Online console game club as a resource a case study of the perceived meaning of club membership

Juho Kuukka, Satu Uusiautti and Kaarina Määttä

Department of Education, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

ABSTRACT
What kind of community an online console game club is? Console game playing has often been viewed as having only negative influence on young people’s lives. In this research, a group of gamers (N = 8) was investigated. They were young adults who played the National Hockey League (NHL) console game regularly. The qualitative case study focused on finding out what made the club meaningful in the club members’ opinions and how they describe activities and interaction in the club. The study showed that the console game club had multiple positive effects in the members’ lives, which were analysed as emotional, social, cognitive, and functional resources. The study suggests that online game networks could provide new ideas on how to arrange, for example, online education in way that the young adults could find motivating and meaningful to attend.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 5 December 2018
Accepted 16 December 2018

KEYWORDS
Online console game; case study; social interaction; player experience

Introduction

Young people talk about playing console games quite often. While earlier they played outside with friends or inside with their parents, siblings, or grandparents card games and board games, today there are new types of games children and youth prefer. Whichever game is in question, interaction with others is usually at the core of the activity (see e.g. Eklund, 2015).

Since various computer and console games have become a major part of many young people’s lives, a concern over their social relationships has also risen (Burns & Gomolińska, 2000). The question is whether this kind of playing decreases or even endangers their social development. In addition, the decrease in physical exercise due to increased console game playing is a topical concern (Mhurchu et al., 2008).

Fox, Gilbert, and Tang (2018) found three categories of online playing that were frustrating play, performance as motivator, and social interaction. However, social interaction often appeared negative, almost harassment, and therefore, the researchers suggested that it is important to understand game players’ everyday experiences within their natural gaming contexts more profoundly (Fox et al., 2018).

Markets are filled with various types of games that people may play in the virtual world. As the internet connections have become faster and console games more developed, today it is possible to play with others even if players were located in different parts of the world. The players are connected and can interact with each other. Therefore, plenty of social activity and interaction is involved in console game clubs. In this research, the interest was focused on how does console game playing appear in the light of communality, well-being and interaction between the club members.
This was a case study in which one group of console gamers were the research target. They were playing a National Hockey League (NHL) console game which is based on the North-American ice hockey league called National Hockey League (NHL). This game is a virtual ice hockey game that follows the same rules and contents as a real ice hockey game does. In September every year, EA Sports publishes a new NHL console game that corresponds with the current rules of the game that the actual league follows. The online game can also be updated promptly as the players or rules in the league change during a season. The game progresses in the same way as the actual league does. For example, if someone gets injured in the real league, the corresponding player in the console game will be injured, too. Online games include the opportunity to be in real time contact with other players so that the players may discuss during the games through their microphones and other equipment.

In this research, a group of 26–28-year-old young adults’ perceptions of their club membership was studied. They have been playing NHL game with PlayStation since 2014. Playing happens online with members located across Finland. The club as a research target was chosen because the purpose was to investigate what kind of interaction and activities were perceived meaningful among the members.

Theoretical background

Communities and memberships

A community means a group of members who, for example, share similar values or activities (Raina & Haapaniemi, 2007). Communality appears through the interaction between members and a shared understanding of the joint interest of the club. The concepts of community and communality are often viewed together, but they are not the same thing: a community does not require the sense of communality in order to act efficiently (Heinonen, 2008). While a community is a concrete place in the real or virtual world, communality is built on social relationships and based on member perceptions and experiences (Lo, Wang, & Fang, 2005; Waldo, 2008). A community can be a group of few or many people. Regardless of size, a shared goal is usually the combining factor of a community in addition to certain basic rules to which the members engage (Ahonen & Majjonen, 2013).

Actually, the concepts of a community and communality are topical. Lack of communality is a serious threat to human well-being (Seligman, 2011), whereas communality helps solve social problems such as bullying at school or at workplaces (Paasivaara & Nikkilä, 2010). According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), communality can be defined in four elements. The first criteria is membership which means that the person has the feeling of belonging to the group or has the experience of sharing with others. The second criteria is the ability to influence. The individual and community are in interaction so that the individual has influence on the group and the group influences the individual. The third criteria is that the individual member feels the membership rewarding. The last, fourth criteria is the connection to other members of the group. The sense of connection requires shared past or similar past with other (see also McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Although McMillan’s thoughts hark back to 1980s, the basic idea of communality can be defined based on this definition. However, what a community is in people’s minds, has changed abundantly during the past decades especially because of the technological development. The new technology has led to the emergence of various communities such as online communities (Paasivaara & Nikkilä, 2010). The types of communities exist in the internet (e.g. Facebook, Instagram).

Online communities and well-being

Coleman (1988) highlights the importance of communality to well-being, which is a relevant perspective to the study at hand, too. According to Coleman, the more integrated the activities are, the more the group membership promotes well-being. Trust in each other lays a positive foundation for interaction and enhances the sense of communality and thus well-being (see also
Communities also have jointly negotiated rules that prevail in online communities as well, but tied with the game rules (Jakobsson, 2007).

Games like the online console game can be defined as pervasive because they expand to various areas of human well-being and lives (e.g. Jegers, 2009). At the core, it is the player experience that determines whether the game is perceived meaningful or not (see e.g. Ermi & Mäyrä, 2005).

Mäyrä (2007) has pointed out in his research that there are multiple contextual layers that surround and underlie every encounter with digital games: playing is more than just random playing. Console game playing has been noted to be an important meeting point to various people (Voida & Greenberg, 2008). According to Voida and Greenberg (Voida & Greenberg, 2008), the social dimension of online playing is significant and is a motivating factor of playing as well (see also Eklund, 2015). According to Lenhart et al. (2008), playing can even increase civic engagement in teens.

From the viewpoint of well-being, Barlett, Anderson, and Swing (2009) reviewed the confirmed, suspected, and speculative effects of video games (see also Chumbley & Griffiths, 2006). The confirmed ones have been validated by empirical research whereas suspected and speculative effects are found in various research with participants or research methods that may not provide generalizable information. Negative outcomes include aggressive feelings, thoughts or behaviour, physiological arousal, and desensitization. Video games have also positive effects that are, for example, types of learning.

Alanko (2015) reported a research by PlayStation on social dimensions of playing. The research also focused on how video games may connect players. According to the findings, the players considered it important to be able to play the game online regardless of the distance between player friends. However, they also appreciated game playing opportunities that made it possible to play together in physically same place. Nevala (2017) investigated the meaning of playing video games in the different phases of life. Based on her findings, online playing was connected with significant experiences of communality and strong sense of social interaction.

Video and online games have also negative effects on well-being, such as addictions (e.g. Griffiths, 2010; Kuss, Louws, & Wiers, 2012; Ng & Wiemer-Hastings, 2005; Wan & Chiou, 2006). However, addiction is not so much dependent on the addictive features of the game itself but addiction may relate to unhealthy coping strategies (one can escape reality by playing excessively) or to general time-management problems (Wood, 2008). In addition, new innovations to increase physical exercise through games have gained increasing attention (e.g. Rizzo, Lange, Suma, & Bolas, 2011).

Research on console game playing has usually focused on large quantitative data (Ivory, 2013). The purpose has been to do study, for example, the connection between violence in games and children’s anxiety symptoms (Chumbley & Griffiths, 2006). However, research on smaller player clubs and individual experiences have been scarce. When the interest is to find out how the club works, how does it function and what kinds of activities do the members share, it is reasonable to select a case like the one in this research. The interest is in online playing and membership in a group of players. Moreover, game research on NHL games specifically is rare.

**Method**

The purpose of this research was to analyse the group activities in an online console game club and the meanings it has for the members of the club. What kind of communality can be found in online console game club? This research was set one main research question with three specifying questions:

- How do the online console game club members describe the meaning of club membership?

  1. How has the membership effected their lives?
  2. How does the membership support their well-being?
  3. What is the quality of cohesiveness of the club according to their perceptions?
This was a qualitative case study because the purpose was to produce specific information and description of a singular case (Saarela-Kinnunen & Eskola, 2010). In research like this, the case can be selected based on practical or theoretical points of interests. Therefore, case research represents a research strategy that focuses on a carefully defined phenomenon or research target (Eriksson & Koistinen, 2014). Qualitative research, in general, does not aim at generalizable information but interpretations of the reality as the perceived from a select point of view (Ronkainen, Pehkonen, Linnblom-Ylänne, & Paavilainen, 2011).

An online console game club of eight persons aged 26–28 represents the case in this research. Seven of them are men and one non-binary person. They live across Finland hundreds of miles apart from each other. The starting point of the club was to play console games together. But it seemed that along with time, various communal and social features started to be increasingly involved, such as events and different means of communication. The club was established in 2014.

An online questionnaire was chosen as the research method in this study. The questionnaire comprised of 10 open-ended questions that were designed to provide research participants a chance to describe their club experiences in their own words. The benefits of open-ended questions were considered crucial here because the research topic was somewhat less explored and thus, research participants’ answers could include surprising elements (Allison, Okun, & Dutridge, 2002; Balistreri, McClelland, Poe, & Schulze, 2001; Hoffmann, 2007).

Structured questions would have directed their thoughts and might have been too narrowly formed as they would have been based on the researchers’ own preconceptions of online game clubs. The questions focused on themes such as the participants’ own description of what the console game club is about and what its purpose is; the perceived importance and meaning of the club; and the participants’ wish to stay as a member and its possible well-being related effects. The questionnaire was designed into online format with Google Forms.

The research participants were recruited by sending them an email containing basic information about the research and a link to the questionnaire. The participants were aware of that the research focused on their online game club only. This had a significant influence on the data collection: while the recruitment letter was sent to participants at the beginning of October 2018, all returned their answers by 10 October.

The data analysis followed the principles of qualitative content analysis (e.g. Mayring, 2000). The analysis began with reading the data several times, making notes, comparing, and making initial interpretations. The content analysis was a process that started with reducing, followed by clustering and abstracting. First, analysis units, that could be words or sentences, were searched. Those units that resemble each other could be categorized into clubs. After that the analysis took the more abstract level of defining general concepts and themes. Table 1 illustrates how the analysis progressed from analysis units towards more abstract categorizations.

The research questions led the analysis. Since the data were obtained via online questionnaire that included open-ended questions, the analysis could start right after data collection without

| Original expression | Reduced expression | Clustering | Abstract category |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| “During the season, we organize various refreshing events.” | Example of events | Experiences of shared activities | Communality |
| “The most memorable experience was the first boat trip of our [nick name] league.” | Example of trips together | Positive experiences of spending time together |
| “When our club gets together we always have fun.” | Example of same-mindedness | Cohesiveness |
| “It’s the first club to ask a friend, e.g., to go to a concert.” | Example of the sense of belonging to a club |
| “I created a WhatsApp group for our [nick name] league, which we use on a daily basis.” | Example of staying in contact | |

Table 1. An example of analysis.
transcribing it. Google Forms also provided various ways of grouping data (e.g. by respondents, by questions, etc.). All the participant was given a random code (Player1…Player8) when the data were anonymized. These codes are used in the Results section, too, when introducing data excerpts.

In case studies, the reliability must be evaluated based on the careful description of data collection, the introduction of findings, and the accuracy of interpretations (Creswell, 2009). In this research, Author 1 knew this console game club beforehand, which may have influenced on the research. The participants may have written what they think that the researchers want to hear. On the other hand, Author 1’s familiarity with the club made it easier to make correct interpretations as he knew the world of online console games. Researcher triangulation (see e.g. Wray, Markovic, & Manderson, 2007) ensured that possible prejudices or preconceptions of the club did not influence on the analysis or reporting of findings. In all, the questionnaire data itself appeared rich and multi-dimensional, and it was considered to provide a good understanding about the meaning the online console game club provided to its members. When it came to data collection, sending the request online enabled the participants answer freely whenever they found it suitable and therefore, the researchers did not influence on the answering event directly. The details in the data assured the researchers that the actual members of the club had, indeed, taken the questionnaire themselves, and thus, there was no doubt about the quality of the data.

Results

Experiences of the online console game club membership

The participants were asked to describe their experiences of what it was like to be a member of this NHL console game club. According to their answers, it meant first and foremost the sense of communality. They mentioned the ‘we’ spirit that was based on alike persons who found it easy to act together. Communality was also mentioned when describing the most memorable or important experiences that often were the shared events of the league. Communality was described for example as follows:

It is not just the question of console game playing but shared events of a coherent club and constantly being in contact in the social media (WhatsApp and Snapchat). (Player2)

The like-mindedness of the league members is important to me. Even though the members are, of course, different individuals with their own opinions, the club is deliberately built of people who get along well. (Player7)

Even if at the beginning competing and playing were the foundation on which the league was built, these elements make just a part of the essence of the league nowadays. The league is a club where we discuss the hot news of the day, share experiences and opinions, have epic weekend trips, and ask advice when in the middle of rock and a hard place. (Player6)

The questionnaire consisted a question of whether the league is about something else than just playing. One of the members stated it clearly in one sentence:

Communality is absolutely the most important thing in the league, not the playing itself. (Player4)

It seemed that after starting the club, the purpose of playing a console game had made way to communality of a club that appeared as a group of friends and all shared activities. The NHL game served as a platform to build events and social media connections that turned the club into a solid community.

Another significant feature of the club membership was the members becoming actual friends. Although the members referred strongly to communality and group spirit, they also mentioned friendships separately. The research participants highlighted that being a member of the online console game club meant that they could keep in touch with each other regardless of where they resided in Finland.

In my opinion, the leagues has a very important role in maintenance of friendships. (Player4)

The league is an important channel of getting to see your friends. (Player2)
Communality does not always mean that people within the community are friends. For example, a sports team may have communality and work well together even though everyone is not friends with each other. However, the online console game club appread a community that enhanced the development and maintenance of friendships. This was much appreciated by its members and made them perceive membership meaningful in their lives. None of the members said that they were in the club just for playing the game but emphasized the communality and friendships more.

**Perceptions of the effects on well-being**

**Factors promoting well-being**
As a natural continuum to the previous findings, social interaction with others was considered the most important factor supporting the members’ well-being. Constant interaction through PlayStation gave them opportunity to discuss their thoughts, trouble and other issues, with each other while playing together. Likewise, daily discussions in WhatsApp were seen to enhance social interaction and provide support from friends if they had any worries. Fluent interaction with other members provided them with joy and support:

- The social environment of our league brings joy; in other words, decreases the risk of depression. (Player2)
- The league provides company and we have fun together; you get support when needed. (Player5)
- It is a forum of the group of friends, where you can share everything between the heaven and earth. (Player2)

Indeed, it seemed to be important to the members that they were surrounded by a club in which they could share things. The club provided mental support by cheering up, comforting, and helping to forget about worries and pressures. The members mentioned that the most effective factor was the excursions and events the club did together. In addition to mental support and refreshing break in their everyday life, they used to do physical activities (such as playing bandy or small-scale Olympic games) – even though the few events in a year did not have considerable effect to their physical shape. Merely, the fun activities and doing together were more meaningful to their well-being. Also, console game playing itself was mentioned rewarding:

- … after winning games in the league I have been enjoying endorphins. (Player5)

**Factors decreasing well-being**
Although the research participants thought that online console game club had more positive than negative effects to their well-being, they were able to critically analyse the possible factors decreasing their well-being. These factors were associated with the league excursions and events, and playing itself. When it came to the shared trips, the members had noticed that the level of alcohol consumption in the events may sometimes be out of control. They realized that there were risks, but on the other hand, they were young adults who only saw each other a few times a year:

- The trips of the league are quite alcohol-oriented and unbalancing the well-being…(Player7)

This was considered somewhat a temporary decrease. However, a more interesting negative feature was the playing itself. The players in the club were mentioned to be quite equally skilled which meant that they had to practice playing quite a lot. The research participants reported that sometimes playing became excessive and had influenced their rhythm of life and communication with their immediate family members.

They had also noted physical changes during these excessive playing events, such as higher pulse and blood pressure. The research participants did perceive these effects concerning:

- When I start playing, it is difficult to end it and I can spend several hours at my PlayStation. (Player1)
Playing seemed to take time especially during evenings. Sometimes sleep was not long enough and the following day was hard. However, not all members of the club mentioned this negative effect and seemingly the research participants varied on how much they used time with the console game.

**The cohesion of the online console game club**

The research participants described the cohesion as very strong. They reflected the current state of the club by contrasting it with the starting point of just playing the game to compete of the championship in the league. After their excursions and events, the cohesion had a qualitative change towards more solid and interactive friendships.

I can tell my own secret and personal issues to the members. There is always someone who is ready to help whatever my problem was. (Player 2)

The members described the sense of togetherness in many ways. One remarkable feature of cohesion was the language or a manner of speech that they had developed and that outsiders would find difficult to understand. They had inside jokes that no one outside the club would be able to find funny. The members described themselves as brothers who have a special bond, which appeared almost touching in the data. Trust, constant interaction, and strong social connections within the club seemed to strengthen the perceived cohesion. In addition, the development as a club could also be interpreted from the way the members described their ability to solve disagreements and discuss freely their opinions and feelings.

We have found the common tone and have made up so much insider jokes within the league that others find difficult to grasp. (Player3)

It is the greatest that ultimately the members are equal. The club supports when difficult, and in my opinion, everyone is noticed very well. (Player7)

As a community, the online console game club seemed important. However, the means of keeping in touch seemed interesting: they used social media and did excursions but no one mentioned phones, text messages, or visits at each other’s houses. The geographical distance hinders the latter, but it is noteworthy that the modern communication methods were preferred by the members generally. The lack of face-to-face contact was replaced by WhatsApp, Snapchat, and online discussions within the console game made it possible to maintain social ties.

The WhatsApp group is so active that every day we have new messages that cover everything from spectator sports to politics and every now and then lead to societal and developmental discussions. (Player4)

The discussion can deal with anything between lasagna from Lidl and politics. (Player6)

Each research participant seemed to have a strong tie with the club. They had nothing negative to say about the club. Instead, they reported that the activities and events are found appealing. Playing itself was a merely good add for the club.

**The console game club as a resource**

As the findings of this study were considerably positive we wanted to continue the analysis by viewing the club membership as a multidimensional resource factor. To do this, we employed Määttä and Uusiautti’s (2012, pp. 39–40) definition of four basic resources that each are important supporters of human well-being. These resources are emotional, social, cognitive, and functional resources.
The console game club supported the members’ well-being in each on the aforementioned resource areas. The club was an emotional resource because the members perceived it as a support that helped coping with their problems. In addition, the club provided them with feelings of joy and satisfaction.

Constant social contacts with the club members served as social resources. Voida and Greenberg (2008) have called console games even meeting places. The club helped to maintain and develop friendships between the members. They had found numerous ways of staying in contact regardless of long distances.

The club could also serve as a cognitive resource. This appeared in a couple of ways. On the one hand, the members reported that they discussed abundantly and about various issues. Thus, the discussions and interaction enhanced their thinking and reasoning skills. On the other hand, the club had developed self-regulation skills in some of the members while some seemed to struggle, for example, with their ability to control the time used for playing. Also, intrinsic motivation can be seen as a cognitive resource (see Määttä & Uusiautti, 2012). For the console gamers, developing their skills in the game and competing against each other appeared strongly motivating. Furthermore, they perceived not only playing motivating but being a member of the club even more motivating.

When analysing the functional resources the club increased, the activities members did were studied. Functional resources mean action that provides pleasure of doing, successes, and a sense of self-fulfilment, even absorption or flow (see e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Being able to use one’s skills and strengths can be the most rewarding functional resource (Määttä & Uusiautti, 2012). Development in the game can be seen as a functional resource: as the gamers became more and more skilful, the more satisfying playing was including less frustration or anxiety (Chumbley & Griffiths, 2006). The element of doing together, sharing the task in the game or in their mutual events, also resembled shared functional activity in which positive individual factors merge with positive group features (see also Uusiautti & Määttä, 2013).

**Conclusion**

In this research, the purpose was to find out what kinds of meanings the console gamers gave to their club. The interest was in analysing the special features of online console game club and its possible effects on well-being as perceived by the club members themselves. The four-dimensional definition of human resources seemed to bring out rather well the members’ perceptions of their club. All these were strongly related to the membership of the club and the perceived cohesion. The findings are in line with, for example, Ravaja et al.’s (2006) study noting that playing with one’s friend is generally more satisfying than playing alone or with a stranger (see also Eklund, 2015). Therefore, the conclusion is that even an online console game club may have many positive effects on its members’ lives.

From an educational perspective, the study has an interesting contribution. First, it elicits the positive features of console game playing that often are left in the shadow in research focusing on the anxiety, behavioural problems, or other negative effects playing may have (see also Lenhart et al., 2008). In the modern times, it is important to realize that online communities, mediated interaction, and social media networks are an essential and inseparable part of our lives (Ma & Agarwal, 2007; Preece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2005; Ren et al., 2012; Swan, 2002).

Therefore, it becomes extremely important to do research on the flourishing online communities and learn from their positive features: Why do some communities function well and seemingly enjoy interaction within the online community? What can be learned from these online communities?

When considering the group spirit in the console game club in this research, it would be necessary to point out the process of developing the cohesion positively regardless of the distance between club members. For online education, this seems extremely relevant. For example, higher education institutions use increasingly online education for students about the same age as the members of the console game club in this research. Thus, these members’ experiences are relevant if we want to understand what makes online activities meaningful and enjoyable to students of this age.
Moreover, our earlier research on online teaching (see Uusiautti, Määttä, & Leskisenoja, 2017) showed that while the teacher can enhance positive interaction and learning environment in the online classrooms, the students still longed for more opportunities to collaborate and interact with their peers. Further research is needed on how to implement for example learning games to enhance cohesion and sense of meaningful learning in online education.

Naturally, online environments are not for everyone and they do not have to be. However, since these types of virtual elements concern our lives somehow at some point, wider understanding about the possible benefits is needed.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Notes on contributors**

Juho Kuukka, MA, is an elementary school teacher graduated from the University of Lapland, Finland. His research interests focus on social development, gaming and communality among students.

Satu Uusiautti, PhD, is the professor of education, especially educational psychology at the University of Lapland, Finland. Her research interests are in positive educational psychology, and positive development, flourishing, and success in various contexts.

Kaarina Määttä, PhD, is the professor of educational psychology and a vice-rector of the University of Lapland, Finland. Her research interests are in teacher education, social relationships, and positive psychology.

**ORCID**

Satu Uusiautti [http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2409-6460](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2409-6460)

**References**

Ahonen, J., & Majoinen, L. (2013). Vertaissuhteet ja yhteisöllisyys [Peer relationships and communality]. In P. Marjanen, M. Marttila, & M. Varsa (Eds.), *Pienten piirissä. Yhteisöllisyyden merkitys lasten hyvinvoinnille* [Among the small ones. The meaning of communality to children’s well-being] (pp. 47–76). Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.

Alanko, P. (2015). *Pohjoismainen tutkimus: Suomalaiset pelaajat luovat ystävyyssuhteita pelaamalla videopelejä verkossa* [Nordic research: Finnish gamers create friendships by playing video games online]. Retrieved from [http://news.cision.com/](http://news.cision.com/republic-of-communications/r/pohjoismainen-tutkimus--suomalaiset-pelaajat-luovat-ystavyyssuhteita-pelaamalla-videopeleja-verkossa,c9724179](http://news.cision.com/republic-of-communications/r/pohjoismainen-tutkimus--suomalaiset-pelaajat-luovat-ystavyyssuhteita-pelaamalla-videopeleja-verkossa,c9724179)

Allison, L. D., Okun, M. A., & Dutridge, K. S. (2002). Assessing volunteer motives: A comparison of an open-ended probe and Likert rating scales. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 12*(4), 243–255.

Balistreri, E., McClelland, G., Poe, G., & Schulze, W. (2001). Can hypothetical questions reveal true values? A laboratory comparison of dichotomous choice and open-ended contingent values with auction values. *Environmental and Resource Economics, 18*(3), 275–292.

Barlett, C. P., Anderson, C. A., & Swing, E. L. (2009). Video game effects – Confirmed, suspected, and speculative: A review of the evidence. *Simulation & Gaming, 40*(3), 377–403.

Burns, T. R., & Gomolińska, A. (2000). The theory of socially embedded games: The mathematics of social relationships, rule complexes, and action modalities. *Quality and Quantity, 34*(4), 379–406.

Chumbley, J., & Griffiths, M. (2006). Affect and the computer game player: The effect of gender, personality, and game reinforcement structure on affective responses to computer game-play. *Cyber-Psychology & Behavior, 9*(3), 308–316.

Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*, 95–120.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008). *Flow. The psychology of optimal experience*. (10. painos.). New York, NY: HarperPerennial.

Eklund, L. (2015). Playing video games together with others: Differences in gaming with family, friends, and strangers. *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds, 7*(3), 259–277.

Erikson, P., & Koistinen, K. (2014). *Monenlainen tapaustutkimus* [Many types of case studies]. Helsinki: Kuluttajatutkimuskeskuksen tutkimuksia ja selvityksiä 11.
Erm, L., & Mäyrä, F. (2005). Fundamental components of the gameplay experience: Analysing immersion. In S. de Castell & J. Jenson (Eds.), Worlds in play (pp. 37–53). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Fox, J., Gilbert, M., & Tang, W. Y. (2018). Player experiences in a massively multiplayer online game: A diary study of performance, motivation, and social interaction. New Media & Society, 20(11), 4056–4073.

Griffiths, M. D. (2010). The role of context in online gaming excess and addiction: Some case study evidence. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 8(1), 119–125.

Heinonen, U. (2008). Sähköinen yhteisöllisyys [Electric communality]. Pori: Kulttuurituotannon ja maisematutkimuksen laitoksen julkaisuja.

Hoffmann, E. A. (2007). Open-ended interviews, power, and emotional labor. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 36(3), 318–346.

Hyypää, M. T. (2002). Elinvoimaa yhteisöstä. Sosiaalinen pääoma ja terveys [Vitality from the community. Social capital and health]. Keuruu: PS-kustannus.

Ivory, J. D. (2013). Video games as a multifaceted medium: A review of quantitative social science research on video games and a typology of video game research approaches. Review of Communication Research, 1(1), 31–68.

Jakobsson, M. (2007). Playing with the rules: Social and cultural aspects of gaming rules in a console game club. In Proceedings of DiGRA 2007 conference (pp. 386–392). Retrieved from http://www.digra.org/wp-content/uploads/digital-library/07311.01363.pdf

Jegers, K. (2009). Pervasive Game Flow: Identifying and exploring the mechanisms of player enjoyment in pervasive games (PhD dissertation). Department of Informatics, Umeå University, Sweden. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5331/35e109688213ee41e1d1b36d10bb23ab0d1275.pdf

Kuss, D. J., Louws, J., & Wiers, R. W. (2012). Online gaming addiction? Motives predict addictive play behavior in massively multiplayer online role-playing games. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 15(9), 480–485.

Lenhart, A., Kahne, J., Middaugh, E., Rankin, A., Evans, C., & Vitak, J. (2008). Teens’ gaming experiences are diverse and include significant social interaction and civic engagement. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED525058.pdf

Lo, S. K., Wang, C. C., & Fang, W. (2005). Physical interpersonal relationships and social anxiety among online game players. Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 8(1), 15–20.

Ma, M., & Agarwal, R. (2007). Through a glass darkly: Information technology design, identity verification, and knowledge contribution in online communities. Information Systems Research, 18(1), 42–67.

Määttä, K., & Uusiautti, S. (2012). The four-leaf clover of human resources. Research Journal in Organizational Psychology & Educational Studies, 1(1), 37–42.

Mäyrä, F. (2007). The contextual game experience: On the socio-cultural contexts for meaning in digital play. In Situated play. Proceedings of DiGRA 2007 conference (pp. 810–814). Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.190.4031&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1(2), art 20. Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385

McMillan, D. W. (1996). Sense of community. Journal of Community Psychology, 24(4), 315–325.

McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community. A definition and theory. Journal of Community Psychology. Retrieved from http://iranarze.ir/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sense-of-Community.pdf

Mhurchu, C. N., Maddison, R., Jiang, Y., Jull, A., Prapavessis, H., & Rodgers, A. (2008). Couch potatoes to jumping beans: A pilot study of the effect of active video games on physical activity in children. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 5(1), 8.

Nevala, T. (2017). Pelitutkimuksen vuosikirja. Pelaamisen elinkaari – Pelien merkitys elämän eri vaiheissa [Yearbook of gaming research. The life span of gaming - the meanings of games in the different phases of life]. Retrieved from http://www.pelitutkimus.fi/vuosikirja2017/ptvk2017-02.pdf

Ng, B. D., & Wiemer-Hastings, P. (2005). Addiction to the internet and online gaming. Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 8(2), 110–113.

Paasivaara, L., & Nirkkila, J. (2010). Yhteisöllisyystä työhyvinvointia [Well-being at work from communality]. Helsinki: Kirjapaja.

Preece, J., & Maloney-Krichmar, D. (2005). Online communities: Design, theory, and practice. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10(4), JCMC10410.

Raina, L., & Haapaniemi, R. (2007). Yhteisöllinen pedagogia [Communal pedagogy]. Tallinn: Arator.

Ravaja, N., Saari, T., Turpeinen, M., Laarni, J., Salminen, M., & Kivikangas, M. (2006). Spatial presence and emotions during video game playing: Does it matter with whom you play? Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments, 15(4), 381–392.

Ren, Y., Harper, F. M., Drenner, S., Terveen, L., Kiesler, S., Riedl, J., & Kraut, R. E. (2012). Building member attachment in online communities: Applying theories of group identity and interpersonal bonds. MIS Quarterly, 36(3), 841–864.

Rizzo, A., Lange, B., Suma, E. A., & Bolas, M. (2011). Virtual reality and interactive digital game technology: New tools to address obesity and diabetes. Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology, 5(2), 256–264.

Ronkainen, S., Pehkonen, L., Linblom-Ylänne, S., & Paavilainen, E. (2011). Tutkimuksen voimasanat [The key words of research]. Helsinki: WSOYpro.
Saarela-Kinnunen, M., & Eskola, J. (2010). Tapaus ja tutkimus=tapaustutkimus? [A case and a research = a case research?]. In J. Aaltola & R. Valli (Eds.), Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 1 [Perspectives to research methods I] (pp. 158–169). Helsinki: PS-kustannus.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. New York, NY: FreePress.

Swan, K. (2002). Building learning communities in online courses: The importance of interaction. Education, Communication & Information, 2(1), 23–49.

Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2013). Does success at work produce well-being and happiness or vice versa? The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies, 7(3), 11–25.

Uusiautti, S., Määttä, K., & Leskisenoja, E. (2017). Succeeding alone and together – University students’ perceptions of caring online teaching. Journal of Studies in Education, 7(2), 48–66.

Voida, A., & Greenber, S. (2008). Wii all play: The console games as a computational meeting place. Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada: Department of Computer Sience. Univversity of Calgary. Retrieved from https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/46790/2008-912-25.pdf;jsessionid=5DD1F3E605C4C4D00A4B9110F1BE3E18?sequence=1

Waldo, J. (2008). Scaling in games and virtual worlds. Communications of the ACM, 51(8), 38–44.

Wan, C. S., & Chiou, W. B. (2006). Psychological motives and online games addiction: A test of flow theory and humanistic needs theory for Taiwanese adolescents. CyberPsychology & Behavior, 9(3), 317–324.

Wood, R. (2008). Problems with the Concept of Video Game “Addiction”: Some Case Study Examples. International Journal of Mental Health Addiction, 6, 169–178. doi:10.1007/s11469-007-9118-0

Wray, N., Markovic, M., & Manderson, L. (2007). "Researcher saturation": The impact of data triangulation and intensive-research practices on the researcher and qualitative research process. Qualitative Health Research, 17 (10), 1392–1402.