

Bachelor's thesis

Gaming, a cure for loneliness?

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HØGSKULEN
I VOLDA

Abstract

This thesis researches if there is a correlation between gaming and reduction in loneliness. Gaming hours have increased since COVID-19 came, worldwide the number of time spent on video games was up by 36% (Statista, 2020). Loneliness is also increasing, “Folkehelseinstituttet” conducted a survey; data showed that loneliness among students was high, and those who lived in Bergen and Oslo had the highest levels of loneliness. (FHI, 2020) Data from the survey conducted for this thesis shows that participants see gaming as sosial, they form long lasting relationships that get them through tough times. Though this thesis survey only has data based on self reported gaming hours, not actual numbers it can be used as a base for further studies. The data shows participation stating that gaming has helped multiple people in reducing loneliness, being social and other aspects of lives, before COVID-19. They report that this has been amplified during the pandemic.

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1.0 Introduction

In an interview with “Mental Helse,” they talk about an increasing amount of people reaching out to them and using their call and chat services. They now have eight phone lines open and four chat services that people can call and talk to. People on the other end are people with different backgrounds who have time, they listen and have different life experiences.

When Oslo’s new and strict covid-19 regulations came, they saw an increase in callers and expanded their opening hours from 18.00-02.00 to 08.00-02.00 (their phone line is always open). They increase their work capacity with the help from “Stine Sofies Stiftelsen” in the hours of 08.00-23.00. Still, there are always people in line. They say it is worrying how the majority of their conversations were about self-harm or suicide. People who call their helpline talk about this and loneliness and isolation, and kids as young as nine use their help-line. Callers are worried and think about the lockdown. They express that they feel they lack contact with kids their age and think it is hard.

Omid V. Ebrahim says it is natural that we feel more lonely during this period. We need contact with other people, it is in our nature to socialize, and when we now lose touch with family, friends, colleagues, this increases our feeling of loneliness. He says this is problematic since it is a precursor to depressive symptoms. (Khorami, 2021)

A study done by the Department of psychology at the University of Oslo shows that covid-19 has led to more people seeing day by day as a challenge. Nearly triple show symptoms of anxiety and depression. “Mental Helse” reported that they get 1700 more conversations regarding suicide on their service “sidetmedord.no” than in 2019. There was a 30% increase from June to October regarding inquiries on depression. In a survey “Oslo -ungdom i koronatiden” done by “ungdata,” participants said they had more time with family, which was a positive outcome from covid-19. The survey also showed that 23% of the boys and 33% of the girls said they had very much/were heavily bothered with loneliness. Boys answering the survey and played video games said they found fellowship in the already established friendships that they had online (verdensdagen, n.d.).

Liv Kleive, a clinic director (at a clinic for mental health for children and young people) in

Bergen, also noticed a change. Kleive says that the hospital is working on a crisis plan to handle the increase in people who need help and are looking for help due to mental issues. Right now (01.2021), they cannot help everyone. The hospital has seen a 20% increase in people wanting to become a patient than the year before. (Haugsbø, 2021)

With the increase, the health personnel sees regarding mental health and problems tied to the pandemic. There is also an increase in another topic as well, gaming. In 2016 a look at global revenues of music, film, and gaming industry showed that the music industry was god for \$16billion (digital, physical sales, other), film \$49 billion (Digital sales, box-office sales), and games \$101billion (PC, console, mobile). The numbers are before covid-19. After covid-19 came, several companies made their game cheaper or for free. (Malim, 2018) Like “Call of duty: Warzone,” they drew in more than 15 million players online just three days after they made their game free to play on multiple consoles (Romano, 2020). “Animal Crossing: New Horizons” was launched on the 20th. March 2020 and sold 1.88 million physical copies in three days (they do not track digital sales, actual numbers are higher). (Byford, 2020)

It is a global pandemic, and people outside of Norway feel the health disadvantages of covid-19 too. In a survey done on behalf of APA (American Psychological Association) on people in America, 1 in 5 adults said their mental health is worse than it was at this time last year, and 78% said the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant source of stress in their lives. 73% of people born 1997-2012 felt lonely, and 71% felt miserable or unhappy. (Bethune, 2020)

Also, worldwide the number of time spent on video games was up by 36%. Spain had the highest numbers, a 48% increase. (Statista, 2020).

There is an increase in people reaching out to professionals and others to talk to about their everyday or more severe needs, and the matter is growing. This growth, together with a growing gaming industry, generates questions. There is not yet much data to look at in Norway regarding these two categories together. Study on Norwegian people`s mental health during lockdown is becoming more and more common.

Can gaming find a way to be of any help during an isolated time? Can it ease loneliness? Can we see kids/young adults reducing the feeling of loneliness due to playing games, and if so, through online or single play? Are people lonely? These questions are worth further looking, to narrow it down and focus on one health aspect that people have said is a growing problem. This paper is going to focus on loneliness and if gaming can affect loneliness.

1.2 Thesis purpose

This thesis aims to look at gamers (meaning offline, online, all consoles, PC, mobile, phone, and iPad). This thesis will look at Norway and how an isolated situation has affected people who played video games to see if video games have affected them in feeling less lonely.

Can loneliness be linked with gaming at all? Are people lonely because of gaming, or does it decrease loneliness? Studies from Norway on how students and people feel during the lockdown have started to come, and loneliness is often mentioned. As well as the increase in hours spent on mobile phones, in front of screen playing games and some articles raise the parent's voice and say they are worried for their children.

Main research question:

Can gaming reduce loneliness?

To answer the research question asking several small questions

1. Is there an increase in people feeling lonely since covid-19?
2. Has average gaming hours per week increased since covid-19?
3. Do people self-report that gaming is a coping strategy for loneliness and/or a social arena for friendship?

This thesis will focus on the timeframe from 12.march to 25.05.2021.

1.3 Covid-19 in Norway

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus was discovered in January 2020. It spread through the world, and in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic had reached a scale that made Norway close everything that did not need to be open. Everyone moved their office to a home office if they could and worked from home. Schools closed on 12. march, everyone self-quarantined and could not meet as many people as before. Research of young people's habits during the lockdown started to come where they write about the effect the lockdown has had on people. Articles about how one can exercise from home, build a good routine, and more came, and experts started to predict how the quarantine affected the Norwegian people based on their field of expertise (FHI, 2021).

1.4 Loneliness

The term loneliness is used in different texts and articles with different definitions. It is hard to pin down a finite definition. The following definition of loneliness is what this thesis is using.

Dr. Holt-Lunstad said that loneliness is a complicated emotion. Still, one way to look at loneliness is “the difference between how much social connection people want and how much they are getting.” So someone can feel lonely in a crowded room or content in solitude. People vary in how much human connection they need. When talking about friendship and loneliness,” Dr. Holt-Lunstad says:

The most obvious is seeking support from friends. Across a number of studies, people with strong social relationships had a higher likelihood of living longer than people with weaker connections. Just knowing that people are there for them, this leads to a reduction in stress. (Sohn, 2020)

In an interview conducted for this thesis. Asle Hoffart defines loneliness as “Loneliness can be defined as an unpleasant state of feeling a mismatch between the desired amount and quality of social interaction and what is available to the person in the person's environment.”

In the interview, Hoffart also says it is a massive increase in people who feel bothered by loneliness. To be alone is one thing, but to be lonely and bothered by it is a whole different thing, and in their survey from June 2020, they asked in the second survey, “how much have you been bothered by loneliness?” 46% answered that they have been bothered by loneliness in the last two weeks. He points out that this is during the summer, and at this time, the covid-19 restriction has been mildly lifted and was not so harsh. The earlier number from 2016 is 16% (from “statistisk sentralbyrå”). Hoffart points out the one thing that hit him the most is the amount. The amount of loneliness. (Appendix 3 “Asle Hoffart”)

Studies have also linked loneliness and social isolation to heart disease, depression, cancer depression, diabetes, and suicide. A former United States surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, has written that loneliness and social isolation are “associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day and even greater than that associated with obesity”. (Weller, 2017)

Klinenberg continues to say that measuring loneliness and isolation is problematic. It is difficult to measure since there are so many ways to measure it. John Cacioppo, a University of Chicago psychologist who has spent much of his career documenting the danger of loneliness, argues that an occasional and transitory feeling of loneliness can be healthy and productive. He says it is a biological sign to ourselves that we need to build stronger social bonds. He relies on more measured statistics. Some studies counted everyone who said they feel “left out,” “isolated,” “lacked companionship,” or when someone said “some of the time” as lonely, and that is a low bar on measuring loneliness. “...overestimating the problem it can make it harder to make sure we are focusing on the people who need help the most.”

(Klinenberg, 2018)

“Folkehelseinstituttet” is the national institute of public health. They are a state administrative body under the ministry of health and care service. A survey took place in 18.11.20-04.12.20, where 26 000 Norwegians participated (the participants came from Oslo, Agder, Nordland, and Vestland). The survey was about infection control measures, quality of life, and mental health.

FHI surveyed to find out more about loneliness, life quality, and mental health. Over 26 000 answered a survey that shows that among students is one in three lonely, several are struggling with loneliness and mental illness. See fig.1; Residents in Oslo and Bergen report exceptionally high scores, they have noticed higher levels of loneliness than the other places. They point out that these places are also the ones that have the most challenging COVID-19 restrictions.

The survey shows a significant difference in living in the city or a rural place. FHI says they see that the youngest are the ones that struggle the most. Bergen and Oslo have had high infection rates and strict local infection control measures during the survey. The high score on loneliness is assumed to be related to both the infection control measures during the data collection period and possibly the duration of the pandemic. (FHI, 2020)

Ensomhet over alder og sted

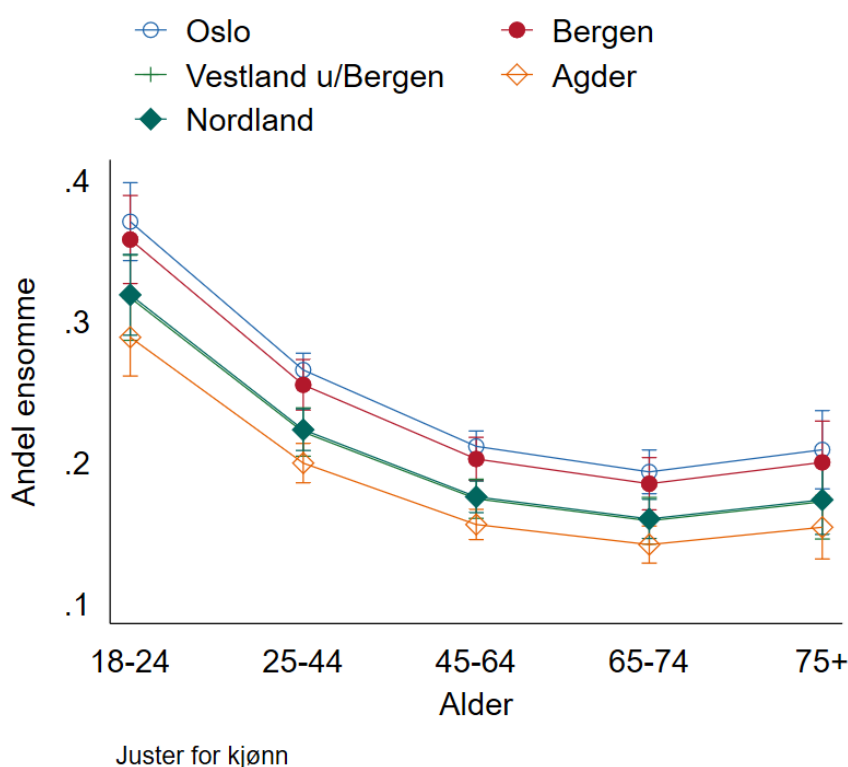


Figure 1

The proportion of lonely people over age for Oslo, Bergen, Vestland without Bergen, Agder, and Nordland. Solid vertical lines for each point are confidence intervals and indicate the uncertainty in the estimate. Diagram: FHI

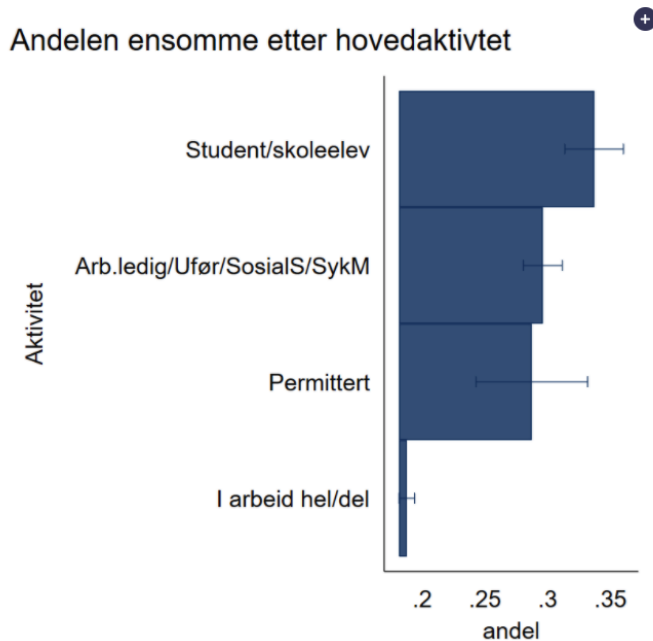


Fig. 2 Proportion of loneliness according to whether one is at work, is a school pupil/student, without work, laid off, on sick leave or disabled, or on social benefits. Solid lines for each column indicate uncertainty in the estimate. Diagram: FHI.

On feeling lonely, the student has scored the highest. See fig. 3; FHI made a graph showing people answering the same question over three different periods. The graph shows how lonely they feel over time. Young people, students, and people who live alone are especially vulnerable. FHI says that they believe the amount of loneliness people feel will decrease since they believe it is situation-based. Their assumption is based on their findings, saying people who live in places with higher restrictions feel more lonely than those who live in places where the regulations are not that strict. (FHI, 2020)

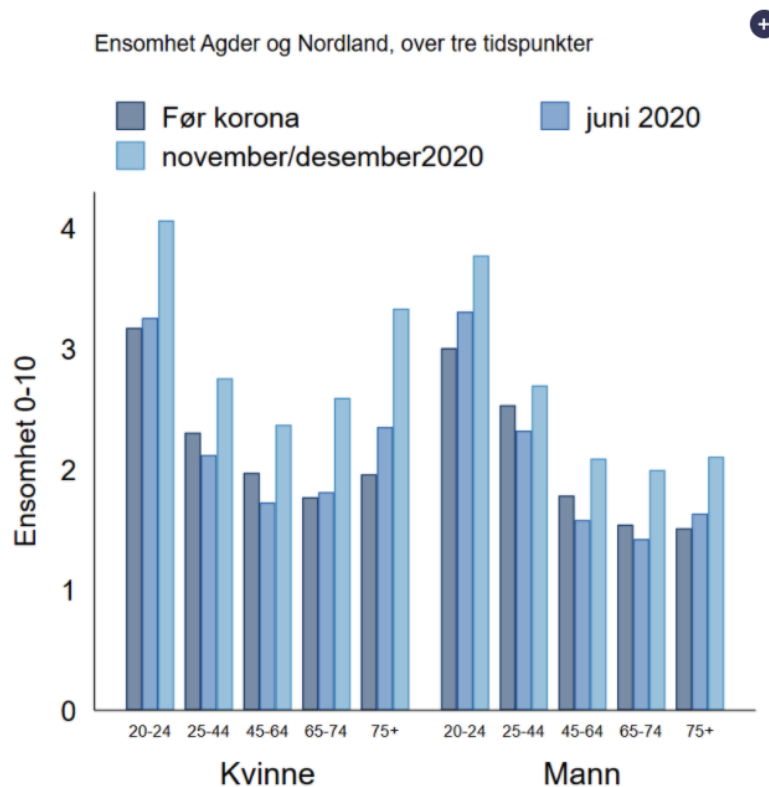


Fig. 3 Scores loneliness on a scale from 0-10, 0 not lonely, 10 very lonely. The figure shows results for people who have answered the question at all three measurement times. Women on the left, men on the right. Diagram: FHI.

A research project on behalf of “medietilsynet”, done by Oslo Met students Henry Mainsah and Kamilla Knutsen Steinnes called “Dataspill og barn og unges forbrukerkompetanse”. The project shows that children describe gaming as something social and a substitute for face-to-face social interactions. The children they interviewed were between the age of 11-17 years old, and the survey showed that they used more time on gaming and money during covid-19. It also showed that gaming had played a more significant impact in their lives during covid-19. The children said they play online games the most.

The survey shows that gaming has gotten a more important place in children's social lives during covid-19, and for them, it is a platform to keep in touch with their friends, counteract loneliness, and include people. The children say they rarely play alone, and they either play with friends or with strangers. (Lassen, 2020)

1.5 What is a gamer?

Until recently, “gamers” have been perceived as unpopular, isolated, inadequate social skills, male, unattractive, and passive. (Kowert & Oldmeadow, 2012) It is not just a stereotype; the stereotype also embosses the words that the media used when there is a gaming-related event. Like this case, a gaming-related death was in the news. In 2018 a gamer was behind a shooting at a video game tournament in Florida. Two people died, and ten were injured from the shooting episode before he took his own life. Much emphasis was put on the fact that he committed the mass shooting because he lost a video game tournament. Other non-gaming-related information regarding motive was not something the media emphasized or seemed interested in. (Levenson & Stapleton, 2018).

Whether or not the media is framing gaming culture is an ongoing debate. An article from 2016 writes about the effects of media frames on perceptions of gamers. They found out that:

framing gaming in the mass media has the potential to alter the formation of public opinion. Based on our findings, one could assume that attitudes toward games and gamers will shift to another direction if certain frames receive more or less emphasis in media coverage of video games.

They end their paper with, “Because of the profound political implications, framing gaming certainly matters.” (Kümpel & Haas, 2016)

Simon-Kucher & Partners and the research institute Dynata surveyed more than 13,000 consumers, looking to understand gaming patterns. Simon-Kucher & Partners say that a “casual gamer” is described as individuals who play up to five hours of video games each week, while “gamers” spend anywhere between 5 to 20 hours. Only those who dedicate more than 20 hours of their week to gaming fall within the “serious gamers” category. They say that “For many, gaming has become a substitute for social interaction, as people crave competition and cooperation and use virtual worlds to meet these needs.” (Consultancy-me, 2020)

These are the definitions that apply for this thesis when talking about “casual gamer,” “gamers,” or “serious gamer.”

1.6 Negative aspects of gaming

Gaming has both positive sides as well as negative and pathological gaming is one negative side. Pathological gaming has behavior such as preoccupation, withdrawal, loss of control, and interpersonal or intrapersonal conflicts. Pathological use of computers or video games is not officially recognized as a clinical disorder. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning and thinking about when writing a thesis on gaming and collecting data where people log their hours. Studies have shown that adolescents, boys more than girls, are more likely to show signs of pathological gaming than any other age group. (Lemmens, Valkenburg & Peter, 2011)

Another negative side effect that can come from gaming is gaming disorder. The World Health Organisation (WHO) classified gaming disorders in their international Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) in 2018. “The ICD-11 is a list of diseases and medical conditions that health professionals use to make diagnoses and treatment plans.”

According to the ICD-11, people with gaming disorder have trouble controlling the time they spend playing. They prioritize gaming over other activities and experience adverse effects from their gaming behaviors.

WHO has warned about the risk of too much gaming in the past, but after covid-19 came, they launched #PlayApartTogether. They partnered up with big gaming studios to encourage people to stay home. WHO ambassador for global strategy, Ray Chambers, states that WHO hopes that the industry can "reach millions with important messages to help prevent the spread of COVID-19" (Leonard, 2018)

1.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory is that people are not motivated to pursue a higher-level need if a lower need is not yet satisfied.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has five stages. The five stages can help justify why some needed to game during an isolated situation. the need for gaming during an isolated situation. The level is simple to understand. People are usually not motivated to pursue a higher level if the lower levels are not fulfilled. Looking at those who played games, the “physiological” and “safety” are basic needs. To have those two levels covered leaves one searching for belonging, recognition, and feeling like they master something. It is here video games come in. Sports can also give those feelings and fulfill this level, as well as other activities. Since they were isolated, gaming is a natural “alternative” for those who did not play and play more hours for those who already gamed. Gaming online gives a feeling of belonging and winning lets one feel achievement (Maslow, 1943, p. 370-396)

FIGURE
9.10

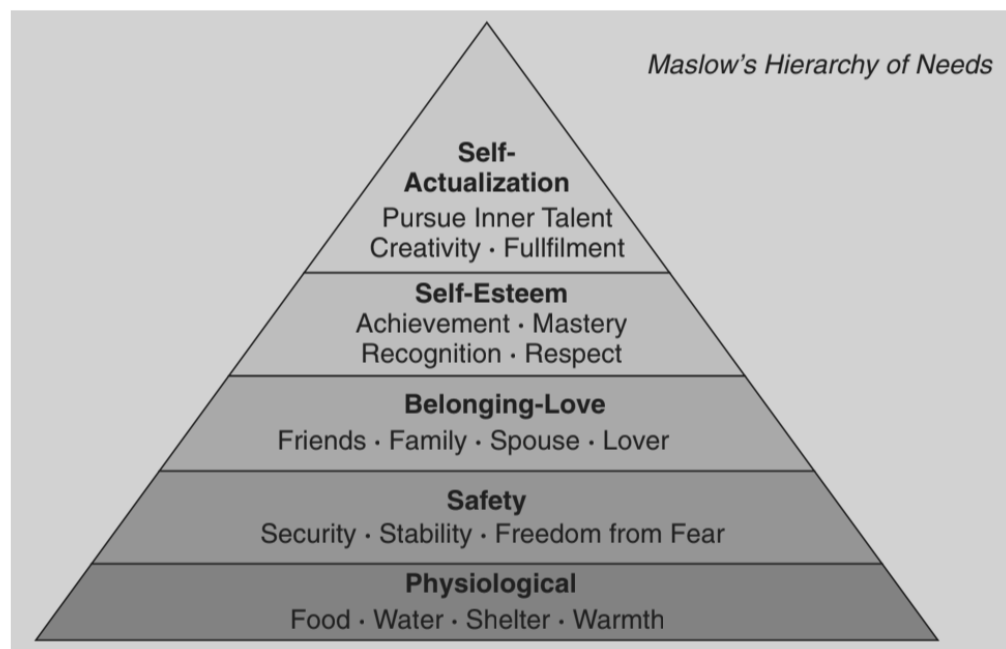


Figure 4 The art of game design: a book of lenses (p.126) of J. Schell, 2008. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers. CC by 4.0

1.8 Dopamine

Lewis-Evans writes a blog post about dopamine and reward. Lewis-Evans writes that he will try to explain what science currently says about the role of dopamine and rewards. He writes about an experiment where they used mice and saw that mice that were genetically unable to produce dopamine still likes things. Lewis-Evans uses persons with Parkinson's disease as an

example, and problems with dopamine production characterize the patients. The same with mice and rats. They do not appear to show any decreases in the liking of rewards (such as sweet tastes).

Lewis-Evans says that rather than dopamine, it seems that other neurotransmitters, such as opioids (endorphins) and cannabinoids, are more often involved in “liking” a reward. Opioid release in the brain can indirectly also lead to reactions in the dopamine system. Lewis-Evans say that the pleasurable feeling one gets when playing a game has probably nothing to do with dopamine.

Dopamine has been the chemical that makes us enjoy rewards, a pleasure chemical, and motivates us to want a reward. Lewis-Evans has a Ph.D. in human factors psychology and works as a user experience researcher. Lewis-Evans says that the brain is not that simple, and his research shows that dopamine itself is not directly involved in “liking” and pleasure.

Lewis-Evans has experimented with mice and says one can draw similarities to patients with Parkinson’s disease since problems with dopamine production characterize them. The two experiments on two different species show similarities. The mice showed a preference for sugar water and, problems with dopamine production characterize them when given a choice, will pick to drink that over plain water. These were mice that have been genetically altered not to produce dopamine. In humans with Parkinson’s disease, they did not show a decrease in liking rewards like sweets. Just like the rats. It is based on these results he bases his arguments. (Lewis-Evans, 2013)

1.9 Former research on similar topics

Research from Oxford focuses on well-being and collected user data from the gaming companies themselves and self-reported data on well-being, motivation, and need satisfaction during play from the persons playing video the games they collected data from. They say that most of the research out there is based on self-reported data and that this has shown to be a poor proxy of actual behavior. Such associations will necessarily be biased. They continue to say that studies suggest that self-reported technology use can lead to overestimating and underestimating the association with well-being compared to directly logged technology use. They say that researchers need to obtain reliable and accurate play data, and to do so, they

need to work together with industry partners. “Therefore, when researchers rely on self-reports of play behavior to test relations with mental health, measurement error will necessarily bias these relations.” The research found a slight positive parallel between gameplay and well-being. (Johannes, N., Vuorre, M., Przybylski, A. K. 2020)

Psychologist and iGen author Jean Twenge found conflicting results using the same data. Furthermore, the authors themselves admitted, “we don’t understand fully the impact of big tech on our society.” They also concluded that, until tech and gaming giants make their reams of user data available for study, “we will be in the dark about the effects of these products on mental health,” while also still decrying “the moral entrepreneurs” who’ve monetized our collective digital anxieties.” (Gossett, 2020)

A master thesis written by Karen Julie Kolbye has a similar research question “How can gaming contribute to psychosocial well-being?” (Kolbye, 2018, p. 11) In Kolbye’s master thesis, she researches and looks into whether gaming can contribute to psychosocial wellbeing. (Kolbye, 2018, p. 1) In her conclusion, she says that due to a broad research field, sampling errors, and other validity issues, the findings cannot be concluded as directly generalizable. One finding Kolbye had was that playing with others and community members had a significant positive effect on all but one of the applied psychological factors. (Kolbye, 2018, p. 58)

1.10 The reason they play

A survey on why people play conducted by The Nielsen Company shows that the main reason (56%) is to combat boredom/fill time. In second place comes “escape the real world” with 45%. In third comes “substitute for unavailable entertainment” with 36%, fourth “stay in touch with friends/family 29%, and fifth place came “socialize with strangers” with 26%. The article mentions that 55% of U.S. consumers played video games at the height of lockdown because of covid-19 and the restrictions that followed because of the pandemic. (Nielsen, 2021)

In an article by Bryan Lufkin, he writes that gamers are not necessarily isolated even though people are sitting alone for hours. Gamers do not just play online with strangers, and they make genuine friendships. Lufkin said that those who had not picked up a controller before

the pandemic realized that it is an excellent way of staying connected to the rest of the world during the isolated time. “The explosive growth of gaming during the pandemic has shown that many have a new outlet for much-needed connection in isolation.” (Lufkin, 2020)

Mark Griffiths, a professor, has written several gaming and socialization studies in video games for decades. He has written a paper on gaming friendship in the pandemic. In 2003 he published a study that showed that out of 11,000 players (of the online role-playing game Everquest), a quarter said their favorite part of the game was to connect with other players. Griffiths had a similar study on 912 players of a “massively multiplayer online role-playing game” where 45 different countries were represented. All of them played on average 22 hours a week. The study concluded that the online game environment was “highly socially interactive.” He said that ten percent of those in the survey ended up forming romantic relationships outside of the game. (Lufkin, 2020)

1.11 Online friendships versus offline friendships

There are stereotypes around being an online gamer. They are portrayed in a certain way: “Awkward or loners, riddled with social anxiety, and drawn to lives of social isolation from the rest of society.” Those people assume online communities waste time building online relationships and think they should use their time on offline relationships. They believe offline relationships are meaningful and more valuable than online relationships. Research tells us that is not true; online relationships are just as valid, making good friendships. They say that up to 70% of online gamers report making “good friends” within their gaming communities and that between 40% and 70 % report that they regularly talk about “offline” issues with their online friends. Their conversations include concerns that they have not discussed with their offline friends. (Baralis, 2020)

People who report that they play with pre-existing friends (from offline/online life) say that they feel less loneliness, greater social engagement, and higher quality with friends and family than those who play with strangers. (Baralis, 2020)

“Anything where you’re actively engaging, preferably with other people in a healthy way, is going to be the healthiest kind of screen time behavior,” Kaye added. Dr. Linda Kaye is a

senior lecturer in psychology who specializes in cyberpsychology and co-authored study. (Gossett, 2020)

Sonja Utz has a Ph.D. in psychology and says that 74% of players have formed lasting, meaningful relationships in gaming. These are the results from her research from observing MUD players (Multi-User Dungeon). They observed them learn about virtual environments and information spaces (the PARC's Jupiter project). (Stuart, 2013)

2.0 Method

2.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to see if there is a potential correlation or trend between Norwegian gaming habits during an isolation situation and loneliness. These numbers will give a better understanding and insight into Norwegians gaming habits and culture during the lockdown.

Getting more numbers and statistics from Norway instead of using international statistics will give a better insight into Norwegian gaming habits during the pandemic rather than using global data.

2.2 Quantitative methods

To answer this thesis, this study will use quantitative methods to collect data from a survey. Data on what type of games they play and any effects on them and feel lonely during an isolated situation. A quantitative method goes wide and focuses on a broader audience. The technique is not a personal one, and one cannot get the essence and meanings of one person. Instead, their answers are turned into numbers and data. A quantitative method is a structured method, and this means that the questions are the same for everyone. (Grimsgaard 2018, p. 68–67).

A survey that is easily accessible has its advantages both so people can share it and easily access it from where they are. A web survey is precisely that. Web surveys are also easy to

collect data from and sort (Østbye, H., Helland, K., Knapskog, K., Larsen, L. O., Moe, H. 2013, p. 139). When doing a survey, it is essential to think through the questions, ask the right ones correctly, and make sure one ends up with the data one wants from them (Grimsgaard 2018, p. 83–85).

Online surveys have several positive things about them. One is that the persons answering are anonymous; this increases the chance that they respond truthfully. Surveys sent out through mail have an under 50% answer rate; this can be a challenge. It is essential to find the right channel, the right people, and places for one survey to get the most answers (Østbye et al., 2013, p. 140).

Through this thesis, the online survey will be used to collect research data, then compare it with other studies. Data from the survey will be analyzed and used.

2.3 Qualitative methods

The data findings from the survey are then used as an interview guide to getting more profound answers from different experts that have their expertise in the field. This is done through a semi-structured interview (Østbye et al., 2007, 105). A semi-structured interview has questions prepared and follows the questions as an interview base. This type of interview lets the interviewer ask follow-up questions and, therefore, may get better answers, and it is a flexible interview method. This is a qualitative method. In qualitative interviews, we can get information that it would be challenging to get otherwise. An exception is when a person is central to the prerequisites. An interview can give the researcher comments that confirm or deny data one already has. (Østbye et al., 2013, p. 130-131)

In a semi-structured interview, it is common to anonymize the person one is interviewing. (Østbye et al., 2013, p. 130-131) All semi-structured interviews in this thesis are with persons with a central role and a valuable background to the paper. Therefore, their name will not be anonymous after consent to do so because they have researched in their fields, and by not anonymizing them, their entire worth of knowledge comes to fruition. (Østbye et al., 2013, p. 37)

2.4 Participants selection criteria

The participants for this research project were selected based on specific criteria. For the survey, they had to be from Norway and play games. They also had to be over 18. The experts had to have related studies, degrees, or hands-on experience on topics relevant to this thesis.

2.5 Data collection and participant selection

The survey collected data from 00.00.2021 to 00.00.2021. The survey got posted on the following Facebook groups:

- “Animal Crossing New Horizons NORGE” (3535 by 03.02.21)
- “Norske Gamere” (4804 by 03.02.21)
- “Pokemon Go Norge (17000 by 03.02.21)
- “Gamere med innvertiss” (276 by 03.02.21)
- “Norsk Minecraft samfunn” (1900 members by 9.feb)
- A Discord channel “Nerdlandslaget” (1539 members by 9.feb)
- “Level up Community” (4500 by 9.feb)
- “Norske filmskapere” (6800 by 20.05.21)

The survey was closed before the experts were interviewed.

After going through the data, two semi-structured interviews took place with experts in different fields. The semi-structured interview was with

Alf Inge Wang is currently working as a professor in Game Technology at the department of computer science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), where he teaches courses on programming, software architecture, game development. He received his Ph.D. in software engineering in 2001. His research interests are game technology, game-based learning, game development, game concept development, software architecture, and software engineering education. He has published more than 130 scientific papers, including journal papers, book chapters, and is an editor for a book. He has also been on several program committees for various conferences and workshops and arranged several special sessions and workshops.

February 6h 2013, Alf Inge won the Norwegian Award for Technical Achievement 2014. Alf Inge is also the inventor and co-founder of Kahoot! and the BitPet, and co-founder of PlayPulse.

The second expert is Lone Ellingvåg Knutsen. Ellingvåg Knutsen is a humanist chaplain at Volda University and a humanistic life counselor at “Human-Etisk Forbund.” She offers conversations to students, works to create meeting places, and actualizes topics in student’s lives. She has a bachelor’s degree in pedagogy with a specialization in psychology from NTNU. A master’s in Consulting Science from NTNU. Further education in Philosophical, ethical and existential dialogues from UiO. She has previously been a doctor fellow at the Department of Social Sciences and thus has educational experience related to research.

Third expert was Asle Hoffart. Hoffart is a professor at the psychology institute and is one of three people working on a project called “Psykisk helse og dens sammenheng med sosiale distanseringstiltak, isolasjon og karantene knyttet til Koronaviruset”. Asle stands for the research on loneliness in the group and specialist in clinical psychology, approved supervisor in cognitive therapy, certified "schema therapist" from the International Society of Schema Therapy. Main position as senior researcher at the Research Institute, Modum Bad, an assistant position as Professor II at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo. Published 130 articles in international journals and written two books on social phobia.

2.6 Strength and weaknesses

Online surveys have several positive things about them, and one is that the persons answering are anonymous. This increases the chance that they respond truthfully. In an online survey where login is not required, one person can take the survey several times. People can also be untruthful and say things they do not mean or otherwise give false information. They were also rating one’s mood and answers from the standpoint of not knowing. (Østbye et al., 2013, p. 130-131)

People also rated their moods and other factors that varied from people to people. This emphasizes and puts light on the data this thesis has collected through the survey. People answer from their perspective and how they are interpreting, let us say, “loneliness.” If they

are used to feeling lonely before the quarantine and still do, this will be nothing new to them, and they will answer accordingly.

The questions are key here, how they write and what are the alternatives when answering. How the data is collected, as well as interpreted, is essential. Just as crucial as asking and formulating good answers.

Another weakness to consider is that all of the expert interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Since this thesis is written in English all of the quotes had to be translated. The experts approved their own quotes and translation was done with the intent to keep the sentence as close to the original as possible.

2.8 Confidentiality

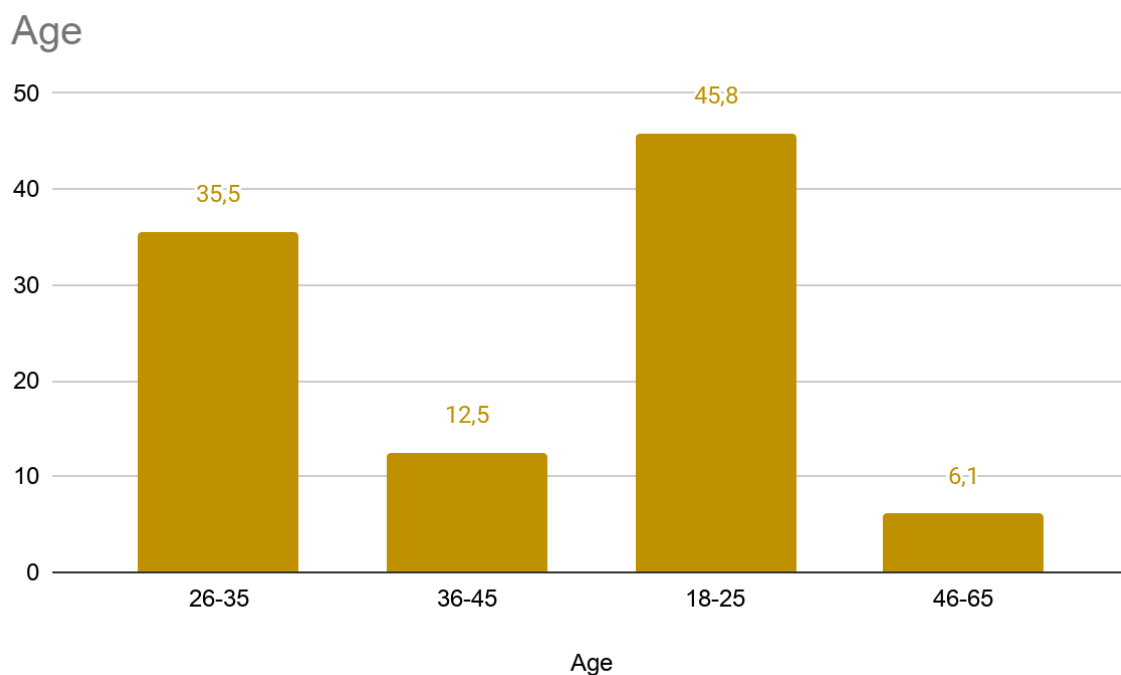
Duty of confidentiality. It is crucial to maintain the subject's anonymity and ensure that the person answering the survey does not recognize anything you write (Østbye et al., 2007, p. 115). Privacy is important. The survey had a section where consent was elaborated and how data would be used in the thesis. See the bullet point for elaboration.

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project prior to my participation.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.
- I understand that all data from this survey will be anonymous.
- I understand that the data from this survey will be used in a bachelor thesis.
- I understand that no other will have access to the raw data contained in this survey.

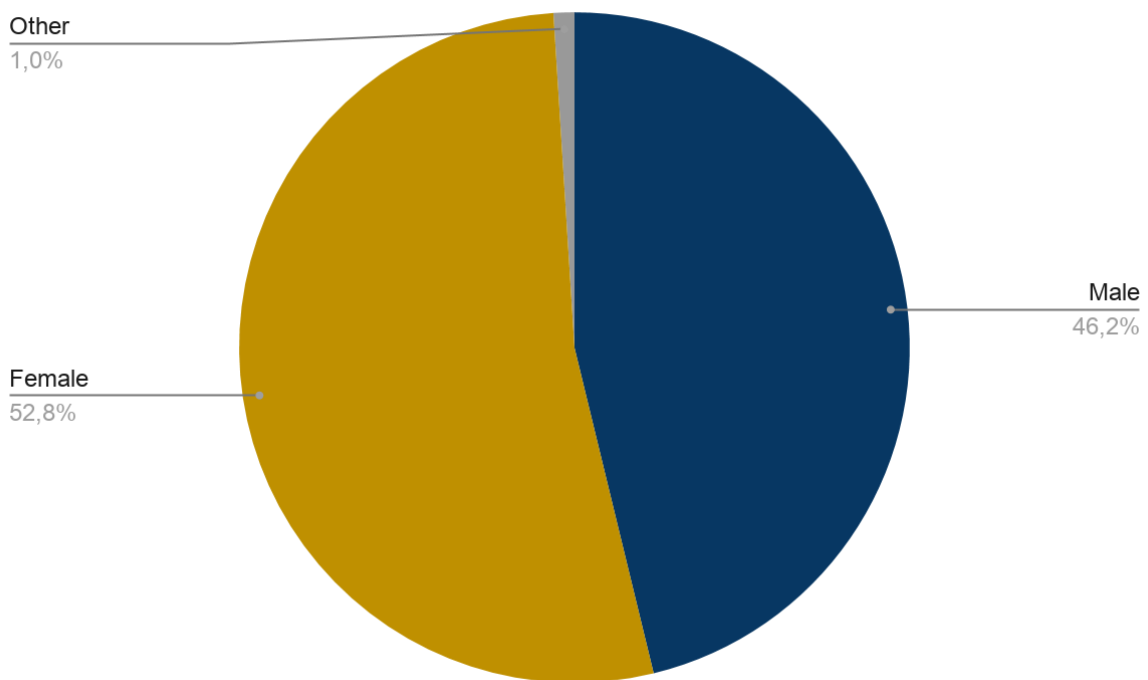
3.0 Results

3.1 Result from the survey

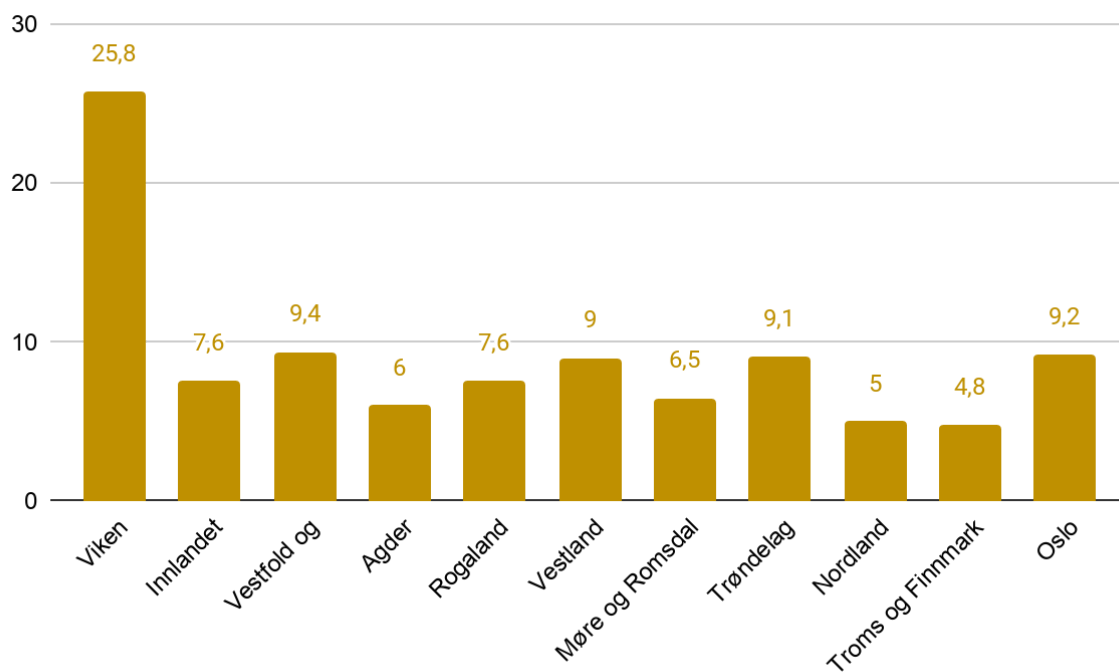
Below is an excerpt of the results. For the complete survey, see appendix 4 “Survey”.



(Figure 5) 45,8% of the people answering the survey were between 18-25 years old. 35,5% were in the 26-35 years old age gap. 12,5 of the people were 12,5, and 6,1 said they were between 46-65 years old.



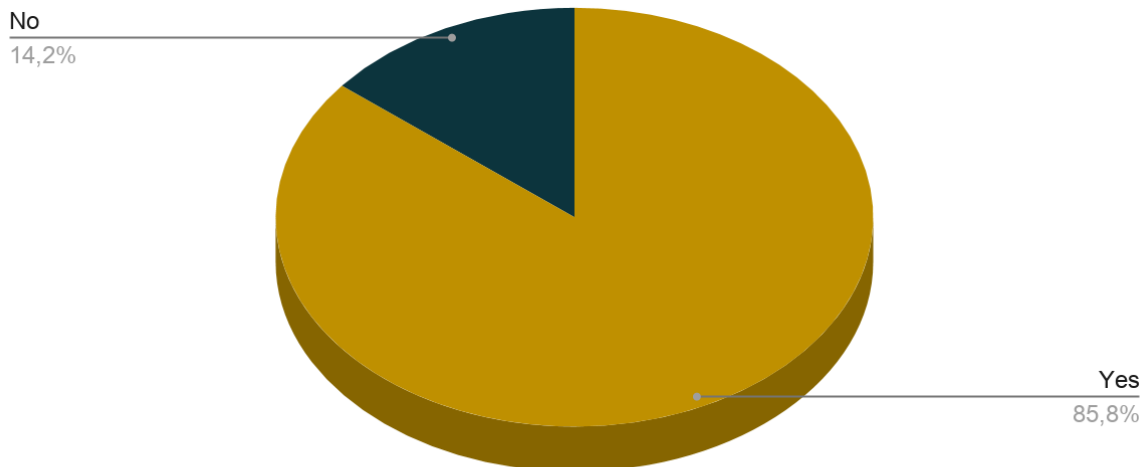
(Figure 6) More women than men answered the survey; they made out 52,8%. 46,2 male and 1,0 in other.



(Figure 7) The majority of those who answered were from Viken, 651 persons and 25,8%. Vestfold and Telemark had the second highest representation of people with 9,4%. Oslo had

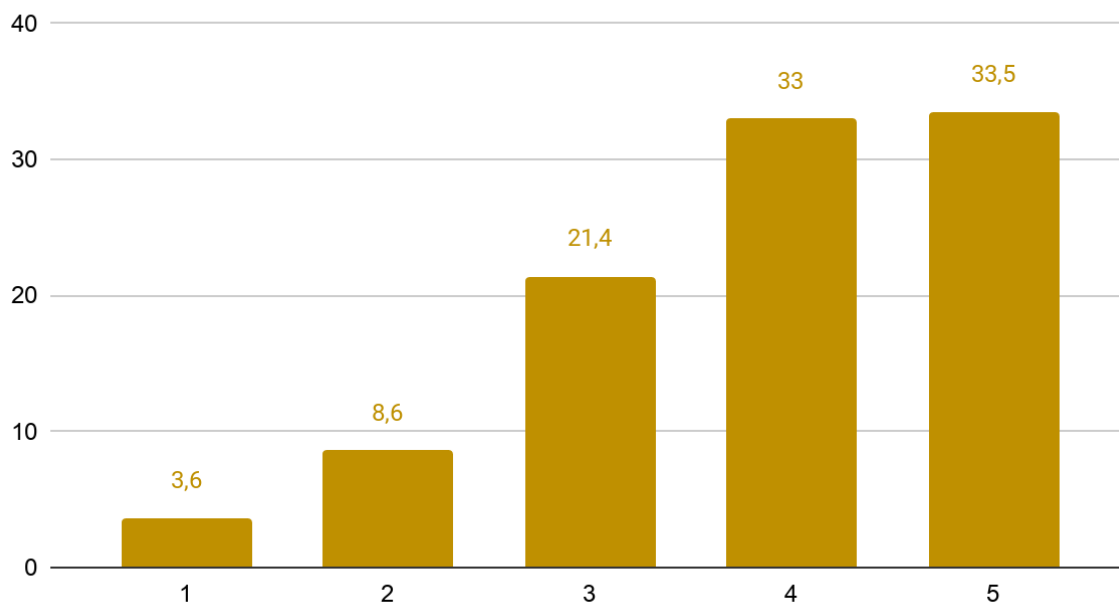
9,2%, Trøndelag 9,1%, Vestland 9%, Rogaland 7,6%, Innlandet 7,6%, Møre og Romsdal 6,5%, Agder 6%, Norland 5%, Troms og Finnmark had 4,8%,

Do you play video games?



(Figure 8) 85,8% Said they played video games, and 14,2% said they did not play video games.

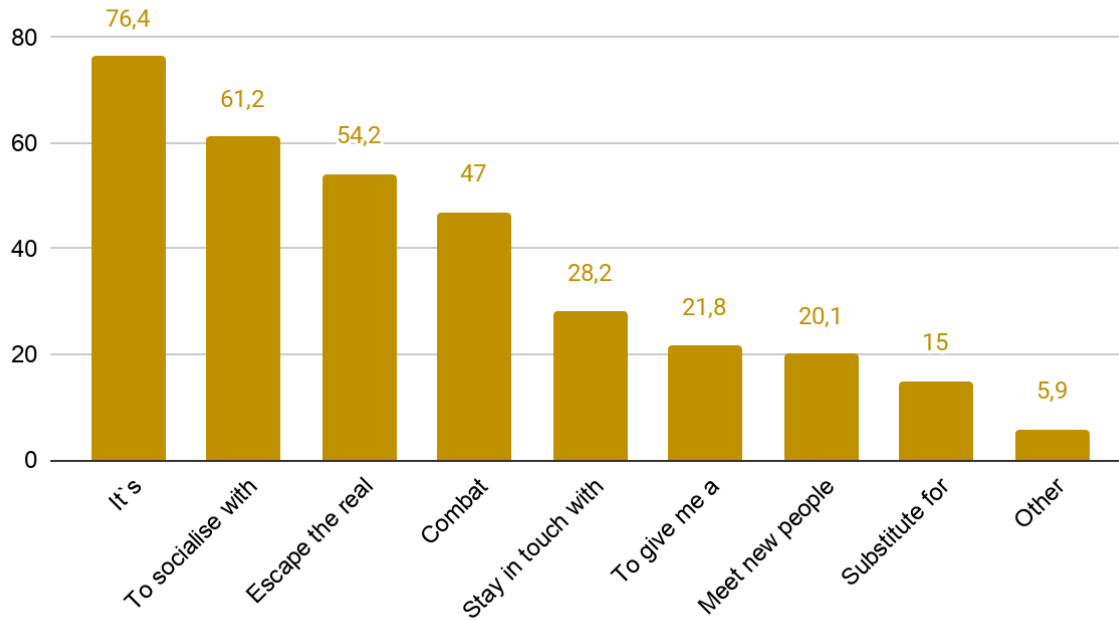
How social do you feel gaming is for you?



(Figure 9) On the question "How social do you feel gaming is for you". People could choose

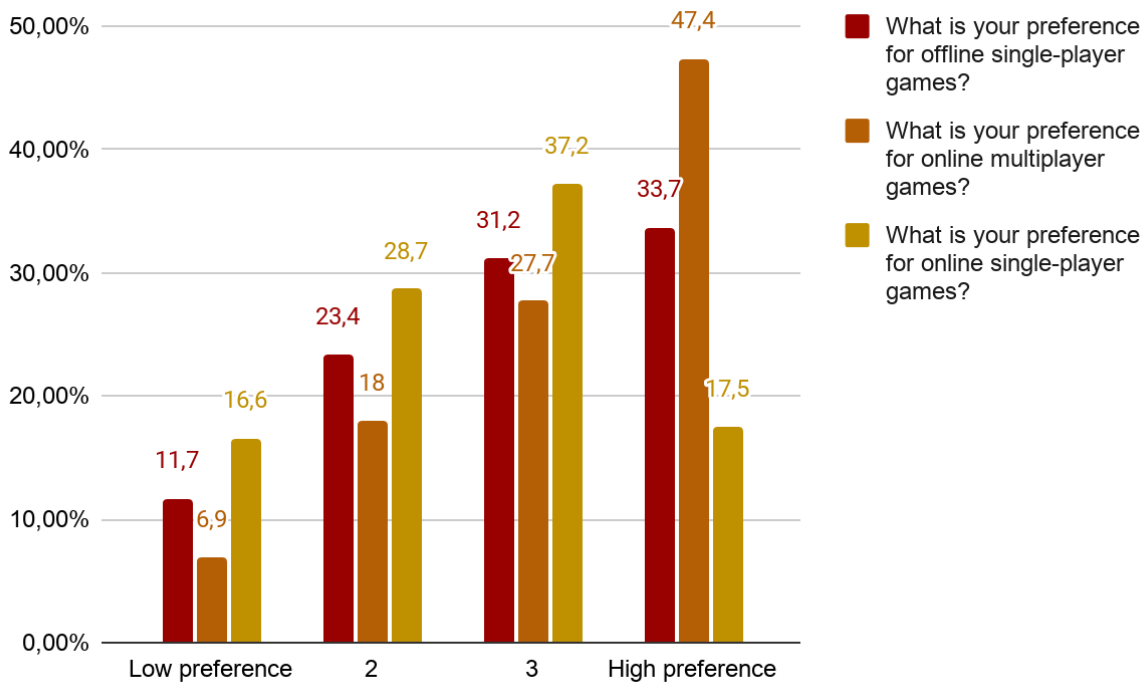
between 1 and 5, where one is “not social,” and 5 is “very social.” 33,5% said “5”. “4” Is right behind with 33%, “3 “have 21,4%, “2” has 8,6%, “1” has 3,6%.

Pick your top reasons for gaming

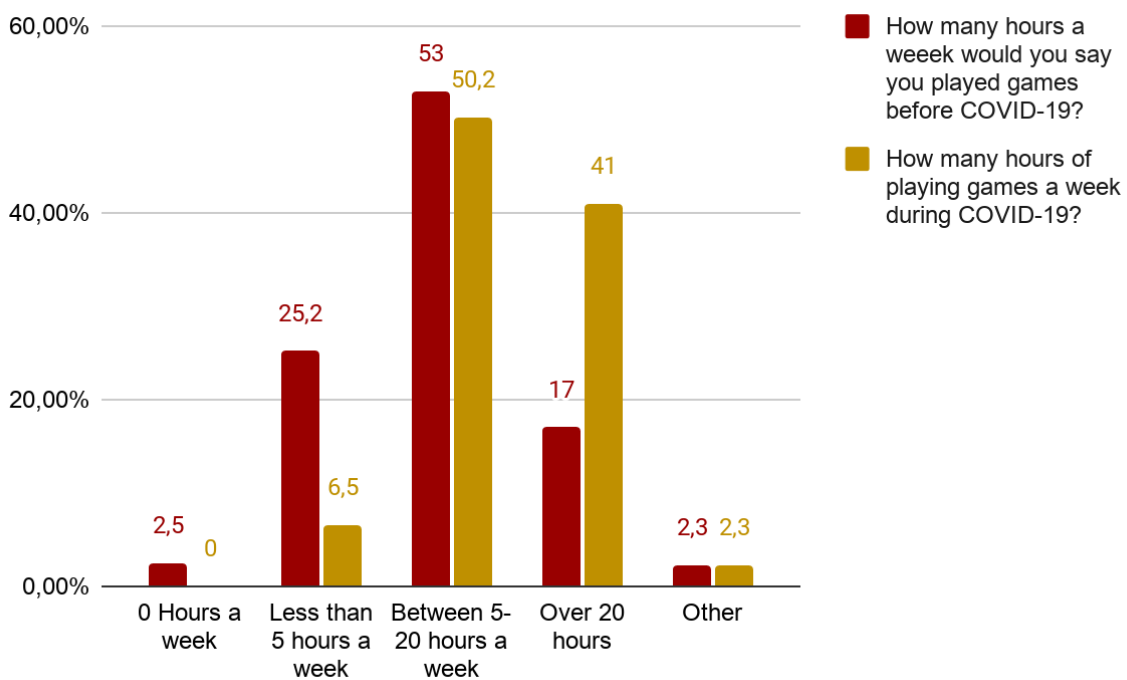


(Figure 10) This was a multiple-choice question, and they could pick several answers. 76,4% Said “it`s recreational/ relaxing”. 61,2% Said “to socialize with friends.” 54,2% Said “escape the real world.” 47% said they play because of “combat boredom/fill time.” 28,2% “Stay in touch with friends/family.” 21,8 “To give me a sense of purpose/motivation.” 20,1% “Meet new people.” 15% “Substitute for unavailable entertainment.” 5,9 “Other.”

Under the category, “other” participants have written their answers. Some have reported they do it for fun, fight depression, play to get closer to people in their family/friends, never played before corona, entertaining.



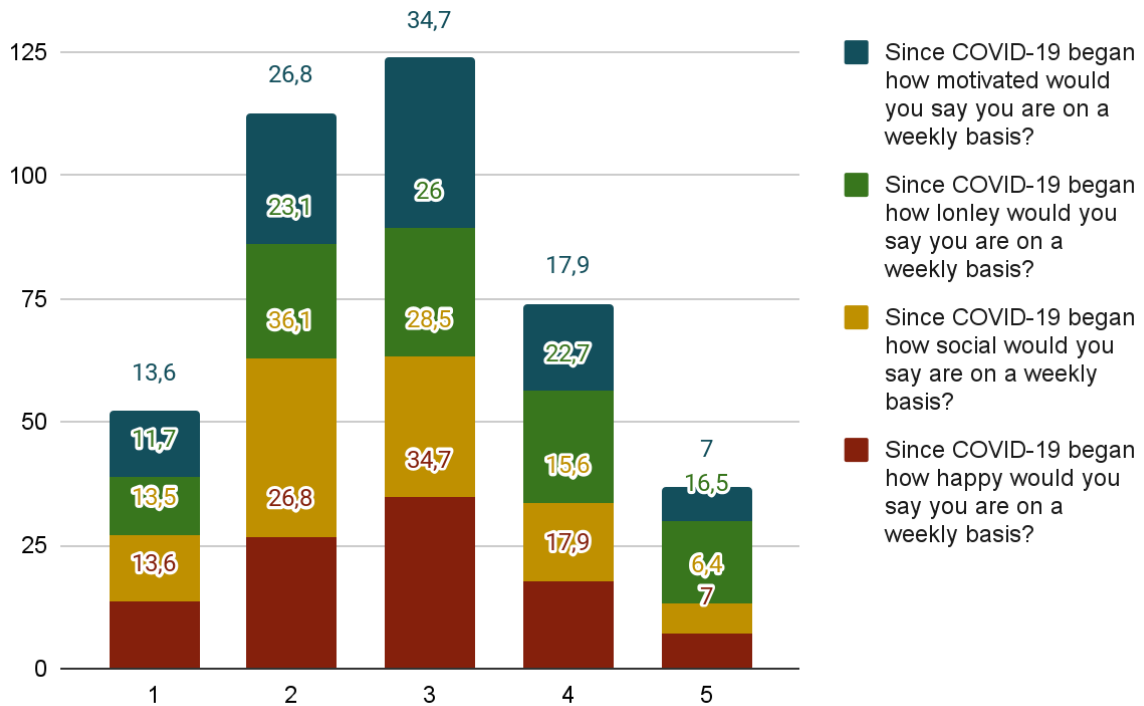
(Figure 11) These are three questions merged into one. They scaled different questions from one to four. Where one is “low preference” and five is “high preference.” Scaling based on people who answered; More people preferred online multiplayer games, 47%, which is 1025, said it as “high preference.” In second place with 804 people and 33,7% ranging it as a three on the scale is online single-player games. Third place with 729 people and 37,2% is offline single-player games.



(Figure 12) 53% Said they played “between 5-20 hours a week” before COVID-19, and 50,2% said they played between 5-20 hours a week during COVID-19. 17% Said they played over 20 hours before COVID-19, and 41% said they played over 20 hours during COVID-19. 25,2% said they had played less than 5 hours a week before COVID-19, and 6,5% said they had played less than 5 hours a week during COVID-19.

2,3% chose to write a custom answer on both before covid and during the lockdown. During gaming during COVID-19, some start playing with other people; some said they play 40, 50, 60, or up to more than 70 hours a week. One stated that they gamed 100 hours a week during the lockdown. Another person said 150 hours a week. One said up to 12+ hours a day.

Gaming, a cure for loneliness?



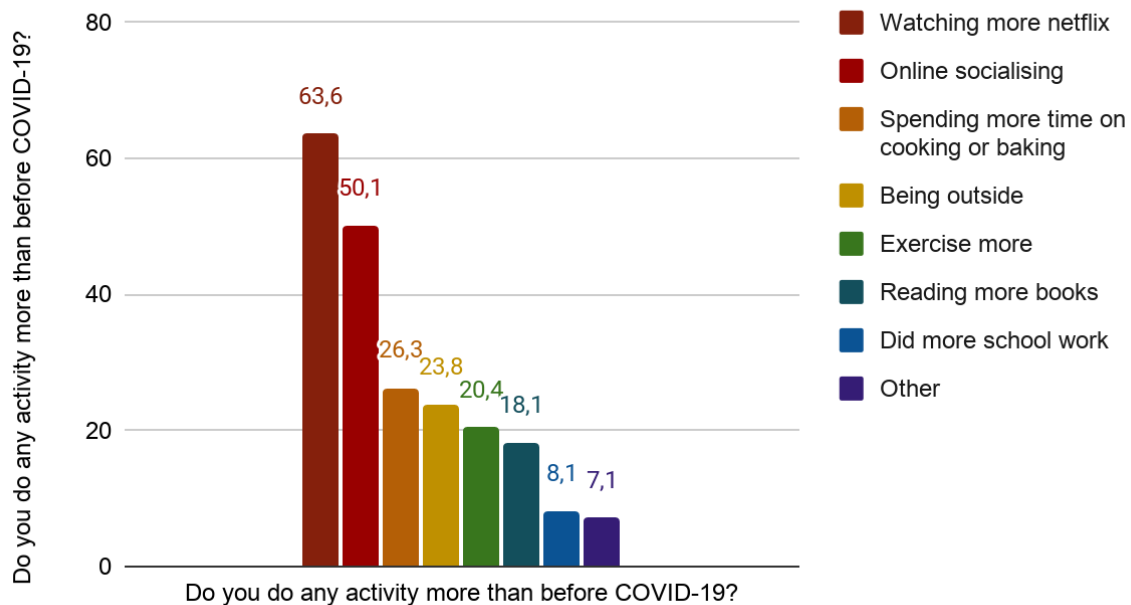
(Figure 13) “Happy” ranged from 1 being “unhappy” to 5 being “happy”: 3,6% said 1. 17,3% said 2, 38,7% said 3, 31,7% said 4, 8,7% said 5.

“Social” ranged from 1 being “not social” to 5 being “very social”. 13,5% said 1, 36,1% said 2, 28,5% said 3, 15,6% said 4, 6,4% said 5.

“Lonely” ranged from 1 being “lonely” to 5 being “not lonely”. 11,7% said 1, 23,1% said 2, 26% said 3, 22,7% said 4, 16,5% said 5.

“Motivated” ranged from 1 being “not motivated” and 5 being “highly motivated”. 13,6% said 1, 26,8% said 2, 34,7% said 3, 17,9% said 4, 7% said 5.

Do you do any activity more than before COVID-19?



(Figure 14) This question has multiple answers so that people could choose more than one. 63,6% said they watched more Netflix, 50,1% said they were online socializing, 26,3% said spending more time cooking or baking, 23,8% said being outside, 20,4% said exercising more, 18,1% said reading more books, 8,1 said they did more school work. 7,1% said “other” and chose to write their answers. Some of the responses were: Hobbies (like drawing, art, knitting, swimming), sleeping more, “no,” animal crossing, and watching streams.

3.2 Result from the survey, the question about friendship/relationship

One question in the survey was a question where the participants could write their answers. Some wrote long responses, and some did not say as much. Below is a summary based on the questions from this answer:

“Please write what you think about the relationships/ friendships you made with other players in the game?”

Some said their relationships in-game came as fast as they came. It is easy to make new friends, but they start playing with other people if one stops playing for a while. Others said that people were friendly, but they did not play with them several times, so they did not make long-lasting relationships. One identified as a girl said they do not speak that often because of the opposite gender being toxic and desperate. Another girl said she gets a lot of nasty messages and hate since she is not that good. Multiple answers said participants only played games with friends, family, or people they knew, but their existing relationships got more robust due to gaming. Others mentioned that they meet different people online; some are toxic, some want to talk all the time, in-game or not. This varies as well; some think it is nice to keep the conversation going outside of the game, others think this is too much to ask and that it is too much. Others said they do not use gaming to get friends or to meet new people but continue to say they do not see a difference in in-game friendships from offline relationships.

One parent said it brought them closer to their daughter. Others mentioned other relations in the family that have gotten stronger due to gaming and during the pandemic have helped them keep in contact.

Multiple people say they have solid relationships; they either want to invite them to their wedding or have done so. Others meet their spouses in-game and meet up later and get married. Their friendships have held them sane through the pandemic, which has helped them through the deaths of family members, sexual assault, and other trauma. Several also mentioned that they would not be here today if it were not because they started to play online games. Multiple people said they feel like people are more present during a conversation in-game rather than “offline” since it has become natural to have one’s phone up during an “offline” conversation, making the person focus less on the conversation. In-game conversations have people that are more present. They also say that since one cannot see the other person, they do not judge based on their looks. How long the friendships are varied, some have had their friendships for 16 years. They have learned from their friendship, how they had it in their country during the pandemic, learned about their culture, and said their relationships are educational. Some value them higher than their offline relationships. They feel like they are wanted; people want you to come on and play and talk with them.

Several people have said it has helped them be less lonely during the pandemic since they could not go outside. Some see it as an alternative to socializing because of the pandemic, others usually chat with other people, but they have done this in the pandemic. They say socializing with people through playing games has helped their physical health and helped them feel less alone.

One explained online friendships/making friends as something that he can compare to seeing and starting a conversation with a person on a train that reads a book you like. Sometimes it is rude, and the person does not like the fact that you interrupted them. Other times you can make great friends.

4.0 Analyze

More girls were answering the survey than boys. Most people came from Viken, and the majority played video games. .. The participants said gaming for them was social. Their top reason for gaming was “it is recreational/relaxing,” “to socialize with friends,” and “escape the real world.” Most people had a high preference for online multiplayer games. There is an increase in hours spent gaming after COVID-19 came. More people played over 20 hours a week after COVID-19 than before. There was also a higher number in “less than 5 hours a week” before COVID. The results from the survey show that there is more time spent on video games among Norwegian people after COVID-19 came. When asked if they could rate how happy, motivated, lonely and social they felt. Happy, lonely, motivated had the highest number in ranging it as a 3. Social peaked at 2. When people were asked what activity they did more of since COVID-19 started, they said: “watching more Netflix” as number one, “online socializing” as number two, and “spending more time on cooking or baking” as number three. When they were asked to elaborate on their relationships, they had all different answers; some do not have the most profound relationships and find them superficial; more people were saying that they were close and good friends than those who had superficial relationships. People have deep friendships through gaming, and more than one would not be here today if it had been for them joining online gaming. Several said their existing relationships have gotten more robust and more profound due to them gaming together. They felt less lonely and felt heard and seen when talking to others online. They said online

friendships do not judge based on looks and people are more present due to not having a phone in their hand like an offline conversation. (Appendix 4)

5.0 Limitations

This thesis bases its numbers on gamers logging their hours. There is sadly not a corporation with EA, Nintendo, Ubisoft, or any other gaming company. Therefore one cannot know the exact time spent in the game. In the research from Oxford that focuses on well-being, they collected user data from the gaming companies themselves and self-reported data on well-being, motivation, and more. They say that most of the research that's out there is based on self-reported data and that this has shown to be a poor proxy of actual behavior. Such associations will necessarily be biased. They continue to say that studies suggest that self-reported technology use can lead to overestimating and underestimating the association with well-being compared to directly logged technology use. They say that researchers need to obtain reliable and accurate play data, and to do so, they need to work together with industry partners. "Therefore, when researchers rely on self-reports of play behavior to test relations with mental health, measurement error will necessarily bias these relations." The research found a small positive parallel between gameplay and well-being. (Johannes et al. 2020)

6.0 Discussion

Having analyzed the data, both on loneliness and gaming hours. Below is the discussion where the results are compared against theory and prior research.

6.1 Loneliness

Several studies have researched how the Norwegian people's mental state is after covid-19 started. One is "Psykisk helse og dens sammenheng med sosiale distanseringstiltak, isolasjon og karantene knyttet til koronaviruset". Three researchers are leading the study. One of them is Asle Hoffart. Hoffart defines loneliness as "Loneliness can be defined as an unpleasant

state of feeling a mismatch between the desired amount and quality of social interaction and what is available to the person in the person's environment.”

Hoffart says that the pandemic has made people feel 46% bothered by loneliness (in the last two weeks). The number in 2017 was 16%. (Appendix 3)

In the research conducted for this thesis, results show that on a scale from one to five, 26% of participants answered 3, and 23,1% replied 2 when asked how lonely they felt weekly since covid-19 started. The participants answering the survey feel average or below when it comes to loneliness. (Appendix 4 “Survey”)

Based on the survey he conducted, Hoffart said there is a considerable increase in people feeling lonely. Hoffart continues and says that an excellent way to feel less lonely is to do new and positive things inside, go out and enjoy nature. It depends and varies; of course, all people are different, but doing something creative or productive is also a way to feel less lonely. Hoffart says that the most common is that you alleviate loneliness by making contact with others. However, then the contact must also be the way you want it, and there are many forms of interaction. (Appendix 3)

In the research conducted for this thesis, results show that when asked, *“Please write what you think about the relationships/ friendships you made with other players in the game?”* people said various things. It varies on how much people get out of other players, some play with different people from game to game. The majority said other players have become essential and inevitable to them, either as friends they talked to in-game, friends in-game as well as speak to offline, some invite their friends through gaming to their wedding.

Some have married a person they have met through gaming. A couple of people also said that gaming saved their lives and kept them sane through the pandemic. Some got through trauma, others sexual abuse, and some deaths in close relation to them because of playing online video games and talking to people close to them in-game. Several also said that they played games with their family members and got closer due to playing games together. (Appendix 5 “Friendship/relationship_survey”)

In the interview with Wang, he says, ”some just want to play games and do not make any close or long-lasting friendships. Others are just rude”, but he thinks that for most of them,

they have long-lasting relationships. Wang comments on the results and says it aligns with what he thought the answer would be. (Appendix 1 “Alf Inge Wang”)

Others did not have those good relationships with people in-game and thought they were superficial and were gone as fast as they came. One described online friendship in a good way: making friends as something that he can compare to seeing and starting a conversation with a person on a train that reads a book you like. Sometimes it is rude, and the person does not like the fact that you interrupted them. Other times you can make great friends.

(Appendix 5)

Numbers from a survey FHI did to find out more on loneliness, life quality, and mental health show that Oslo and Bergen’s residents had a notably higher level of loneliness than the other places. FHI points out that these cities are also cities with the most challenging covid-19 restrictions and that the survey showed a significant difference in living in the city or a rural place. FHI says the youngest are the ones that struggle the most. They also measured how lonely Norwegian people felt over time, having three control points. Students, young people, and those who lived alone were especially vulnerable. (FHI, 2020)

A research project on behalf of “medietilsynet”, done by Oslo Met students Henry Mainsah and Kamilla Knutsen Steinnes called “Dataspill og barn og unges forbrukerkompetanse”. This shows that kids aged 11-17 said gaming played a more significant impact on their lives during covid-19. For them, it is a platform to keep in touch with their friends, counteract loneliness, and include people. The children say they rarely play alone, and they either play with friends or with strangers. (Lassen, 2020)

The data from this thesis and previous research suggest that many Norwegian kids and young adults feel lonely. Many people have turned to video games or increased their hours to be social, deal with the pandemic, make friends, or maintain a friendship, which could affect them feeling less lonely.

6.2 Gaming hours

More people are gaming worldwide due to covid-19 (Statista, 2020). In a survey conducted for this thesis, numbers indicate that Norway is not an exception, 85,8% that took the survey

said they played games, and 52,8% said they identified as female. (Appendix 4) Wang says the gender result depends on where the survey was published.

Also, he has found in his research that women tend to underestimate how much time they spend on gaming. Men tend to overestimate and say that there is probably still some stigma on how people “see” a gamer. He says that if a man says he plays 100 hours a week in some environments, it is cool to brag about, but for women, it makes them an “outsider” if they say they play as many hours as the man. Wang says he does not think there is such a huge gap between women and men playing video games. (Appendix 1)

Gaming hours is something this thesis was researching: “how much do you game?”, the numbers are self-reported, and one can not be sure that these are 100% correct.

Nevertheless, looking at the survey done for this thesis, gaming numbers participants logged when asked how many hours they played before and after COVID-19. The results (shown in figure 12) without counting the “other” include serious gamers in varying hours of gameplay a week. The numbers show an increase in gaming hours a week after COVID-19. 41% Said they gamed over 20 hours a week during COVID-19. This makes 41% a serious gamer. during COVID-19. (Appendix 4)

Gaming hours and games based on the data are selling more copies because of COVID-19. Like “Call of duty: Warzone,” they drew in more than 15 million players online just three days after they made their game free to play on multiple consoles (Romano, 2020). “Animal Crossing: New Horizons” was launched on the 20th. March 2020 and sold 1.88 million physical copies in three days (they do not track digital sales, actual numbers are higher). (Byford, 2020)

In 2018 WHO classified gaming disorder as a behavior addiction; this means that they have trouble controlling the amount of time they spend on playing games and prioritize gaming over other activities and experience adverse effects from their gaming behaviors. (Leonard, 2018).

WHO says nothing about hours spent on gaming, and looking at the numbers from the survey, one can see that the numbers have increased. In the “other” category, 2,3% chose to

write a custom answer on both before covid and during the lockdown question. In the time spent on gaming during COVID-19, some of the answers were that they said they play 40, 50, 60, or up to more than 70 hours a week. One stated that they gamed 100 hours a week during the lockdown, another said 150 hours a week. One said up to 12+ hours a day. (Appendix 4)

Knutsen looks at these numbers and says that it is difficult to say these bad or good numbers. If someone lost their job due to COVID-19 and gaming is their hobby, it is not strange or worrying that someone would spend that many hours on a game. They socialize as they would do at work or school, they spend time on their hobby, and they meet friends and family as they would on a day without corona. Only now do they get all that thorough gaming. (Appendix 2 “Lone Ellingvåg Knutsen”)

Mark Griffiths, a professor, published a study in 2003 that showed that out of 11,000 players (of the online role-playing game Everquest), a quarter said their favorite part of the game was to connect with other players. Griffiths had a similar study on 912 players of a “massively multiplayer online role-playing game” where 45 different countries were represented. All of them played on average 22 hours a week. The study concluded that the online game environment was “highly socially interactive.” He said that ten percent of those in the survey ended up forming romantic relationships outside of the game. (Lufkin, 2020)

Dr. Linda Kaye that is a senior lecturer in psychology and specializes in cyberpsychology and co-authored study says that “Anything where you’re actively engaging, preferably with other people in a healthy way, is going to be the healthiest kind of screen time behavior” (Gossett, 2020)

A survey conducted for this thesis data shows that 33,5% said “5” when asked, “how social do you feel gaming is for you?”. When asked why they game, 61,2% said “to socialize with friends.” The majority had a high preference for online multiplayer games. (Appendix 4)

The data from this thesis and previous research suggest that people in Norway have increased their gaming hours for reasons like. To be social, stay in touch with friends, or make friends.

Data indicate that there is still a stigma around women who game and that gaming for men is seen as cool. Gaming hours both genders say they have based on the data from Wang indicates that men overestimate and women underestimate because of the stigma they meet. Where in reality, data suggests that there is a little gap between the genders. Kaye says screen time where one engages with other people is the healthy kind of screen time behavior.

7.0 Conclusion

The main research question: Can gaming reduce loneliness?

The data from this thesis and data from other researchers imply that loneliness during COVID-19 has increased. Data also show that weekly hours on gaming have increased (Appendix 4). Data from other researchers suggest the same increase in hours as well as more players. "Call of duty: Warzone" drew in more than 15 million players online just three days after they made their game free to play on multiple consoles (Romano, 2020)

Data suggest more people gamed and participants in this thesis survey expressed that gaming had helped them in many ways. Some said it is why they are here today, and several said it has helped them be less lonely during the pandemic. Participants said socializing with people through playing games has helped their physical health and helped them feel less alone. Several participants said they had deep, close and long relationships with their friends. The majority said it is a social arena and that they have spent even more time in the game since COVID-19 started.

Data from this thesis and previous research suggest that playing video games positively impacts our health. One can not conclude with anything from this thesis alone, but with further research where actual gaming numbers from the companies like EA can be used instead of self-reported as this thesis uses.

Other aspects that may positively impact one's health are a part of people's lives during covid-19. As Hoffart said, a good way to feel less lonely is to go out in nature, do something

creative/productive or do something positive inside. These factors have not been measured in the survey done for this thesis, and one can not conclude by saying how much gaming has helped decrease people feeling lonely.

This thesis survey and previous research suggest that gaming is growing, both in hours spent and money put in and that the pandemic is one of the leading causes of gaming's rapid growth.

7.1 Further research

This thesis can not conclude that there is a definite correlation between feeling less lonely and gaming. It is an interesting topic that needs further and more specific research to be able to conclude. The data from the further research could be used to understand better what affects loneliness, and to be able to do specific research will get better and more concluding results.

Research on this topic is sought; before this bachelor was handed in, NRK made contact, saying they wanted to use the data from this thesis survey since there was a lack of data on this topic. There is an advantage to doing further research because loneliness is increasing among the Norwegian people and looking at a possible positive effect and looking further into gaming as a social arena, which can benefit many people.

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9.0 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1 Alf Inge Wang

Jeg lurer først på i forhold til å kunne bruke navnet ditt, tittell eller utdanning, det kommer ann på hva jeg har lov til i oppgaven. Jeg kan sende deg hva som kommer itl å bli brukt og i hvilken kontekst også om du vil det?

- Ja, det skal være greit.

For det er flertallet damer som har svart enn mannfolk

- Ja for det er interessant.

Ja for jeg ble overrasket selv, men det er å ting vi blir lært eller ting vi tror. Å vi blir lært at, er det mange flere kvinnfolk som gamer tror du?

- Det er ikke store forskjeller, før er det den stigmaen som er at det er tenåringsgutter på gutterommet som sitter å spiller, å det er ikke sant. Det jeg har sett i min forskning er at endel har. om man spør endel jenter om de spiller dataspill så sier de “nei jeg gjør ikke det”, men spør jeg mer spesifikt om de spiller på mobilen, “ja det gjør jeg”, okey spiller du mye? “ja” svarer de. okey, da spiller du dataspill. ofte når jeg spør hvor mye de spiller så sier, så sier gutter har en tendens til å overestimere og sier 20-30 timer mens jenter sier veldig lavt. men i realiteten tror jeg ikke det er så store forskjeller, men det at det e nok litt stigma enda og si at man er gamer og jente selv om det er veldig mange som er det, så det bør ikke vær så stort. emn i realiteten så tror jeg ikke forskjellen er så stor. Men når jeg ser på jenter opp til en hvis alder og gutter så er det så er det stort sett ingen forskjeller. å så skjer det noe i 13, 14 års alderen, der det er en tendens til at det er færre jenter som spiller enn gutter. men samtidig så er det veldig mange, kanskje de ikke bruker like mye tid. men, ja jeg er ikke så veldig overrasket egentlig. Men det spørs på hvilke forum det er hentet, men det at det var overvekt av kvinnelige respondentene det va overraskende.

På spørsmplet hvor sosialt føler du gaming er for deg, spørsmålet så er det ganske lite svarprosent på 1-3 men på 4-5 så er det 33% ca på begge.

- Men det her er jo veldig høyt, for i hovedsak er det jo $\frac{2}{3}$ som sier at det er temmelig sosialt, det er jo litt... jeg tror det har vært et skifte og det har jeg hørt om også, at det

har blitt et skifta blant foreldre en stor undersøkelse som blå kors gjorde nå nettopp der foreldre ble spurt om gaming var sosialt eller ikke, jeg husker ikke når de kjørte denne undersøkelsen sist, men det har vært en kjempestor endring før så trodde jeg de sa det var 20% som sa gaming var bra sånn sosialt, men nå er det på sånn 40% eller nå sånt. Så jeg tror oppfattelsen av at gaming e sosialt, at mange skjønne det at online og det å ha vænna på nettet er viktig også i gaming har det blitt mye mer akseptert, det virke som om det e in alignment med det en ha sett før.

Spørsmål om vennskap og forhold

- Det stemmer jo veldig godt, jeg har jo en kamerat, det er lenge siden. men det va på 90 tallet, han spiller et tidlig "tekstbasert world of worldcraft" er den enkleste måten å si det på. så han dreiv å spilt med folk i usa og ble veldig godt kjent med ei dame i texas og når det ble sommerferie så bestemte han seg for å dra og besøke henne, når de kom tilbake så bestemte de seg for å gifte seg og fikk unge.. åja. Det kan skje dramatiske ting, så det å si at det her ikke har noe å si det e sånn som m alt annet sosial kontakt, forskjellig. Noen er ikke.. bare vil game og vil bare ha noen som kan hjelpe seg, noen er for eksempel bare drittsekker på online spilling. Men jeg tror for de aller fleste er det sterke bånd. Dette er "enlightenment" med sånn som jeg regner med svaret hadde vært.

Grunner for å game:

- Vet du forresten hvor stor andel av de som svarer som for eksempel er fra pokemon go forumet?

Det går det dessverre ikke an å se.

- Ja for det kan ha mye å si for svarene du har, fordi at jeg har jo gjort en stor forskningsstudie på pokemon go og gått gjennom stort sett all forskning på den og der ser jeg at det er hvertfall oppfattet veldig som både sosialt og positivt. og der også e huske ikke andelen med gutta og jenta, men den også tror jeg er ganske jevn altså. Så det kan å forklaring littegrann av profilen det har.

Jeg postet i animalsk for eksempel osv osv.

Hvilket type spill foretrekker du? Online, offline, osv 1025 har trykket 4 på online multiplayer og offline single player har 700 svar så det er jo.

- Det er litt interessant fordi i svarene offline og online viser at ja takk.. det er jo ole brumm da, ja takk begge deler. Det stemmer nok også, at ja. At folk spiller egentlig både online og offline litt som... Det er en god del eller en del som ikke gjør det i en så stor grad, men det er nok for de som spiller så er det nok begge deler.

Antall timer folk har spilt, før og etter corona. Jeg har tatt utgangspunkt i (den artikkelen der de definerer hva en gamer er, og antall timer som de deler opp i under 5t mellom 5-20 og over 20)

- Men det der har jeg sett på at, kanskje ikke stemmer. Å da kommer.. for jeg har sett undersøkelse på det der med spesielt kvinnelige spillere som ofte under estimerer, eh. Når jeg spurte de om.. «bare et par timer i uken». Men når jeg liksom spør fortell gjennom ei uke. Åj, å så blir det kanskje 6 eller 7 timer i uken allikevel. Det der, det kan faktisk hende at. Tallene her e.. tendensen her tror jeg blir riktig, men det er ikke sikkert de er helt nøyaktig fordi det kan være et fellestiltak som er ganske stort her da.

Nevner undersøkelsen i Oxford og nevner feilkilder om de ikke hadde sett tallene fra EA, og tendensen til at de fleste under eller overvelder. Den undersøkelsen viser at det er ca 2t i differanse. Å du sa at det var jenter som under melder og gutter over melder ut i fra din erfaring?

- Ja, ja. Og ofte er det slik at i riktig miljø så gutter synes det er litt kult å skryte av at de spiller 100t i uken, mens for jenter er det litt sånn stigmatisere så er du liksom «litt ut» så da vil man helst si «eh, jeg spiller egentlig ikke så mye» å så kanskje du spiller like mye som han gutten som sier at han spiller 100. Men det er bare at.. men det hvertfall det som er sett på spørreundersøkelsen, når jeg snakker med de så er det store forskjeller. Jeg teori praksis så er det ikke så store forskjeller. Men måten de uttrykker det på og det har noe med hvor akseptert det er å si at de spiller mye.

Tror du gaming har blitt mer akseptert no under pandemien? Å det kommer en del artikler som viser og skriver om at der de ser den største veksten er blant de over 40 som har startet å game.

- Ja, jeg tror. Det sier seg selv fordi at vi må jo vær veldig mye hjemme og inne selv om vi ikke må være inne hele tiden er det begrenset hva en kan finne på og jeg tror mange er lei av enten sosiale medier og se på filmer. Jeg tror at flere har oppdaget at gaming er nyttig og spesielt om de finner den sosiale biten i det. Så tror jeg det stemmer at det er en betydelig økning, og det ser en også i bransjen at en har solgt mye mere spill det

har aldri vært.. 2020 har vært det beste året for bransjen i mtp salg og rekord a mtp online spilling og alt mulig. Så det ja. Det har helt garantert ført til en økning og det tror jeg ikke er bare i. Jeg tror jeg er en økning i folk som har gamet mye før som kanskje har gamet mye mere men også mange mange flere nye som tatt opp gaming, så det stemmer nok.

Hvor er folk fra, folk gamer mere og at folk har det værre der det er strengere korona tiltak.

- Ja, det er interessant. Det virker som det er en god representasjon av de fleste og det er bra at det ikke, er veldig «bias» på enkelte plassa.

9.2 Appendix 2 Lone Ellingsvåg Knutsen

This is a summary of an interview with Lone Ellingsvåg Knutsen. The interview is 1 hour and 30 minutes. (File of the recording is in the delivered folder). This is a Semi structured interview

Loneliness

What you said about isolation for example. I experienced that that is a very natural reaction to the pandemic. The fact that we are being encouraged to keep to ourselves. To keep to yourself is to isolate and one can get the effects of isolation and feel loneliness. If they do feel lonely. If they do, it's natural. I will not say that this is something everyone feels, not everyone is the same. Some might feel the opposite, that this is something good. To be alone and choose to use what they want to use their time on.

Also, this pandemic has been going on for a long time, I would think the vast majority of people feel some sort of something they miss, something they have missed, and something they lack in their lives now. But I think we should be careful not to generalize the effect of the pandemic. Like everyone feels more lonely as an effect of the pandemic.

The term loneliness is something I think is so hard for individuals to define for every single one. I think that the way we talk about loneliness now is that since they don't have a job or is a students, and therefore I don't belong somewhere. I'm not social in everyday life, that's why I'm lonely. I'm spending my time alone. but loneliness, the feeling isn't about one being alone or not. one can feel alone when one is together with others. it's about maybe they don't feel understood, maybe they don't feel like they belong, that people don't see them in the right way. that they don't live their lives as they want, and that others don't recognize that. That's something that can be experienced as lonely.

Do you think gaming is a good alternative or a small substitute for social contact?

I think many can feel a feeling of control when they game, in relation to a pandemic that they don't have control over.

Talking about the stereotypical gamer. What people have said in the survey about relationships and what gaming has meant for them.

We sit and talk about how it's not necessarily an escape, for everyone. but that you get something there that the world lack or is not good at. we seek something we need, it's an existential need. and that gaming has become an arena to meet those needs, I think that a lot of people see that. I don't think we can say it's not a real arena, cause it's real people, that interact with each other. I think that people can see it and feel that is more real by many people. That I than authentic meeting with another person, because you peel back.. all that lack in everyday life, it variates but I can envision that people don't feel that they are seen or understood, that there are topics they can't talk about with others offline, and that they aren't seen as who they are because they just see a body for example. So if they could see something else in-game and think that how you look in-game says nothing about you. but I hear you and.. yeah, take away all the.. yeah. I think that is important.

What did people do during corona other than gaming?

I think some people got a lot of positive things as a result of quarantine and covid-19. Things they have missed in their lives before covid-19. Now they suddenly had the time to do. And the pressure is gone, one can choose what to do with the time they have when their home. They feel free because of this, I think there is a lot of good stories out there as well. I think it's sad if we get on a single track and think that covid-19 only has made people's health worse. Because of studies that have been done before. But I think there is a joker here, people have felt they are freer, to have options, had more time to do what they think is important. And that THAT has been a positive factor in their health as well, and that they felt better about themselves. I also think people have felt and thought about "what is the meaning of this life?". "What is important for me?" and what is valuable for me?". And that people have thought about that and found a good answer to that and used the time to think. And some have realized that something is missing in their lives, they don't have a purpose. And maybe gaming collects both. Those who get more of what they see as valuable and those who see that their lives lack something.

If the average of the norwegian people lets say has gained two kilos and the media and thers say our health has gotten worce. I think and people have gotten more freash air, maybe more mussles ergo gained waight. quality time with eatch other as well, bether relation with one and another, become happier because of it. Thats why I think its dificult to draw a conlution, and i think one should be care full to do so as well. and rather ask more questions and do further studies to look at all the different possibilityes.

Can we learn something from gamedesign and put that into the offline world?

People get a feeling of mastering things ingame and

Samtykke:

Du har mitt samtykke til å bruke det som har blitt sagt på dette opptaket til forskning di i bacheloroppgava.

9.3 Appendix 3 Asle Hoffart

Denne samtalen fant sted 13.04.21

Intervjuer-Kan jeg ta opptak av dette?

A- Ja, null problem

I- Kan jeg bruke hva som blir sagt her i denne samtalen i bacheloren min og at jeg har ditt samtykke til å gjøre det? Jeg sender også ut siteringene jeg kommer til å bruke så du kan gå gjennom de før oppgaven blir levert.

A - Ja, det er greit.

Intro, der det blir snakket om oppgaven.

Kan du si hvordan du definerer ensomhet?

a - Yeah. it is.. Ens behov for kontkt med andre ikke er tilfredsstilt.

I - Lort og enkelt.

I - Ja for noen kan være endomme når de er alene, og noen kan være ensomme når de er med andre.

A- Absolutt! Det har lite å si om du er med personer eller ikke. Det er en indre følelse.

Ensomhet kan bli definert som en ubehagelig tilstand av å føle et manglende samsvar mellom det ønskede mengde og kvalitet av sosialt samspill og det som er tilgjengelig for personen i personens miljø.

I - Kan du se at pandemien har en effekt på folk når det kommer til ensomhet? (Ut i fra undersøkelsen)

Det er en veldig økning. Vi hadde et spørsmål som brukes på statistisk sentralbyrå "hvor mye har du vært plaget av ensomhet?" å føle seg ensom er en ting men å være plaget av ensomhet er en annet. vi spurte ikke om dette i den første bølgen vi undersøkte, men i den andre da vi spurte i juni. da var det faktisk 46% som hadde opplevd at de var plaget av ensomhet i de forutgående 2 ukene.

Det vanlige tallet der, skriver statistisk sentralbyrå er 16% (2017). Så det er nær en tredobbling som er plaget av ensomhet. Å det var faktisk under sommeren og det var lettelse

av tiltakene og en kunne være mer sammen og dro på ferie og det var mer optimistisk stemning.

I min undersøkelse ser det ut til at de som bor der korona restriksjonene har vært hardest har vært mer ensomme, hva er dine tanker om det?

Vi har folk fra forskjellige deler av landet. Men vi har ikke knyttet/delt inn i strenghetstiltak, det har vært i den tid vi undersøkte felles for hele landet. Vi har ikke sett på den sammenhengen, men vi ser generelt at når tiltak er strengere så er det høyere nivå av angst, depresjon og ensomhet. men det er overaskende lite bedring fra mars i 2020 til juni/juni i 2020, det går ned noe men ikke så mye. Så det er fortsatt veldig mye ensomhet selv med gjennåpningen. Delvis gjennåpning var det jo.

Alt det negative som blir nevnt om helsen vår i media med vekt og depresjon. Tror du det er andre sider også. Da positive sider ved denne pandemien?

Apsolutt, så det er jo positive sider ved det også. vi har ikke sett så mye til der i vår undersøkelse, vi har ikke sett akkurat på det. Men det er jo, sånn det er med tid i samme familien og anledningen til det. og litt for mye tid sammen også, ahha, etterhvert. men det er jo forskjellig fra folk til folk. det det å ha anledning til å gjøre ting. Å vi fant ut at de hadde bedre psykisk helse de som gjorde nye positive ting hjemme, det gikk sammen med bedre psykisk helse med mindre angst, depresjon og ensomhet. å det å gå ut og frisk luft og oppsøke naturen var også sånt korulerte med bedre psykisk helse.

Tror du gaming kan ha en påvirkning på folk? Positivt og negativt

Ja, jeg tror at gaming, altså. det er det å ha noe å gjøre da. det er en slags for sosial kontakt det en har gjennom gaming. Så det med online kontakten er en form som ungdomen har vendt seg til, det er ikke godt å si.. en kan peke på mange ulemper ved det, det at en ikke ser den andre. det er noe annet å ha fysisk kontakt. å det er det vi er vandt til og det savner vi og trenger vi. å ha den direkte fysisk og det å se hverandre og se alle nyensene og få det til å gli samspillet. så er det det vi er treng på og trenger, er den direkte fysiske samspillet.

men så er det den gaming da online, som er en form for kontakt. og kanskje bedre en ingenting.

Det finnes ikke en kur for ensomhet, men kan du si enkelte ting som hjelper mot ensomhet?

Vil nok være forskjellig. Gjøre positive og nye ting hjemme. oppsøke naturen er veldig generelle ting. vi har ikke sett på noe spesielt i undersøkelsen, men det er jo avhengig av hvilket behov en har. det kan jo være at en kan komme over ensomhet av å gjøre ting alene eller engasjere seg i ting da, å gjøre noe kreativt eller produktivt og sånt er en måte for noen å komme over en ensomhetsfølelse for noen. men ensomheten er jo en direkte og et signal at man savner kontakt med andre. Det vanligste er at man letter ensomheten ved å få kontakt med andre. men da må også kontakten være sånn som man ønsker, det er jo mange former for samspill.

Å gaming er jo hva man ellers hadde fått, men så er det hva det står i veien for eventuelt? men online blir jo eninteraksjon, man får et gjensvar. Men det er også mangelfullt den kontakten en får over skjerm da, det er jo forskning på det å. at den erstatter jo ikke den direkte kontakten.

Ja, jeg hadde blandede svar der. noen syntes det ikke var like bra som offline kommunikasjon, mens andre sa den var bedre. da fordi man ikke kunne se hverandre og dermed ikke bli dømt. man hadde ikke telefonen som oppslukte en og dermed var mer tilstede da. Mange synes det er mye bedre å snakke gjennom spill.

Nettopp, det blir mer fokusert da, å så får du ikke.. når du slipper bilde av hverandre så blir det ikke noen dømming som d sier, og en blir ikke opptatt av hvordan man blir dømt eller framtrer så en blir kanskje mer aktiv og interesert i aktiviteten en har felles. dette er sentralt ved sosial angst. at en blir.. kommer over en sosial angst. har en sosial angster er en jo selvfokusert, at en er opptatt av hvordan en opptrer foran andre. å så er det sånn at når en kommer over over det å få den sosiale angsten er nettopp å få et nytt modus, et nytt perspektiv og glemmer seg selv og blir opptatt av det en holder på med og et en holder på med sammen med andre og innhodet av andre sier og den aktiviteten som en gjør sammen med andre. så gaming kan holde et fokus på aktiviteten.

er det noen funn som overrasker deg gjennom denne undersøkelsen som dere har gjort?

Det var det nivået egentlig, som var mest overraskende. Så høyt nivå

i- av ensomhet.

A- at det var så utberdt og at det var så.. men mest at det gikk ås lite ned der vi hadde den gjennåpningen. eller så er det de derre. har du lest den der boken til lars fredrik svendsen om ensomhetens filosofi?

I- nei

A- Han er filosof og den burde du skaffe deg. Han sier det i starten av boken “nesten alt det jeg trodde jeg viste om ensomhet, viste seg å ikke stemme. Jeg trodde at flere menn enn kvinner er ensome, og at de ensomme er mer alene enn andre. Den sterke økningen i antall aleneboende ville gi store utslag i antall ensomme, antok jeg. Jeg trodde at sosiale medier skapte mer ensomhet ved å fortrenge den vanlige sosialiteten. jeg trodde at ensomhet, til tross for at det er et subjektivt fenomen, var mer å forstå ut fra individers sosiale omgivelser enn ut fra deres individuelle disposisjoner. jeg trodde at de skandinaviske landene hadde hlye nivåer av ensomhet, og også at tallene var økende. Videre antok jeg at en slik økning var knyttet til den senmoderne individualismen, og at individualistiske samfunn har høyere ensomhetsnivåer enn de kollektivistiske. Jeg har aldri arbeidet med et tema hvor de antakelsene jeg fikk til arbeid med, er blitt gjort så til de grader til skamme.”

ikke noe av det som stemte.

Det vises i undersøkelsen vår også, at kvinner har et høyere ensomhetsnivå enn menn. Det er litt overraskende fordi de prater jo mer, ahhaa. Mere utadvente da.

Du snakket om kjønn, men er det en alder som skiller seg ut?

Det er faktisk, de høyeste er 18-30 og 31-45 de er høyere enn de fra 45 og oppover da. Så det er de yngre som har høyest ensomhetsnivå. Under nedstengingen i mars. 2020. Men så var det sånn at når det gjaldt alder så gikk ensomheten mest ned.. unge voksne hadde høyest grad av ensomhet, å så var det sånn at den gikk mest ned til juni, ved åpningen. Den gikk mest ned

med de unge, og det tolket vi som at de hadde mest å vinne. fordi de trenger mer sosialt, og de er vandt til et mer utadvend og sosialt liv. Det var de som bodde alene som hadde høyest ensomhetsnivå.

Hva tenker du no om hvordan det kommer til å være fremover? Tror du ensomheten går nedover eller?

Der er veldig spennende å finne ut av det. Vi skal gjøre masse målinger fremover med samme utvalget. så det.. Vi er usikker på det, men det har vært en tendens til en vis økning av ensomhet. ikke så mye, men en hvis samfunnsmessig liten tendens. Det er indre sirkler vi er redd skal slå seg ut og utvikle seg og føre til en bevaring av ensomhet, angst og depresjon utover tiltakene og denne pandemien.

9.4 Appendix 4 Survey

Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

This survey is being used as a collective on data from Norwegian people on their habits during the Pandemic. Data on gamers and non-gamers.

***Må fylles ut**

1. Do you live in Norway? *

Markér bare én oval.

Yes

No

2. Are you over 18 years old? *

Markér bare én oval.

Yes

No

Gaming during the pandemic

3. Consent *

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project prior to my participation.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.
- I understand that all data from this survey will be anonymous.
- I understand that the data from this survey will be used in a bachelor thesis.
- I understand that no other will have access to the raw data contained in this survey.

Markér bare én oval.

Yes

4. Age *

Markér bare én oval.

18-25

26-35

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Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

7. Do you play video games? *

Markér bare én oval.

- No *Hopp til spørsmål 24*
- Yes

Gamers

8. How social do you feel gaming is for you? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not social	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very social

9. Pick your top three reasons for gaming *

Merk av for alt som passer

- To socialise with my friends
- It's recreational / relaxing
- Meet new people
- Stay in touch with friends / family
- Combat boredom / fill time
- Escape the real world
- Substitute for unavailable entertainment
- To give me a sense of purpose/ motivation

Andre: _____

10. What is your preference for offline single-player games? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Low preference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	High preference

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Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

11. What is your preference for online multiplayer games? *

Markér bare én oval.

1 2 3 4

Low preference High preference

12. What is your preference for online single-player games? *

Markér bare én oval.

1 2 3 4

Low preference High preference

13. What are your top three types of communication tools to use during playing games? *

Merk av for alt som passer

- Discord
- Zoom
- Houseparty
- In game chat
- Team speak
- Mumble
- Ventrilo
- Skype
- Console game chat
- FaceTime

Andre: _____

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Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

14. Please write what you think about the relationships/ friendships you made with other players in the game *

15. How many hours would you say you played games before COVID-19? *

Markér bare én oval.

- 0 Hours a week
- Less than 5 hours a week
- Between 5-20 hours a week
- Over 20 hours a week
- Andre: _____

16. How many hours of playing games during COVID-19? *

Markér bare én oval.

- Less than 5 hours a week
- Between 5-20 hours a week
- More than 20 hours a week
- Andre: _____

17. Since Covid began, how happy would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unhappy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Happy

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Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

18. Since Covid began how social would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not social	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very social

19. Since Covid began how lonely would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Lonely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not lonely

20. Since Covid began how motivated would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not motivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Highly motivated

21. How many weekly social interactions do you have except gaming? *

Markér bare én oval.

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 5 and above
- Andre: _____

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Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

22. Explain how are you social outside of playing video games? *

23. Do you do any activity more now than before Covid? Like *

Merk av for alt som passer

- Watching more Netflix
- Exercising more
- Reading more books
- Spending more time on cooking or baking
- Being outside
- Online socialising
- Did more school work

Andre: _____

Don't play video games

24. How are you social during these times? *

Merk av for alt som passer

- Online social networking
- Online video conferencing
- Social distance meetings
- Phone calls

Andre: _____

22/05/2021

Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

25. How would you say your mood has been since covid-19 and the lockdown started? *

Merk av for alt som passer

- Better, I like the lockdown, and having a small group of people I can meet
- Worse, my mood has dropped considerably
- A lot more ups and downs
- I'm a lot more bored now than before
- I feel lonely
- I feel lonely even though I talk to my friends through social media
- Stressed, there is way too much pressure

Andre: _____

26. What do you do more during the COVID-19 lockdown? *

Merk av for alt som passer

- Watch more Netflix
- Exercising more
- Reading more books
- Spending more time on cooking and baking
- Being outside
- Online socialising
- Did more school work

Andre: _____

27. Since Covid started how lonely would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Lonely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Not lonely

22/05/2021

Norwegians and their habits during covid-19

28. Since covid started how happy would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unhappy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Happy

29. Since covid started how motivated would you say you are on a weekly basis? *

Markér bare én oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not motivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Highly motivated

Dette innholdet er ikke laget eller godkjent av Google.

Google Skjemaer

9.5 Appendix 5 Friendship/relationship_survey

Friendships/relationships (3000)

“I feel some of them are more real than what I’ve gotten from people in real life. We have battled immensely and been through hell together so a special bond is forged. You don’t have the physical pressure, the alcohol pressure or the pressure of being someone you are not. You are just a bunch of gamers bonding over what you love and then sometimes you’ve had a bad day and you sit down to play with your friend from India and he hears you are bummed out and you get to tell him what’s going on without any pressure. I think it might be something with the Norwegian mentality that turns me to games and bonding with foreigners too?”

“I’ve met some really good friends while playing online, and it helps during this situation a lot. To feel connected with people from all around the world is really fun and interesting”

“Jeg har blitt kjent med en liten gruppe jenter, og vi snakker nå sammen hver eneste dag selv om vi spiller eller ikke. Det har gitt meg en **flukt fra hverdagen** som permittert, og også nå når jeg har mistet jobben min. Vi har spillet til felles, selv om vi er helt ulike mennesker-men har gjennom spillet også blitt kjent på et dypere plan. Disse jentene har vært en stor og viktig del av livet mitt det siste året, og vi gleder oss til det er akseptabelt i samfunnet å kunne reise rundt slik at vi kan møtes i RL.”

“It's friendships that will last a lifetime”

“I love the people that experience the same struggles as me and that we can talk about it, **it has made the pandemic easier**”

“During lockdown it gave me and my daughter something in common to interact positively about.”

“Mostly playing with family. Helps us keep in touch during covid.”

“Get a closer relationship to my nephews through gaming”

“they are the best kind. cus we cant see etchother so **we get to know etchoter without jugement**”

“Met the best people in my life in online games. We have travelled to visit each other in different countries, met my previous boyfriend in an online game. Online is how I have socialised with people for a long time, due to being lonely and not knowing people irl”

“I have a friend which I met in a game in 2009 (I was 9years old at the time) and today in 2021 we are still playing together 😊 she is from the Netherlands so we probably would never have met if it wasnt for gaming. She is one of my closest friends and helped me through a really rough patch in life after I survived a sexual assault. Gaming has been my therapy and helping me trust other people again”

“I met my boyfriend through gaming and it has helped us to manage a long distance relationship through the pandemic. I have also made a lot of very good friends and the ability to be social with them online through games ensure I never feel lonely even though I am bound to stay at home alone for long periods of time. **Gaming is invaluable for my mental health.**”

“They've been very rewarding. One of my experiences was that I got to go to Ireland and get free food and lodgings for working at a farm, just because I made a friendship in some text based pirate game (Rule the Seas). Pretty cool, if you ask me!”

“Good. One did move from Belgium to Norway thanks to gaming”

“The friends I've made from gaming are all amazing. They give me good times, we comfort each other in bad times, we teach each other about different cultures. Simply indescribable friendships.”

“I’ve gained more online friends, even school related through gaming. We have a weekly schedule for the weekends to play games together, and we sit for hours chatting and having fun. **I actually feel like I’m being more social than ever. Life would honestly be boring without them, I look forward to our weekly gaming session.** Bonus is that I’ve gotten to know more people from my local area as well as international.”

“Much more interesting because of the common interest of gaming. Some are more deep and closer relations than what i have with irl friends”

“Its great, i have friends thru gaming in other countries who will be in my wedding if its possible with the”

“I have gained some great friends that have an active group chat almost daily, It is a lovely bunch that I would consider even inviting to my wedding when I "Grow up"

“I play with my housemates and it’s brought a lot of laughter and fun during our third lockdown here in england”

“They are good, and sometimes better than physical relationships. Because in todays world we use our phones alot when bein together. But when gaming we talk a lot compared to when we are together physical.”

“Jeg har møtt mange nye folk gjennom å spille. Jeg har alltid spilt, men i år har jeg spilt ekstra mye, naturlig nok. Det har ført til at jeg har fått meg mange gode venner som jeg faktisk vil si er en av mine nærmere venner. Folk jeg når som helst kan skrive til og de vil mest sannsynlig svare innen kort tid, og så kan vi spille sammen og ha det veldig gøy. **De nye vennskapene jeg har fått gjennom spill i 2020 har definitivt vært med på å ikke gjøre meg mentalt gal mens vi har blitt bedt om å holde oss hjemme i et år nå”**

“Now after covid it means everything”

“Educational, rewarding in times of loneliness and solitude”

“It's great! I have gotten to know som many people I never would have talked to without these games in common. **It also helps feeling less lonely when I can't leave my house**”

“It's amazing how many friends I've got through playing video games, they've become really close and I don't think I would be here today if I never started to play online games.”

“I feel that the friends i have online are as good as i have irl. **Easier to open up and be yourself online tho**”

“Utrolig hvor mye en samtale med en fremmed fra andre siden av verden kan bety. Selv om vedkommende er fra en helt annen plass, kan vi kjenne oss igjen i de samme tingene. Er noe med det å få utløp for tanker, og kunne reflektere med fremmede. Når det kommer til venner jeg har fra før, er det mer den alminnelige sosialiseringen jeg setter pris på. Det er ikke det samme å sitte i hvert vårt rom foran hver vår skjerm, men i det minste kan vi prate og underholde hverandre.”

“I have sosial anexity and play with others help me.”

“Some of the friendships I've made online is as real as it gets. Some people I have known and kept in touch with for 16 years which is basicly half my life and they are from South Africa. Others I've known for 5-8 years and they came all the way from England, Sweden, Netherlands and Scotland to celebrate my birthday in Norway 2 years ago. Online relationship are gold because you share the same interests and you have daily dialog with them.”

“It have saved me from boreddom and being way to depressed”

“One of the best type of friendships you can get, there will always be bad ones of course, but usually good ones.”

“It's not the same as meeting in person but it helps with the isolation of the pandemic”

“It's fun and makes u forget about the world for a while. **I don't feel so lonely aswell.**”

“They are my chosen family. I speak with them every damn day, and has really helped me with my loneliness, as I live in Denmark currently, and I'm on sick leave from my job, due to a physical illness that I've recently gotten”

“Det er en fin måte å kommunisere på i denne pandemien vi står i. Alternativ sosialisering!”

“It has made a big impact on who I am today, my views on cultures and how others treat each other.”

“Since we are not able to meet people nowadays, playing and talking with others is kinda good for my physical health, I mean, so i feel that i am not all alone”

"It's as real as any hobby or life experience friends you gather out in 'the real world'. We shared a hobby, and we became friends through it. It's like talking to a person on the train when you see he/she is reading a book you like.

Sometimes, if you're not doing it right, it's kinda rude and the person you're talking to hate you for ruining their traversal through another world but sometimes you can make great friends."

"Well, i got irl friends all over the world because of gaming. Several of them has visited me and my husband here in Norway. Last year (2020) I got a parcel with a huge christmasgift from the mum of one of my gaming friends. That's tells me something of how deep these friendships go.

At our wedding 8 years ago, a friend we met online gaming was my husbands best man. What I'm trying to say is that I think that some of my best friends come from gaming, and I love it."

“Man får en følelse av at man er ønsket, man logger på og det er alltid noen såm venter på deg”

“Spennende å kunne snakke og chatte med andre folk hvor man har en felles interesse/noe å snakke om, **annet enn Covid-19**”

“The relationships ive gained through gaming is probably the most healthy relationships I’ve countered. Because of gaming I’ve gotten more close with my irl friends that I play with, and I’ve met the kindest souls over discord. We all help each other out, and play lots of different games because we have different preferences. **After COVID I’ve actually been quite happy, and I’m less lonely because I’m always talking with someone**”

“Very tight bond. Able to share though times like depression, break ups etc. And get advices, understanding and help. “

“It’s a good way to find friends that likes the same thing as you. And with this pandemic going on we keep each other’s company without being close. and I’m so happy I’ve met these people because they listen to me and my problems and we help each other.”

“I have gotten friends for life by playing videogames. People i feel i can talk to about almost everything. I have learned alot about New cultures and ways of living by getting to know People from all over the world. And the thing i love about meeting People on games and such is that there is really no racism, ethnic hate etc.. Everone is welcome in a gaming enviornment, as it should be every where really.”

“Staying as strong or even closer during 2020”

“By gaming i have mase many friendships Even better than they were before, but i have also gained a lot more friends. Gaming is a very big part of my life. Gaming helps me when i’m feeling down and when i’m bored, but gaming is also there to have fun and stay in contact with my friend. I think society has but a negative shadow over gaming, but i have learned alot by gaming, gaming help me with school, or at least english. I had the best grade in english without really studying. Gaming companies deserves a big thank you”

“Jeg tror vennskap online, er undervurdert. Jeg tror at enkelte ikke forstår hvor gode venner en kan bli, selv om det bare er på nett. (Eksempelvis han som døde, hvor foreldrene trudde han ikke hadde venner, men i begravelsen kom det 'online venner' fra over hele verden.)

“During Covid-19, I have not established new relationships with other people that play the same videogames as me. What I have done, on the other hand, is learned how to enjoy solitude and stillness. This I feel, have been helped by playing videogames”

“Jeg kjører i et sim-racing team da er det viktig å holde kontakten med de andre i teamet”

“Have no special thoughts, **but it's been handy in these corona-times!**”

“I think those relationships has held me mentally stable and kept me going. Without gaming and the social aspect of it I would've felt quite lonely.”

“I hope they can last after the Covid is over, i will atleast stay in touch with them as much as possible. Ive made some good friends online during this year.”

“Its great, I play in a team of 5, I have never met them, but **if i didnt have them to talk to almost everyday i would be alot more lonely**”

“Gaming is a good way to socialize, and **those online friendships is golden when ur playing, to both fight boredom and loneliness**”

“I think it's very nice. I laugh alot during the games and it makes me feel less lonley. I feel people still cares about me and wants me to be happy.”

“Honestly if it weren't for gaming this last year I honestly dont think I would be here today. Covid proved to me that being lonley isnt easy and going in with the mindset that I can atleast to pretend to hang with my friends in games if I can't meet them IRL. And that really helped alot for my mental health!”

“Helpful in life in general. Without Pokémon GO social network I'd probably be either 6 feet under due to the loss of my grandparents within the last 3 years, or extremely depressed and alone at home”

“I have made several friendships through gaming and it also severely helps me get through tough times and the ongoing pandemic. I would say some of my closest friends are the ones I play games with.”

“I think it’s a very special game that me and my friends have, because we lived in a refugee camp together and after everyone splitting up and go to different countries, we haven’t been able to communicate at all. But after I found out they all play online I was able to get in touch with my friends who I haven’t talked to in years. That moment when we talked in PlayStation party after many year was so special and emotional for me.”

“Helpful when things seems dark”

“Relationships made during gaming is special, cause you often socialize online when your in a good mood, and the escape is close if you wanna be alone etc...”

“Fått mange nye venner verden rundt etter corona kom”

More neutral responses or negative

“I feel like you can lose them as fast as you gain them. It's easy to get new friends, but if you stop playing for a while you can just as easily lose them. You can lose them easily because they find new people to play with etc”

“Blitt kjent med nye folk, vennskap som oftest baseres kun på videospillet. Er ikke så glad i å snakke i voicechat. Som jente møter jeg som oftest bare gutter som er toxic eller desperat.”

“They usually don't last :/ So not very good”

“I have only made one friend through gaming. I have not spoken to her for about 6 months, as she quit playing. But we had a good time together and I miss her”

“Hat stor mulighet til å fått et sterkt bånd med en vennegruppe, samtidig som flere vennskap har gått tapt når noen har slutta å spille”

“They are short-lived, but good in the moment”

“I keep em at a distance. Dont feel like online gaming-friendships are the ones to count on. And i usually also play with currently existing friends, and not ones ive only met online.”

“Depends, some games are higly toxic, others are nice”

“Good, many of them dosent last for that long”

“I have met some new onei, but im mostly playing games with friends top catch up with them under the pandemic”

“I don't feel like I really "know" the people I've met via online gaming, I'm more of a "have fun with my real life friends" kind of gamer. When it comes to my real life friends who I also play games with, I feel like we have a stronger relationship because of our shared love for gaming.”

“I don't use games as a way to gain relationships. In the general sense; I see no significant difference in relationships made in-game vs out-of-game.”

“It's purely game based, so not on a deep level, but still enough to give me a sense of existence if that makes sense?”

“Som jente får jeg en del ekle meldinger og noe hat siden jeg ikke er så flink”

How are you social outside of video games?

People are social with people they live with, like family and friends. Or through apps like messenger, Instagram, facetime. Others are social at work or when they do everyday chores like at the store, picking up their kids in kindergarten or through school, or hobbies. Others have dogs they walk. Or some didn't have any social interactions outside of gaming.

"Norway is a country that makes any kind of socializing hard, so I would t say I am social outside gaming.”

“Veldig lite sosial, gaming har hjulpet mye.”