Li, 2018; Qian et al., 2020). Since they do many things with people, such as watching streams together, movies, live events or even attending a concert at a LAN, where it is a more enjoyable and entertaining environment than doing all of that from home (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020). On top of that, gamers enjoy all the offline activities a LAN provides, such as having cosplayers, participating in tournaments and challenges, which allow them to experience joy while doing new things due to the social networking nature of the event (Ko et al., 2005; Pons et al., 2006; Kerr & May, 2011; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017).

Moreover, gamers enjoy being at a LAN where their favourite gaming brands are present either to buy rare game edition products, get new and unique news and updates about their games from the brand itself before it is even announced, which can contribute to learning new skills because it provides information (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020). Gamers can also get a chance to get free merchandise that is highly appreciated and make them

enjoy the LAN and take something back home to remind them of the enjoyable experience and memories. Furthermore, many gamers can satisfy their need for enjoyment when they are surrounded by their favourite game-related decorations found eye pleasing. Finally, free food and beverages add a lot to the enjoyment experiences at a LAN for a gamer, especially when they get a game-related product such as (limited-edition Monster).

One of the major benefits of a LAN is enjoying the high-speed local area network (Jansz & Martens, 2005). Even with the technologies and internet access everywhere, gamers highly appreciate the local area network because they trust and assume that it will provide them with high quality experience without any technical issues compared to the home network. The **network benefits** can be seen as doing multiple things faster than at home, such as sharing data, transferring files, streaming, watching, playing and chatting with other people using interactive platforms, all can be done at the same time and faster. What is interesting about the high-speed local area network is that it brings more possibilities to the games because it is fast and provides equal opportunity for all gamers by having the same ping which becomes more evident in shooter games. However, gamers trust that in case of any technical issues, the technician team is highly qualified and will be there to fix that problem. While that is happening, gamers can still do other activities, so even if an issue occurs, it will not affect the enjoyment because of the other things to do and enjoy such as offline activities rather than being at home and not being able to fix anything or do anything else to enjoy which might make them angry or bored (Jansz & Martens, 2005).

However, a minority of participants expressed frustration when playing games at a LAN because many people there can create unpleasant conditions for those who lack social skills, so they cannot be around so many people. Also, there are loud noises and long queues to get essentials (drinks, food, toilets). Moreover, if a lag occurs, they will be disappointed and annoyed because it will affect the game. Therefore, they prefer to play games from home because they can focus on the game without distractions, watch streams to learn, chat and feel relaxed. Nevertheless, they already know that staying at home will not give the same benefits as escape and entertainment, but they value focusing on playing games rather than getting those benefits. This agrees with Neus et al. (2019) that gamers who value their gameplay will have more desire to stay home and not be motivated to go to a LAN and get benefits such as escape. One of the

opinions stood out, pointing out that the price of LANs is too high thus preventing a participant from even considering attending. However, if the price of the LAN tickets was reduced, he might be more inclined to consider attending LANs.

5.3 Social Interaction

Social interaction is the main and most influential **motivation** to attend a LAN. It was evident that participants go to a LAN to socially interact with other people who share the same interest (Ko et al., 2005; Pons et al., 2006; Kerr & May, 2011; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Hamilton et al., 2014; Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). It is argued that gamers are motivated to attend a LAN because it can gratify the need for social interactions (Cummings, 2008; McQuail, 2010). Further, because gamers are motivated by social interaction to attend a LAN a U&G perspective argues that gamers active because of the interaction at a LAN which is the media in this context (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Kim & Ross, 2006; Sherry et al., 2006; Qian et al., 2020).

The benefits gained from social interaction with others at a LAN are, **feeling acknowledged, building relationships, acquiring information, socialisation** and **finding new teammates.**

Feeling acknowledged by a group of people can satisfy the needs of belonging and love allowing gamers to have good communication and understanding which can foster relationships (Maslow, 1943; Wang et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2021). Supporting the results of Weiss (2011), It was evident that a relationship is not a motivation to attend a LAN, however, it is found to be a benefit of the social interaction with others. When a **relationship** is established out of social interaction it leads to gaining benefits such as, **sharing experiences and information** to help and support each other, which is a fundamental part of the esports culture and is highly valued by gamers, encouraging them to continue engaging in esports and resulting in better game outcomes (Przybylski et al., 2010; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Eklund, 2015; Badatala et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2018; Tang, 2018; Chang, 2019; Wang et al., 2021). Those relationships can help **keep gamers updated** with esports related information such as upcoming events and game updates (Seo & Green, 2008).

Participants gain benefits when interacting with journalists, brand representatives and professional or better gamers than them. By interacting with experts, one is able to **acquire** first-hand **information** such as sharing their tactics, techniques, and new developments in

gaming to become better gamers (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Where U&G argue that gamers seek to gratify the need for improving knowledge (Cummings, 2008; McQuail, 2010).

Socialisation with team or community members at a LAN can be beneficial because players can interact physically with each other and have fun (Neus et al., 2019). This interaction will advantage the gameplay of the whole team because members can communicate better (Eklund, 2015; Chang et al., 2018) and read each other's body language, which helps them stay relaxed and keep things under control. This will also lower the chances of getting mad at each other because they understand the situation since they are physically together rather than online and do not understand it. The results confirm that digital interaction can never replace authentic real-life social experience, interactions, communications and relationships because gamers become more understanding when physically together and mind their language and care about each other's emotions (Scheibe et al., 2016; Bründl et al., 2017; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Xiao, 2020). Moreover, big LANs such as DreamHack offer gamers from around the world (who are part of the same team or community but in different countries) to meet IRL and socially interact for the first time.

Finding new teammates to join the team or the community is another benefit, where social interaction allows to find like-minded people who share the same passion and interest, which results in finding suitable teammates who share the same goals (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Yee, 2006; Decortis et al., 2010; Kang et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2021). Further, the findings show that team dynamics are constantly changing because gamers might have work or studies, so they change their priorities, pushing gaming back on their list. As a result, teams will be looking for a replacement. Therefore, a LAN is seen as a suitable place to find new teammates because social interaction can help gamers connect with like-minded people who have similar interests and build long-lasting loyal relationships with other gamers that can extend to the online setting (Stanford University, n.d; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Gee, 2008; Taylor & Witkowski, 2010; Kang et al., 2013; Eklund, 2015; Taylor, 2016; Chang et al., 2021).

However, social interactions at a LAN affect the minority, making the experience unpleasant. If everyone is socialising and communicating, those participants will lose focus on the game and will be nervous that everyone is watching them. They also prefer to get information online

because of its convenience and availability of more comprehensive information (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Chang, 2019). They improve their skills by watching professional gamers, or rewatching their mistakes which can advance their gameplay skills since a LAN does not provide enough time for that (Qian et al., 2020; Barney, 2021). Further, a LAN is not a place to learn or improve. This could be justified by Neus et al. (2019), that at a LAN, screens are distant, and it is a challenge to watch tournaments between professional gamers. There is a risk of missing out on important aspects of the gameplay, therefore, watching professionals at a LAN and learning from them is not optimal for the participants. Participants prefer to watch from home, where they have access to multiple screens and better visual images, as confirmed by Hamari & Sjöblom (2017) and Neus et al. (2019), to appreciate the skill set of professionals.

Also, if participants are socially interacting with rude, toxic, and negative players, which can discourage their urge and willingness to refine abilities. It could be restrained because of the inability to use insulting language as usual. Nevertheless, some desire to be at a LAN with their team or community to benefit from social interactions but cannot do it because they lack time to be part of one or the long distance between the gamers (not situated within the same country or city).

5.4 Revised Model

From the findings it was evident that competition, diversion, and social interaction are the motivations for attending a LAN. Further, the gained benefits from attending a LAN are **rewards, information, skills, escape, entertainment, relationships, socialisation and finding new teammates.**

Achievement was not seen as a motivation but rather as a benefit where gamers get **rewards** from achieving something in relation to competition.

This study found **information** as a benefit gained from attending a LAN rather than a motivation which contradicts Jansz & Martens (2005) and Neus et al. (2019) findings that see information as a motivation to attend a LAN. It was evident that **skills** is a benefit gained from attending a LAN rather than a motivation contradicting Barney (2021) findings.

The findings showed that **escape and entertainment** are not a motivation for gamers to attend a

LAN, but it is a benefit they get out of diversion, this finding contradicts with (Trail & James, 2001; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Neus et al., 2019). Instead, LANs benefit gamers by giving them an escape and distraction from daily routines and ordinary activities, responsibilities, or problems. And it also entertains them (Gantz & Wenner, 1995: Yee, 2006). This research supports Weiss's (2011) results that **relationship** is not a motivation. However, socialising and finding new teammates were benefits that emerged from the findings and were coded into the theme.

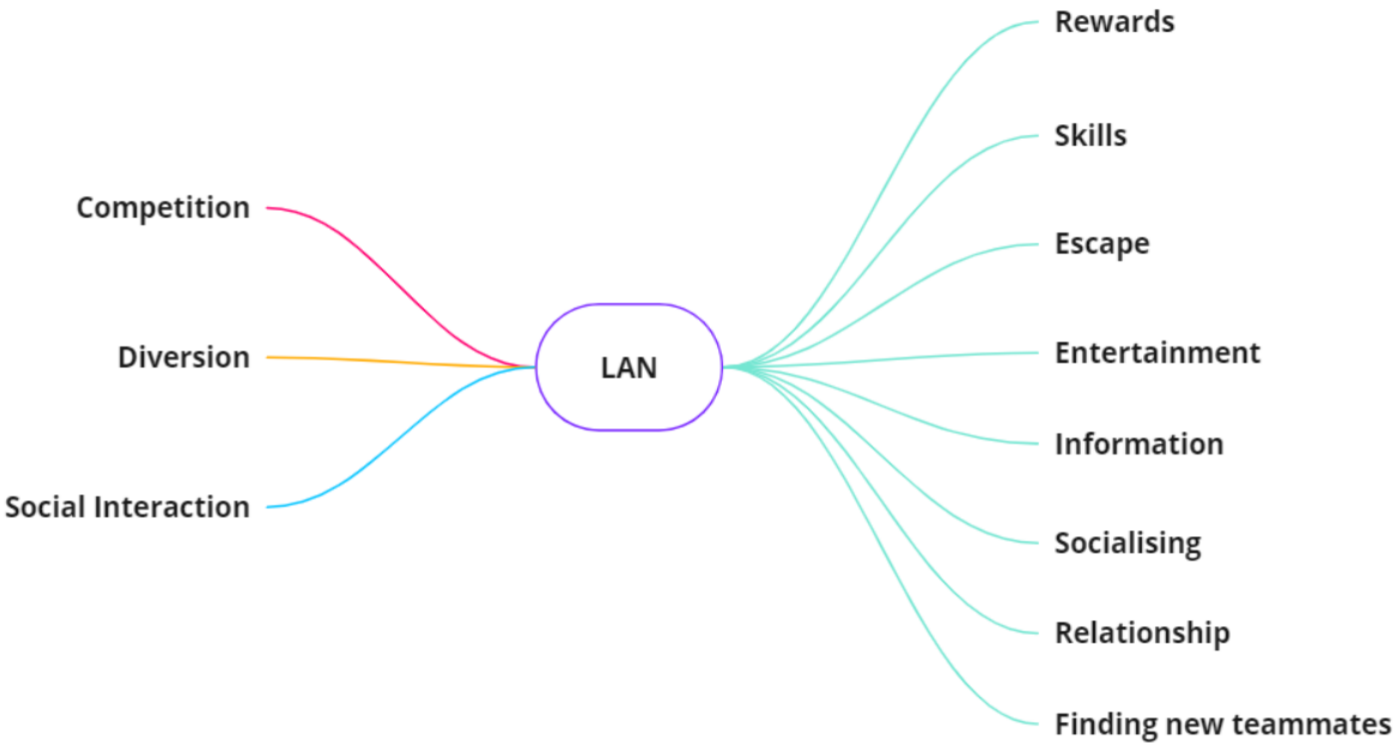

Figure 7 - *Revised Model of the motivations to attend a LAN and the gained benefits out of it* (own representation)

6. Conclusion and Implications

This chapter presents the research's theoretical, managerial, societal and ethical implications and considerations. Afterwards, the study's limitations and recommendations for future research are presented.

6.1 Theoretical Implications and Contribution

This study has explored the motivations to attend a LAN and found the benefits gained from it. Using a small sample of gamers, following a qualitative exploratory approach that contributes to the adequate exploration of the motivations to attend a LAN where the results contribute to filling the gaps and provide novel insights in the research area where a little research was done on the topic suggested by Jansz & Martens (2005), Scheibe et al. (2016), Bründl et al. (2017), Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018), Neus et al. (2019), Michailidis (2019) and Lui (2020). Considering the importance of this topic, there is a need for theoretical exploration.

First, this study found three motivations to attend a LAN from a U&G perspective: competition, diversion and social interactions driving gamers to attend a LAN to gratify their needs. Where rewards, information, skills, escape, entertainment, socialising, and relationships are discovered to be benefits in this context and with specific this sample. This is the contribution to the theory.

Secondly, this study explored the LAN's vital qualities, unexplored feelings and impressions for gamers suggested by Taylor & Witkowski (2010) and Neus et al. (2019), where the benefits gained from attending a LAN are the vital qualities, unexplored feelings and impressions.

Thirdly, this study adds to the literature on U&G and gamers' motivations to attend a LAN by identifying and clearing the ambiguity between motivations and benefits.

This study noticed two types of gamers (casuals and competitive), and their motivations to attend a LAN and the benefits they gain vary from a U&G perspective where gamers judge the value and importance of LAN on their terms of understanding and views. (Katz et al.,1974) .

Aslo, this study contributes to the U&G theory and fills gaps in a unique context (LANs) this contribution further adds a conceptualisation and specified distinction where it shows that needs

drive the motivation to attend a LAN and therefore gain benefits where this contradicts the criticism of the theory by (Ruggiero, 2000; Krcmar & Strizhakova, 2009).
We argue that gamers are active users who purposely select, engage and consume media, LANs in this context. We did an interview study rather than a self-report, resulting in rich and accurate descriptions adding to U&G literature (Katz, 1987; Ruggiero, 2000; Sherry, 2001; Williams et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2009).

The findings confirm that certain aspects of LAN cannot be substituted by online gaming and vice versa. However, both provide certain gratifications that are distinct from one another. Further, participants anticipate certain gratifications to be satisfied at a LAN that an online game will not satisfy (Ruggiero, 2000; Neus et al., 2019).

Consequently, evaluating the factors that affect gamers' motivation to attend LANs is essential (Jansz & Martens, 2005; Scheibe et al., 2016; Bründl et al., 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Neus et al., 2019).

Lastly, a revised model is presented to clarify and present the new contribution and serve as a base for further knowledge extension to explore or test the model further. Therefore, this study can be an initial groundwork for exploring the motivations to attend a LAN and the benefits gained.

6.2 Managerial Implications and Contribution

The study can assist LAN organisers as it provides valuable insights regarding the motivations to attend a LAN. Thus, the results of this study provide suggestions to the LAN organisers regarding how they can combine online and offline activities during the event to create greater value for the attendees of their events. The study can further provide insights useful for LAN organisers as it can inspire them to create new activities that can become part of the event itself. The study could be used as a foundation to build onto ideas for activities gamers value from the online setting and be practically applied to a LAN.

The authors suggest the study is reviewed by LAN organisers and perhaps by event organisers as it could be found relevant for both. The attendees judge the quality of a LAN, and thus meeting their expectations as a LAN organiser or event organiser would undoubtedly increase the perceived value of the LAN. Thus affecting the motivations of gamers to attend the LAN. Meeting customer expectations increases the chance of gamers/LAN attendees coming back.

It was evident from the findings that the motivations and benefits (gratifications) were intertwined, meaning there is an interconnection between them. On the other hand, LAN organisers can focus on the benefits gamers derive from their time and money investment to increase gamers' motivation to attend LAN events. This suggestion was inspired by the findings where some participants were motivated to get their money's worth back in merchandise. However, providing small tokens or merchandise is beneficial for the sponsoring brands represented on the LAN. It increases brand awareness and further creates a sense of appreciation gamers feel when provided with the freebies.

We suggest dividing the gaming areas at LANs into smaller sections, where each section consists of people playing the same game. This would make the opportunity for people to find like-minded gamers, find new teammates, and exchange information about game tactics more efficient, time-saving (since you would not need to shuffle between LAN rooms looking for gamers who play your game), and stress-free (since you would be in the same game section with like-minded people). People who play different game genres might have different personality traits, thus, some can be found incompatible as some gamers are more relaxed and easygoing, whereas others are tense and rigid. An example would be Arcade versus Shooter game players or

The Sims and Call of Duty players. It can be speculated that providing an area or section dividing the players of each game genre (where all arcade players are sitting together in one section and all shooter game players in another) would increase the enjoyment gamers get from attending a LAN. Moreover, it will prevent gamers from experiencing awkward situations where they find themselves at a LAN in a group talking about a game, but they cannot participate in the discussion due to not having any knowledge or prior experience with the game. Further, sectioning the outlay of the LAN provides gamers with a better opportunity of finding teammates, socialising, and gaining information from others who might be more knowledgeable and experienced. The sections might further increase the sense of community and belonging to gamers as their preferred choice of the game puts them in a section with like-minded people who share the same interests and thus can create a sense of community within the community. All participants at a LAN can be seen as gamers belonging to the LAN community. Sectioning the gamers into niche groups further reinforces the sense of community as it creates a community of the group within the LAN community.

6.3 Societal Implications and Ethical Considerations

The authors had to ensure that this thesis would benefit society. This research respects all different people in society and protects all participants' opinions and thoughts by being anonymous concerning their privacy to prevent any harm or damage to them (Oliver, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Hair et al., 2011).

Further, the authors will publish this thesis in the DiVA portal because it is a digital platform that works as a publishing system by helping universities and researchers publish their work. DiVA is mainly used for academic purposes. Publishing this thesis will be beneficial for society and reachable to other students who wish to take this study further or individuals in society who wish to get new knowledge about the topic because DiVA is openly available to everyone in society to read, use and benefit from (DiVA, n.d; DiVa, 2022).

Nevertheless, the study can harm society, including individuals. This study is interested in understanding people who are part of society. The results might affect or change individuals' behaviours and attitudes towards esports in general, leading to a societal issue (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Some downfalls of video game playing are discussed by Yee (2006), where gamers exposed to long hours of video gameplay can become easily susceptible to developing game addiction. However, Wang et al. (2021) suggest a coping strategy/mechanism and propose a shift in actions for gamers. Moving from an online gaming environment to an offline one, where gamers can engage in other activities such as cosplay and still be related to the gamers' interest (cosplaying their favourite game character). Also, esports is more inclusive for everyone in society and not limited to age like sports, where professional gamers can reach 76 years old (Tuting, 2020).

Anticipating how individuals might use the results of this study is tricky and can be problematic, however, this study is interested in understanding the phenomenon and producing new knowledge without the purpose of harming anyone in society. Also, this study is not aiming to encourage people to spend more or less time playing video games.

6.4 Limitations

This study contributes to the esports literature by providing insights into the motivations to attend a LAN. However, some limitations became apparent in light of the study's qualitative nature. The findings were based on personal experiences and feelings that were unique to each participant, and the sample of the study consisted of 15 participants due to the reach of theoretical saturation. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole gamers' demography but are instead a small representative sample. Further, the participant sample did not play one specific game but instead played a variety of games, thus, the motivations of gamers can be affected/influenced by the game type (MOBA, FPS, TPS, etc.).

Another factor that affects participants' motivation is the type of games they play. Findings revealed that the sample was primarily casual gamers rather than competitive gamers. It was noticed that the motivations and benefits of attending a LAN could be fundamentally different for casual and competitive gamers.

Moreover, it was observed that the motivations and benefits of attending a LAN could vary according to its size, so this study did not explore one specific type of LAN.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations in the study can be viewed as opportunities for future research and could thus become the foundation for a more thorough investigation. Thus, using the same motivations to conduct quantitative research to test the revised model in **Chapter 5** would confirm the results on a larger scale and provide a basis for generalisation. In connection with quantitative research, applying a different sampling technique for the sample to be more representative, such as probability sampling.

Doing research that focuses on finding participants who play the same game and investigating their motivations could increase the quality of the research. The reason for that is that different games require different types of skills, which can affect participants' motivations to attend a LAN and the perceived benefits they get out of it.

From the findings, it was evident that casual gamers and competitive gamers have different motivations to attend a LAN, and thus they gain different benefits from it. Therefore, future research should focus on sampling either casual or professional gamers to see a clear distinction between their motivations and benefits, which can be fundamentally different.
Gamers with different demographic and social backgrounds will have different motivations and benefits from attending a LAN (Sherry et al., 2006). Therefore, it suggested that exploring females' motivations would give different findings.

Finally, from the findings, it was evident that there are different expectations based on the size of the LAN (big LANs such as Dreamhack or smaller LANs such as Corehack or home LANs) as motivations to attend and perceived benefits. Therefore, it is recommended to do research focusing on one type of LAN.

Another suggestion derived from the findings is to explore motivations in connection to the price of tickets for LANs and investigate how the price can influence the motivation of participants to attend a LAN.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

In this section, the Interview guide for the semi-structured interviews of this study is presented.

1. Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Welcome the interviewee.
- Introduce ourselves and the project.
- Inform the interviewee of their rights as it follows:

  - ❖ They can leave the interview whenever they want.
  - ❖ They can skip any question they do not feel like answering.
  - ❖ If they do not understand any question, they can ask for clarification.
  - ❖ They can have their camera on or off. It's up to them.
  - ❖ Inform them that the interview will be anonymous.
  - ❖ Inform them how the data will be handled.
  - ❖ Inform them that they can choose a cool nickname if they want to be used in the study.
  - ❖ Get their permission verbally for the GDPR Thesis Study Consent Form.
  - ❖ Get their permission to start recording.

After the introduction of the GDPR regulations the following steps were approached:

- Ask participants to pick a nickname.
- Get permission from participants to record the meeting in video and audio format.
- Now ask them if they are ready to start the interview.

2. Discussion on the topic (around 30 minutes)

Part 1 (Competition)

1. Do you think it is important to compete at a LAN?
2. How does winning or losing affect your experience at a LAN?
3. Have you ever competed at a LAN and lost? ***Follow up if "Lost":*** What were the emotions you went through?

Part 2 (Skills)

4. Would you be able to give examples of skills needed to be a successful competitive gamer?
5. How do you learn and adapt to the new META?
6. Do you consider a LAN a place where you can improve and learn new skills?
7. Do you want to improve your skills and why?

Part 3 (Escape)

8. How do you feel when attending a LAN and playing games? Can you describe it?
9. How does attending a LAN differ from playing games or watching streams from home?

Part 4 (Entertainment)

10. What kind of activities do you like to see and do at a LAN?
11. What makes a LAN enjoyable to you and makes you want to come back?
12. Besides playing games do you see any other benefits to the local area network (***high-speed internet***)?
13. Have you ever experienced an internet lag in a LAN? ***Follow up if "Yes":*** How did it make you feel?

Part 5 (Information)

14. How do you keep yourself updated about upcoming LAN parties? ***Follow up:***
    Is there a community that informs you?
15. How do you keep yourself up to date with what is new in esports (new games, new game hacks or tactics, offers or discounts in the game)?
16. How important is information sharing for you in a LAN and why?

Part 6 (Achievement)

17. What do you get from attending a LAN? ***Follow up:*** Do you get any rewards?
18. How do the rewards you get from attending a LAN affect your opinion about participating again?

Part 7 (Community)

19. Are you part of a gaming community? ***Follow up:*** Does that affect your motivation to attend in a LAN?

Part 8 (Social Interaction)

20. Do you go to a LAN to make new connections? ***Follow up if "Yes":*** Is this important to you?

Part 9 (Relationship)

21. How can communication and collaboration with others affect your willingness to get involved in a LAN?
22. How does being together physically influence your game experience?

Part 10 (Teamwork)

23. Do you play single player or multiplayer games? ***Follow up for multiplayer****:* What makes a strong team composition?
24. Do you meet new teammates at LANs? Does your team change over time?
25. What individual skills make a strong team composition?

3. Summing up (5 minutes)

- Ask them if they want to add anything else or if they have any thoughts they want to express.
- Ask them if they enjoyed the interview.
- Finally, thank the interviewee for participating in the study and for providing valuable time and information, letting them know how important their participation is in this study.

Appendix 2: Additional Interview Questions

Here is an example of some of the additional questions used in the interviews.

Probing Questions

1. Why did you feel like that?
2. Can you give an example?
3. Can you elaborate more about this?
4. How did you react to this?
5. What do you like about that game?
6. What game do you play?
7. So do you feel like it's kind of comforting when…..?
8. Does that influence the way you….?
9. In what way?

Follow-up Questions

1. So is it important to …? For you?
2. Why is that?
3. Hypothetically, if you have not experienced that, what are going to be the emotions you would go through? If ….?
4. Can you elaborate on that?
5. Would you consider that? In that case?
6. So in that case would you do that?
7. Do you have anything else to add to that?
8. Does that make you also more focused when…?
9. So would you say that made you…?
10. So, if you have a…, would you …?