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Deconstructing Paradox: Pixonic's War Robots

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Abstract

Mobile game industries have been slowly changing during the past 20 years. It has undergone several innovative mutations from it's revenue opportunities to their business models, and business strategies. During this time, several standards for a successful mobile game have been established especially the balancing of in-game purchases. Pixonic, a Russian company has neglected this standard and regardless, its product War Robots has ended up in the top grossing games on Android and iOS. This paper therefore takes a look at War Robots community's reasoning, value presumption and the paradoxical relationship between the Pixonic and the community. It addresses leftover value, which was identified by the community and assesses its importance. Furthermore, it also takes a look at how does Pixonic do this differently in terms of innovation, where this innovative practices can be noticed and what is it's effect. The results of the project accumulates value determinants of the player retention.

Keywords: Mobile games, Business model, Free-to-play, Pixonic, Network effect, Behavioural theory, Innovation, Jobs to be Done theory, Monetization strategy

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1.Introduction

The mid 90s to the mid 00s saw the widespread proliferation of home internet access. Increasingly, the internet became parts of the private lives of millions, then billions. However, when not at home or work, internet - if at all accessible - was ostensibly limited to internet cafés sputtered on many city corners. (Cohen-Almagor 2011)

With the revealing of the iPhone in 2007, apple kicked-off the smartphone revolution, which would come to bring constant accessibility to the internet into the hands of billions of consumers, with widespread ramifications for the mobile gaming industry. (Aldrick 2018) Initially, mobile gaming had been limited in scope, and most products were to be found on devices designed with gaming specifically in mind - mobile phones, on the other hand, had few if any massively popular games - many of which came as pre-installed. Accessibility to mobile gaming was thus subject to several delimiting factors, which created a steep barrier of entry for consumers. Aside from paying the up-front cost of a console, individuals had to further pay for each instalment. (Knudsen n.d.)

This dynamic was upset with the proliferation of the smartphone - the smartphone brought with it a new platform, to deliver games to consumers. Traditionally, games for mobile phones were minor installment, which in most cases were preinstalled on the phone at birth with games such as Snake being installed on 350 million devices globally (Handjam.co.uk 2019). Now, with the emergence of the Smartphone, gaming and mobile companies quickly recognized and seized the opportunities of this undiscovered field, thereby bringing an era of innovation to the industry. As a result, new business models sprung into existence and entry barriers, which has hampered the consumer base in the early days of mobile gaming, were removed.

With the new era, the mobile gaming industry flourished through product- and marketing innovation which resulted in a dominant business model: The Freemium model which separated the players into paying users called premium players and players playing for free called freemium players (Dmasper 2017). This new model paved the way for a more consistent stream of money instead of the traditional one time payment, thereby creating incentives for game developers to channel money directly back into the games and fueling the innovation already taking place (Harrison 2015).

Today, mobile-gaming is steadily rising in its popularity. It not only attracts people who are traditional console and PC game players, rather, it expands the market to encompass smartphone owners who may not traditionally consume gaming products. (Sarwar and Soomro 2013) In 2018, mobile-gaming has for the first time accounted for over half of the global gaming market at 51%, with traditional platforms such as PC and Console-gaming falling behind 24% and 25% respectively - yet absolute numbers showed, that neither segment fell in absolute numbers. Many video game producers have sought to harness this market, not least Pixonic, whose mobile game 'War Robots' has become hugely successful. (Wijman 2018)

1.2. Problem Area

War Robots has been a popular game since its release, the popularity was so strong that in the early stages of the game, the company faced issues with maintaining the significant player growth as the company still waited to receive the first payouts from the players of the game. The major challenge for Pixonic was simple that they were a relatively young company with War Robot being the first game, which attracted a large number of players, and therefore lacked the necessary equity needed to invest and secure a continuation of the growth in the number of players. In August the 2015, just 16 months after the initial release of the game, War Robots reached 300.000 daily active players a number which continued to rise to 1.4 million daily active users at April 2016 (Henry 2016). Today the game has more than 100 million downloads across both the IOS and Android platform alongside Steam on the PC platform (War Robots). All this which have contributed to War Robots taking since April 2016 broke into the US 200 chart for the highest grossing game, a chart which they have remained a part of ever since (Henry 2016).

If one follows the traditional logic of economics and the law of demand, it is expected when the prices are increased, that the quantity demand should fall (Carden 2012). However, during several updates in the game, Pixonic has increased the prices of purchasing and upgrading in-game content through several methods including the direct upgrading price and the time it take for one upgrade to be finished (War Robots n.d.). Following the law of the demand, this should have resulted in a significant impact on the players base, but instead, this occurred during the same period, where the number of downloads reached 100 million across

the IOS and Android platform thereby, contradicting the law of demand, thus creating paradox where both prices and the amount of player was rising. In itself this isn't a problem but it showcases an gab of knowledge within the mobile games industry which is relevant for the future innovation of the industry.

Aside from the IOS and Android platform, which are the most popular, then War Robots have expanded to several other platforms such as the PC and other smaller platforms. However, the PC platform comprises fundamental differences from the IOS and Android platforms, as well as it being almost brand new there by including several startup problems. Because of this, the well established IOS and Android platforms are significantly more interesting to investigate.

Reaching the limits of the freemium model, innovation has taken companies such as Pixonic even further in the search for new and alternative revenue stream and as such expanded on the model in use. These models are called a combination model as the incorporate the advantages of several business models usually including the freemium model, In-App advertising and In-App purchases along with the possibility of being a premium membership (Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara 2016, p. 205). These are often considered the most importants part of the combination model, however, it isn't limited to them thus creating the opportunity for further innovation, which could explain how Pixonix managed to double the amount of downloads, when they increased the prices.

Next to the business model of War Robots, pixonic have prioritized the in-game community with their innovation as it has develop a lot throughout the lifespan of the game, starting out as a minor function of the game limited to players being able to team up and write small messages. Today, it included several function such as clan goals and benefit, ranking system with clans setting up teamspeak groups in other app thus arguably making it an essential part of pixonics strategy of keeping players attached to the game.

1.2.1. Problem formulation

This case study will therefore analyze the paradox of irrational loyalty of the community to the Pixonic's War Robots and will try to understand how does innovation play part in this. In that regard, we will seek to answer following questions.

Research question:

How does Pixonic use innovation in terms of players retention despite its non-user friendly pricing?

Sub-questions:

1. **What core values motivate users to commit to irrational behaviour of making purchases within the game?**

2. **How has Pixonic pursued an innovative monetisation strategy?**

2. Literature review

Before one starts a research, it is without a doubt a sensible thing to take into consideration previous works about the topic. The purpose of it is not only to not research things, which have already been investigated but it also provides us with a knowledge, perspectives, methodologies and many other research strategies, which were used to lay results, which we can then use to complement our own (Bryman 2016, p. 6). For this project we conducted the traditional narrative literature review, as our goal with it is to simply give a comprehensive overview and interpretation of data and research in a narrative way (Ibid:91) about mobile gaming, free to play business models and perhaps even Pixonic itself.

2.1. Narrative review

Improvements within the area of technology have been consistent for the past century especially due to the second world war, and now upcoming depletion of resources, global warming and many more. This rise has not only caused for technology to focus on daring important tasks, but also improve even basic tasks for our lives. Instead of writing everything on paper, we have computerized everything significantly and can access this information

through regular computer and nowadays even cell phone. This has opened many possibilities, communication wise but also entertainment wise. In this day and age, people use their phones for multiple tasks, which includes chatting, listening to music, organizing calendars and even playing video games. Playing video games on phones has been possible ever since one of the first phones have been created and have continued to improve from their visage to their mechanical perspective.

This is where people have noticed a business opportunity, as most people have access to internet and have a cell phone and therefore it can reach to vast majority of people. The time, when it was possible and available spans for about 10+ years and has developed different variations of business models, pricing and advertising methods and other different strategies.

2.1.1. Literature review focused on business models

Firstly, Rissanen (2006) has made a research from a developers perspective about financing of the game (costs) and it's return revenue. At the end of his research he suggested, that there needs to be change due to “buy-to-play” model (game was offered for one time purchase - only one revenue stream) being unsustainable and loss inducing. Thus, the model has shifted towards “free-to-play” model.

In terms of “free-to-play” model, there have not been a lot of studies, however there are few about how developers or publishers monetize their product and important aspects of their product if they are using this model.

Penttinen, Tuunainen and Rossi (2010) have mapped, out of a sample in size of over 700 people, their demographics and their value prioritization in terms of product. What are the main factors of being attracted, to play of people from various background. Main were usually the technical aspects, such as the graphics, etc. Their research also includes to some extent of social aspect and what is its weight in terms of friends recommendation (was not really high). As for the business model, they include minor aspects, but do not touch microtransactions and their value but more a technical aspects of it.

Another take on revenue models and important attributes for a successful mobile game were researched by Alomari, Shaalan and Soomro (2016). They have identified current trends of monetization of video games with a “free-to-play” model. They used ARM

model (Acquisition, retention and monetization) funnel model to map out the most important aspects, one of them being was ,in terms of importance highest, inviting friends to the game. In terms of revenue, they have found retention of users to be the most significant. They have also concluded that in the future, culture, lifestyle and loyalty could play a big part in the mobile games industry. Regarding revenue though, more money seems to be concentrated in the casino games as opposed to other types of games.

Furthermore, a short reading was made by Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara (2017), who have taken a look at six Iranian games and also have identified how they are monetizing their product. They identify that mobile games are using the combination of multiple monetization techniques in their product.

Moreover, Tomić (2017) has described the possibilities of microtransaction and groups out 3 types of microtransactions: Cosmetical, content related (more progress) and privileged (or pay-to-win) content giving the latter one least amount of popularity.

2.1.2. Literature review focused on community and network

Pei-Shan Wei and Hsi-Peng Lu in their journal called “Why do people play mobile social games? An examination of network externalities and of uses and gratifications” (2013), are researching the reasons behind people playing socially interactive games, specifically on mobile devices. In order to get a valid answer to their question, the researches conducted questionnaires, from which they gathered 237 responses. From their research, they were able to conclude, that both “individual gratification” and “network externalities” played a large part in the people's reasoning of why do they play mobile social games. However, interestingly, the fact that these games are played on mobile phones, was not one of the major factors in this question.

Similarly directed research paper by Sajad Rezaei and Seyedeh Sheyda Ghodsi, called “Does value matters in playing online game? An empirical study among massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs)”, where the study was again based on answers collected from more than 200 questionnaires. In this paper, the researchers looked into relationships between “emotional value (VE), social value (VS), price-value for money (VP), performance-quality value (VQ) and repurchase intention (RI), willingness to pay a

premium price (WTP) and word of mouth (WOM), in multiplayer online role-playing games. Based on their results, they argue that there is a positive relationship between price-value for money and repurchase intention, same as performance-quality value and repurchase intention. However, there was found a negative relationship between emotional value and repurchase intention, same as social value and repurchase intention. Moreover, emotional value, price-value for money and performance-quality value was found to have positive impact on word of mouth, whereas social value does not. regarding willingness to pay a premium price, they argue that emotional value and price-value for money have a positive effect, while social value and performance-quality value does not.

Zeithaml et all (1996) in his research paper "The Behavioral Consequences of Service Quality" argues that companies have to improve their customer service, as there is a believed direct correlation with profit of the company. Moreover, he argues that customers sometimes have "spurious loyalty" towards the firm, when they are not satisfied with their services, but they feel like there is no other option.

2.1.3. Literature review focused on mobile gaming innovation

Besides the already mentioned innovation in terms of business model growth and innovation (mostly researched in terms of mobile gaming), there is some literature in regards to the innovative perspective of mobile gaming. Mäyrä (2015) mentions and describes it as a technological experimentation, where mobile games are implementing players location as a focal point of their gameplay. This essentially started back in the year 2000 and slowly has developed into treasure hunting GPS challenges (Montola, Stenros, & Waern, 2009, pp. 32ff in Mäyrä 2015) and continues now with new games, which essentially is based on GPS locating in their mobile devices. This perhaps gives opportunities and values for players as real life socializing with strangers is going to be encouraged and perhaps even more value gained in the future.

Besides that, Mäyrä (2015) also mentioned how networking aspects of mobile gaming has expanded, pointing out the innovativeness of connecting their mobile game player accounts with their social media accounts. Players are slowly being part of the "social gaming experience" since the cooperation between players has become quite integrated within the

social media where they can ask their friends to help them with something, they send each other gifts, they see their progress,etc.

On the other hand, Sang (2015) talks about innovative positioning and marketing of the case of "The Kingdom of Rock" a children's game published by Tencent. What was observed was its initial investment into the games foundation and focus on attracting early receivers, which was then built up on, when movies, comic books, toys and other things have been made due to its popularity. She also stresses out the importance of a targeted marketing instead of highest reach marketing, so basically instead of marketizing it to as many people as possible, companies should focus on the audience, which finds their product to be relevant to their interest (Ibid.). Furthermore, she also emphasizes corporations to keep giving incentives to their players (releasing updates and new content) to maintain their users.

Thus, according to the literature review there are few hypothesis we have, which are:

- The community is spuriously loyal to the War Robots, and therefore have trouble quitting it
- The business model is offering the same value as business model of any other game
- Pixonic is using something new in accordance to the knowledge about value in mobile games, their business model and network
- Adoption of the game as a 'standard' increases the relative value and demand for in-app products and services.

3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, four selected theories will be examined; Schumpeter's innovation theory of profit, the Network effect theory, the behavioural theory and jobs to be done theory. This combination of theoretical background will be later on applied in order to answer the research question. Schumpeter's innovation theory serves to explain the reasoning of Pixonic for their pricing and how essentially innovation leads to profit. We believe that changes (innovation) is what Pixonic is doing, which we will try to identify, in pursuit of a profit.
Regarding network effect theory, we try to understand how network is playing a role in the case of player retention and community behavior and values.

In terms of behavior theory, we use it to understand various value criterias, its presumption and community behavior. Finally, Jobs to be done, we explore alternative ways of value proposal and player retention.

By using these theories together, we will understand the motivation of both the corporation as well as the community for their actions and how innovation is the catalyst for to their relationship.

3.1. Schumpeter's Innovation theory of Profit

When researching innovation economics theories that highlights innovation and entrepreneurship, there is no doubt that it goes back when Joseph Schumpeter introduced the concept of an innovation theory in his book called “Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy” in 1942. He described the innovation as the critical element of economic change and argued that economic change is connected with the market power, activities of entrepreneurs and innovation (Pol and Caroll 2006).

Literally, Schumpeter’s innovation theory of profit is the component of his theory of economic development (Dwivedi 2010, p. 24). According to the theory of profit, he believed that an entrepreneur is capable to gain economic revenues by creating new successful innovations (Cantwell 2000, p. 3). This theory considers the main role of the entrepreneur to be creation of innovation and the profit, which is the outcome of his performance. Schumpeter suggested that innovation should be any new policy that entrepreneurs attempt to decrease general cost of production or increase the demand for the products/services (Cantwell 2000).

In this matter, innovation should be divided into two parts. The first part includes the activities which decrease the general cost of production, such as introduction of new technology, introduction of a new techniques of production, innovative methods of leading the industry and etc. However, the second part of innovation includes the activities that can increase demand for a product or service. For example, serving in a new market, finding new suppliers or sources of raw materials, adding new features and introduction of better quality products.

In general, the innovation theory of profit indicates that if the innovation of entrepreneur is successful he can increase profit either by increasing the demand for the

product or decreasing the general cost of production. The time they profit by using this innovation usually does not last long , because the competitors are likely use the same innovation. In the beginning, entrepreneurial companies enjoy first mover advantages with the monopolistic position in the markets. The leading innovative entrepreneurs create a temporary monopoly position which they obtain higher profits from innovation, because they set higher prices for the product and decrease the cost of production. But after a certain period of time, others start to imitate the innovation, and the profits therefore decrease by time (Cantwell 2000, p. 2f).

The theory of economic development was developed by assuming stable economy in any country. Under this condition, demand and supply are equal, prices and costs of products are equal and total revenue and total cost of the company are equal (Dwivedi 2010, p. 24). It means that companies do not make net profit as managerial wages is paid. Net profit should be gained only by creating innovations products and services, creating new techniques and finding new methods of supply goods. As we mentioned before, this kind of innovation includes launching new products, or making them better, developing technology and serving in new markets, and innovating management. These innovations will enable companies to fix and increase the prices of products higher than stable equilibrium price (Ibid.). It is resulted innovative companies make net profit by making the price higher than production cost. So, that is how Schumpeter defined innovation as the part of profit.

3.2. Network Effect Theory

According to Beck (2006), the network effect theory can have a various definitions that can be more or less specific. The earliest definition, defined by Katz and Shapiro (Katz and Shapiro 1985, p. 424) around the year 1985 states that “the utility that a user derives from consumption of goods, increases with the number of other agents consuming the (same) good”. In other words, the more people uses the same product, the higher the consumption.

Approximately nine years later, in 1994, Katz and Shapiro share another definition, which says that “the value of (a) membership to one user (which) is positively affected when another user joins and enlarges the network” (Katz and Shapiro 1994, p. 94). Meaning that the larger the network is, the more positive effect it has.

Later on, when following the timeline, another group or researchers shares their definition, in which Church, Gandal and Krause (Church et al. 2002, p. 1 in Beck 2006, p. 41) believe, that "network effects exists if consumptions benefits depend positively on the total number of consumers who purchase compatible products". It can be therefore argued, that the theory stands its ground well, considering the applicability over the years.

Conceptually, one can view the players, or customers, as part of a network of adopters. Shapiro and Varian (1998) explored direct network effects vis-a-vis adoption. Shapiro and Varian argued, that direct network effects constitute the relation between the use of a network and the number of participants (Beck, 2006p. 45). The adopter's perception of the value of the network - in this case inherently tied to the product - increases proportionally relative to the number of adopters. Vice-versa, from a social welfare point of view the total benefit of a network increase super-proportionally with n(n-1) (Ibid.).

This means, that in the case of direct network effects, the external benefit component of a standard or good depends inherently upon the number of adopters of that good, and adoption of the standards included. To put this into a tangible context, an in-app purchase of a digital good - for example a weapon in an online game - only has value because other consumers have adopted that standard of reference of value, as consumers of the good.

To this extent, it is in the interest of the company to ensure as low a barrier of entry to adoption as possible, as it is multiplicity of adoptions that increases the value of the goods, and because the social welfare of the game's network is super-proportional to the number of adoptions.

3.3. Behavioural Theory

In this chapter, we will examine the various factors, which influence the player's choices, when they decide to spend money on content in War Robots. To do this, we will use the theories of behavioural economics as it will allow us to generate an in-depth understanding of the purchasing choices made by the players.

Behaviour economics are markedly defined as other fields. Traditionally economist have been influenced by the theory of the homo-economics which outlines the human being as rational thinking, cost minimizing and benefit maximizing individual which furthermore has stable preferences. This view has drastically changed and today, behavioural economics is

vastly broader covering fields such as social science, economics, psychology, sociology and anthropology and the various different fields influences the economic decisions (Rehman 2016).

The benefits a person receives when doing a purchase can be divided into different categories depending on whether the benefits are practical, emotional, social or moral. However, not all types of benefits within each category are relevant to this project. The field of the practical benefits covers money, time, satisfaction and pain, however, pain is not of relevance to this project due to the fundamental of what this project is about. Money is by most customers usually considered to be a major factor, but the truth is, that it is a lot less significant than many of the other factors such as time. Time is considered of significant value by most customers simply because saving time is a valuable thing, and in general, is it very common for customers to purchase thing and services, that saves them time such as taking the high-speed train as opposed to the normal train for a little extra (Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt 2017,p. 80ff). Lastly satisfaction, which is the most basic factor of them all, it is pure enjoyment and therefore, a strong factor for everybody (Ibid:82f).

Amongst the emotional benefits, fear and self-actualization are the ones relevant to this project. Both of these benefits can be related to status (a benefit, which will be mentioned later) within this theory section. Self-actualization is the search for achieving the personal full potential when all the basic needs are covered, and it covers several similar words such as self-reflection and self-discovery. Essentially, it is about how people believe they can change their identity because of specific purchases they make (Ibid:84). Fear is connected to risk-taking and loss repugnance. It is an fundamental part of humans to avoid risk and loss in order to gain some kind of profit, and it comes to show both in our private for professional life, where anything uncomfortable is avoided (Ibid:85).

Lastly, this project will make use of the social benefits in order to gain an understanding of the in-game purchases. In this case, it accounts for the status as previously mentioned and the community. According to Khallash and Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), status is about placement within the community, and it is considered an extremely powerful factor influencing all human whether they agree with it or not. Status is about communicating one own values to the rest of the world thus making it about what other people think, feel and perceive when they rest of the world sees and meet oneself, and how what they feel about you makes you feel. It is derived in having access to something, which is not available for

everybody, and it is the feeling we get when others have access to something we don't (Ibid:85f).

Aside from the status, there is the community factor, which is highly relevant to this project because of how people seek to belong somewhere. A good example of this is when people pay money to go stand in the rain of an outdoor restaurant with other instead of watch it back home in the warmth on the television (Ibid:86).

Value is a broad term and the definition of it varies depending on the field. According to Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), the definition of value is determined by the user and is influenced by a broad number of variables which a practical, moral, emotional and social aspect of which cover several subfactors and depends on the type of benefit, which the generate for the user (Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt 2017,p. 79ff). Fundamentally, people perceive value in relation to the context of which it is presented thus meaning that value is subjective rather than measurable on a scale (Ibid:65). This means that the value in this project is entirely measured by it improves in-game performance, how costly it is to acquire and through the social interaction with other players.

3.4. Jobs to be done theory

The history of Jobs to be Done theory dates back to 1999 when Anthony W. Ulwick created Outcome-Driven Innovation (ODI) strategy. In late 1999, he developed this strategy and explained to Clayton Christensen how the process works. The theory was defined as people purchase products and services to get their jobs done (Ulwick 2005). Christensen underlined ODI theory by analyzing market structure in his famous book The Innovator's Solution and called it "Jobs to be Done" theory. (Christensen 2003, p. 73ff). Since that time, this theory was developed a lot together by Christensen who is the professor at Harvard Business School and Ulwick who is almost 28 years in the business field.

Jobs to be Done theory explains that innovators need to understand that customers do not buy products or services, instead they hire different solutions at different times to get some bunch of jobs done (Silverstein 2013, p. 3). According to this theory, to perform innovation process successfully, companies need to gather three types of data, p. They have to learn which jobs their customers are trying to accomplish (this involves the activities or tasks customers are trying to execute); the outcomes customers are trying to accomplish (that are,

the metrics customers use to determine the successful completion of a job); and restrictions that might interrupt customers using new products or services (Ulwick 2005, p. 23). These three types of data should allow companies to create new and powerful customer value by helping customers execute new or more jobs; by improving the satisfaction of completion of specific job; and by removing barriers that avoid customers from doing a job possibly (Ibid.)

While most companies develop their existing products or services with the purpose of making innovation (for example creating quarter-inch drill), the innovation is getting done instead of thinking and realizing better ways to get the job done (creating a quarter-inch hole). The main idea of the theory indicates that companies should stop studying their products, instead study the "job" that customers are trying to achieve/get done. By focusing on the job, rather than product and its features, companies should gain predictable growth.

Thus, in practice this methodology works by knowing all the customer's needs and demands and determine the missing ones. Customers build a pattern of activities which they need to execute. The companies use this opportunity to create new products or adding new values to existing products by capturing these points as customer need statements. In other words, this customer need statements may describe what feature product or service should suggest to get job done better and may allow to the formation of ideas or solutions that would provide the execution of this process. Customers use some outcome statements to get successful job done, which are described as how they measure value.

4. Methodology

To kick-off our research paper, we need to establish methodological comprehensive guide or a structure, which we establish to write our methodology.

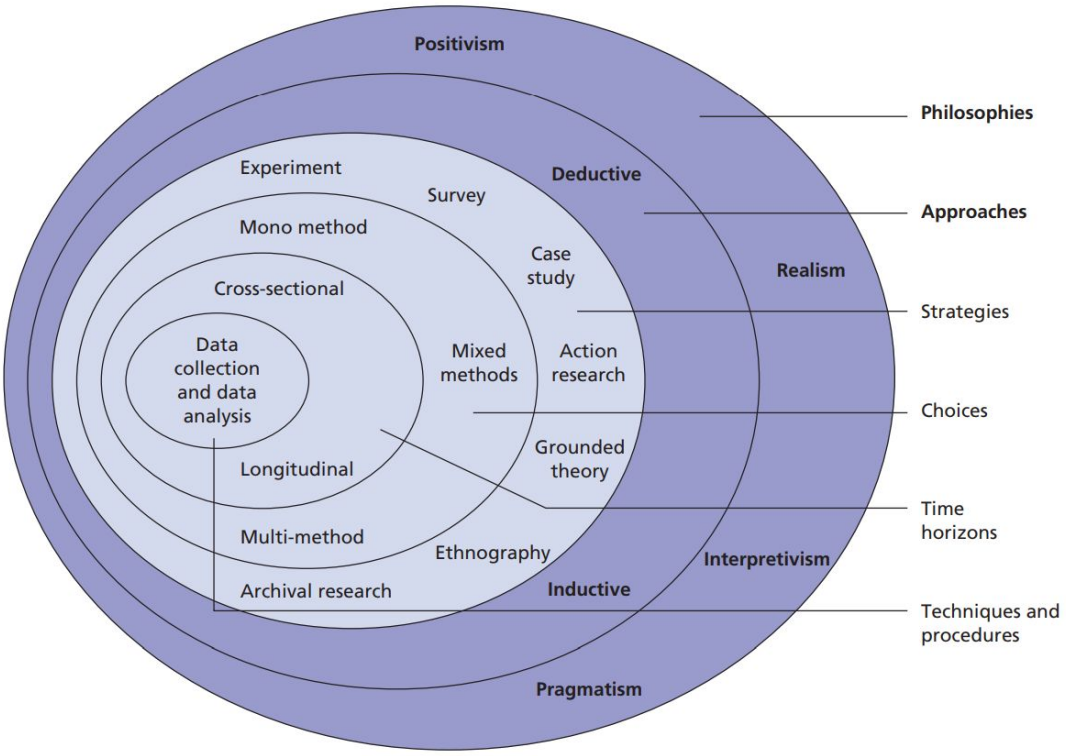

Figure 1: The research 'onion' (Saunders et al., 2014,p. 108)

As the graph suggests, we will firstly present our philosophy of social science or the overall view of the topic proceeding with the approach. Furthermore, we will present multiple strategies employed in our research following with choices of methods (qualitative or quantitative). We then proceed by establishing what time horizon we are taking a look at as well as defining our data collection and consequently doing the analysis.

4.1. Philosophy of the Research

This chapter shall discuss the philosophical lenses we are using to observe and answer the question to our research. It consists of theoretical comprehension of reality and how can the reality be studied. Thus, it is necessary to explain, what lenses we have chosen, how were they used and why we found it important to implement them.

Pixonic's War Robots has been an achievement due to their strong revenue streams and considerably big player base regardless of their non-consumer friendly prices and business model. Considering the status quo of Pixonic's War Robots and the paradox of its success, we have decided to use pragmatic perspectives to answer the research question.

Pragmatism is an approach, which main focus puts on the experience and actions of human beings (Egholm 2014, p.169). It is in one of our objectives to pinpoint Pixonic's basis for the success, thus identification of whether it is the community, which has built a strong brand or the company itself is necessary. This means that their past actions and experiences are are the basis for the current situation and its consequences.

Ontologically speaking, pragmatism believes that phenomena that happen are interpreted by social actors and directly trigger action of these actors (Ibid.). In the case of Pixonics release of War robots it's release, maintenance and updates are the phenomena, the community (social actors) is then influenced, and get triggered to play the game and be part of the community, or develop this community.

In terms of Epistemology, pragmatism assumes that knowledge stems from a bodily sensation and we can acquire them using interpretation of signs (Ibid:170). This is achieved through abductive research method as opposed to the induction and deduction, which essentially is known as the "qualified guess" (Ibid.). Fundamental aspect of abduction is basically to go back and forth between previous knowledge, experience and research focus in order to achieve understanding. It starts of with multiple hypothesis established through experiences of the world so in this case let us say "If you have items, which have high value in their stores, it is more likely for people to be more engaged and buy them" we will proceed by testing this hypothesis with our primary data (Ibid:174). How abductive research method will be used is explained more extensively in paragraph below.

Since pragmatism produces data, which are interpreted by researchers, the knowledge is therefore not value-free (Ibid:170). On that note, the results of this research are not intending to uncover "the truth" but essentially to get as close to the truth as possible and achieve understanding of the phenomena based on the knowledge we have acquired in the particular context (Ibid.). Due to lack of any extensive literature on this particular case and its topic, we believed that choosing pragmatism as a way of looking at the bigger picture was no doubt essential.

4.1.1. Abductive research method

Abduction is one of the research methods, which is essential for pragmatic approach. It is a combination of both deduction and induction in a sense, where we as researchers test

out multiple hypothesis and it's likeness (Ibid:174). These hypothesis are known as “qualified guesses”, which are made by researchers to make predictions based on previous experiences, general knowledge and common sense. Few members of our research group are present within the gaming market and engage with its community on daily basis. Their knowledge paired with those who are not active within this industry will be a basis for hypothesis. Qualified guesses are then tested, using data gathered using mainly primary data gathering methods. In our case, we shall test it out using web-based surveys, thereafter probability of each of the hypotheses will be assessed.

4.2. Data collection

For our research, we have used mixed methods therefore both quantitative and qualitative data have been used to answer our research question. Particularly, we have used the convergent parallel design to give meaning of combining them (Bryman 2016, p.639).

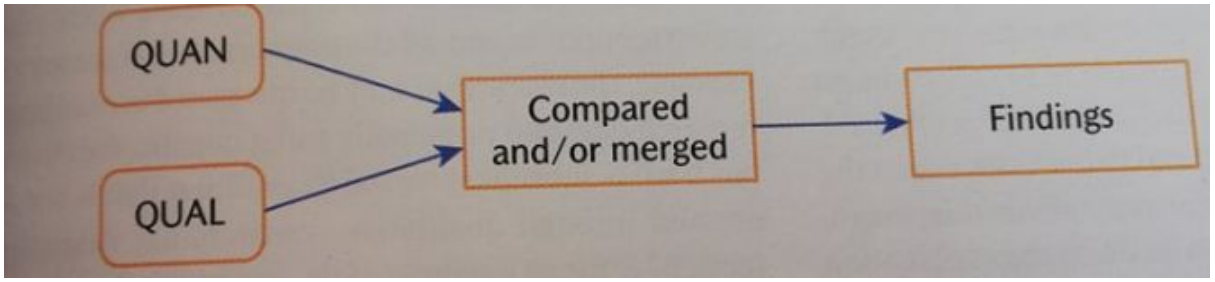

Figure 2: Parallel design (Bryman 2016, p.639)

The main idea of this model is to use the data gathered from the users, the community of War Robots as a form of quantitative data and to some extent as qualitative. We then used them to create a discussion comparing and merging them using the pragmatic and theoretical lenses.

4.2.1. Primary Data

Primary data are data, which have not been processed by another third party, but they were gathered by us, using methodological tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups,etc.

As it was mentioned already in the data collection, our primary data consists of web-based surveys created using Google Forms due to its simplicity. Advantage is it's

reliability (no third-party interruption) and precision of questions in terms of our interests whereas it's con being perhaps it's sample size even due to the time and reach.

4.2.1.1. Data sampling

For our primary data sampling, there is only very few criterions. The only requirement we have to take the survey, is that the user from the community needs to be playing War Robots mobile phone version instead of the computer version. We have this requirement due to the potential difference in mentality within the community, as well as maybe different business model. No age, sex nor nationality requirements were taken into consideration.

For this project we are using typical purposive case sampling, where the choice of our sample is based solely on their dimension of interest (Ibid:409). Together with that, we are also utilizing snowball sampling, which essentially works in a way that our respondents are causing a snowball effect where they share the survey for us with other people (Ibid:415) within the same dimension of interest. An example in our case would be, when a Facebook moderator of a War Robots community page has decided to share the survey with other groups, as well as his friends playing the game with him.

4.2.1.2. Web-based survey

Our survey was created using Google Forms, due to it's software accessibility, compatibility and simplicity. To spread out the survey, we have joined various community groups, which we found using simple Google search with keywords such as “War Robots community/players/clans” and have found plenty of them, focusing mainly on Facebook due to the amount of people being part of them. We also contacted groups on Reddit (which is a Social media like platform, consisting of multiple sections about specific topics, can be a “subreddit page” of War Robots), as well as Discord (Popular gaming platform, where people create communities, clans, and use it for communicative and socializing purposes), however only Discord moderators allowed spreading of the survey. In terms of Facebook, moderators were very helpful and have even helped themselves to spread the word to other groups by contacting other admins of War Robots community groups. Initial response goal we envisioned was at least 100 respondents, however in the duration of one week and we received 111 responses.

The questionnaire in this project sent out to the players is threefold. The first part is basic knowledge about the players and their purchasing choices which is meant to establish a baseline from which, the rest of the data can be compared to. The second of the questions are derived from behavioral economics and specifically the different factors, which influences the choices of the player when making a purchase. Therefore, the purpose of the questions is to go in-depth with the various factor, which has been identified as relevant for the project, as it will allow is to measure them against each other as well. The final part of the questionnaire is grounded in the networking theory are investigating the players networking base, which in the case of War Robots, would be the difference to which the players are associated with and build up a network around. Furthermore, the final part goes in-depth with the players association and "addiction" with the game with the purpose of outlining how much, players play and how easy it would be for them to just stop playing.

4.2.1.3.Coding

In terms of our survey, most of our questions were closed-ended as opposed to the open-ended questions. We have done that for the purpose of processing, as it is easy to compare, to code and therefore to categorize the results (Ibid:247). Perhaps, some things are also a lot clearer when answers are given for the respondents (Ibid.), what kind of answers we expect. This is no doubt, also a disadvantage as it may not reveal a lot of spontaneity of respondents and therefore some interesting input (Ibid:249).

Additionally, it is also easier for respondents to complete, as they do not need to think extensively and can finish the survey in a rather short amount of time (Ibid.). In terms of that, respondents do get limited space to express themselves and also there is a possibility of misunderstanding of questions, which may result in errors (Ibid.). Here are few examples of our coding tables.

Have you been inspired by the streamers or other players to buy in-game content?

Fact	Interpretation	Code
23.4 percent - Yes	However, some have been influenced almost one third of the sample.	Network effect

76.6 percent - No	Most of our sample were not persuaded by streamers or influencers to make a purchase of content within the game.	Network effect

Do the “chores” such as daily login, daily quests, special events,etc. give you an incentive (gives you a motivation) to play the game?

Fact	**Interpretation**	**Code**
68.5 percent - Yes	Chores or jobs seem to have an incentive creation ability for players to get back to the game or to get retained a bit more. Jobs seem to be one of the things, which are viewed by the players as rewarding enough to do them and get back to them.	Jobs to be Done, Value
31.5 percent - No	However, for the one third of the playerbase it seems to be not so motivating.	Jobs to be Done, Value

4.2.2. Secondary Data

In our research, the secondary data was used in literature review (See 2), where mostly articles, journals, encyclopedia and conference article have been used. We have also included a lot of secondary data within “The Case” section (See 4.4). There, websites thesis, journals, articles and books have been used to give an overview about the contextual aspect of mobile gaming as well as Pixonic’s War Robots. All of this data we then use (especially literature review) to go back and forth between the data, comparing, mergin, discussing and analyzing (See 5,6).

4.3. Case study design and research strategy

This research is focusing on investigating Pixonic's War robots community (single case), therefore we have decided to employ a case study research design. Overall, a case study as a research design involves an in-depth investigation of a single "case", which essentially can be location, community, organization,etc. (Bryman 2016,p.60). According to Yin (2003), the purpose of a case study is a "desire to understand complex social phenomena" or "to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (Shramm 1971 in Yin 2003).

Essentially, we are using it to examine the phenomenon in a context due to it's possible fusion of the phenomenon and the context (Ibid.). What it means is that the context has a significant relevance to the phenomenon and is therefore necessary for us to explain.

Strategy	Form of Research Question	Requires Control of Behavioral Events?	Focuses on Contemporary Events?
Experiment	how, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
History	how, why?	No	No
Case study	how, why?	No	Yes

Figure 3: Research Strategy division graph (Yin 2003)

In terms of research question, Yin's graph (2003), has helped us with the understanding and structuring of it as there are different strategies employed in different kinds of research. It has helped us to define the form of our research question (See 1.2) as well as set the time focus (See 4.5.2). For us, survey strategy as well as case study strategy have similar attributes besides the formation of the research question. That is why, we have chosen case study due to its research question potential. We are also using survey as a tool for data collection, however in terms of design and strategy we find case study to be more suitable due to it's explanatory capabilities (Ibid.).

The following graph (Figure 4), represents our overall research strategy and our time frame in order to draw a processual (step-by-step) comprehensive guide towards how the research was conducted. In order to conduct a successful case study, there are five attributes of the research design, which are necessary to be established and identified. Firstly, it is the study's question (Ibid.) referring to formation of the research question. In our case, our research question starts with the adverb how, therefore our strategy revolves around case study. Another attribute is about it's propositions that essentially is/are hypotheses (Ibid.), which are stated in our literature review (See 2). Next is the units of our analysis, which is defined by what is investigated through research question (Ibid.), in our case it is the community's relation towards Pixonic's War Robots (See 4.2). Fourth attribute is about linking the data to the propositions (Ibid.), which is self-explanatory on it's own. It is basically about our knowledge foundation (literature review) and our hypotheses processed and discussed with data collected (See 5,6). Finally, the last attribute is the criteria for interpreting the findings (Ibid.). Yin (2003) states that there are no specific way of setting these criterias but hopes for the patterns of data to be contrasting. Consequently it is about contrast and variance in the data, which gives opportunity to the researchers to interpret different propositions. In our case, there is a significant contrast and extremes of data variety in some of our data is significant, giving us an opportunity to discuss them (See 5).

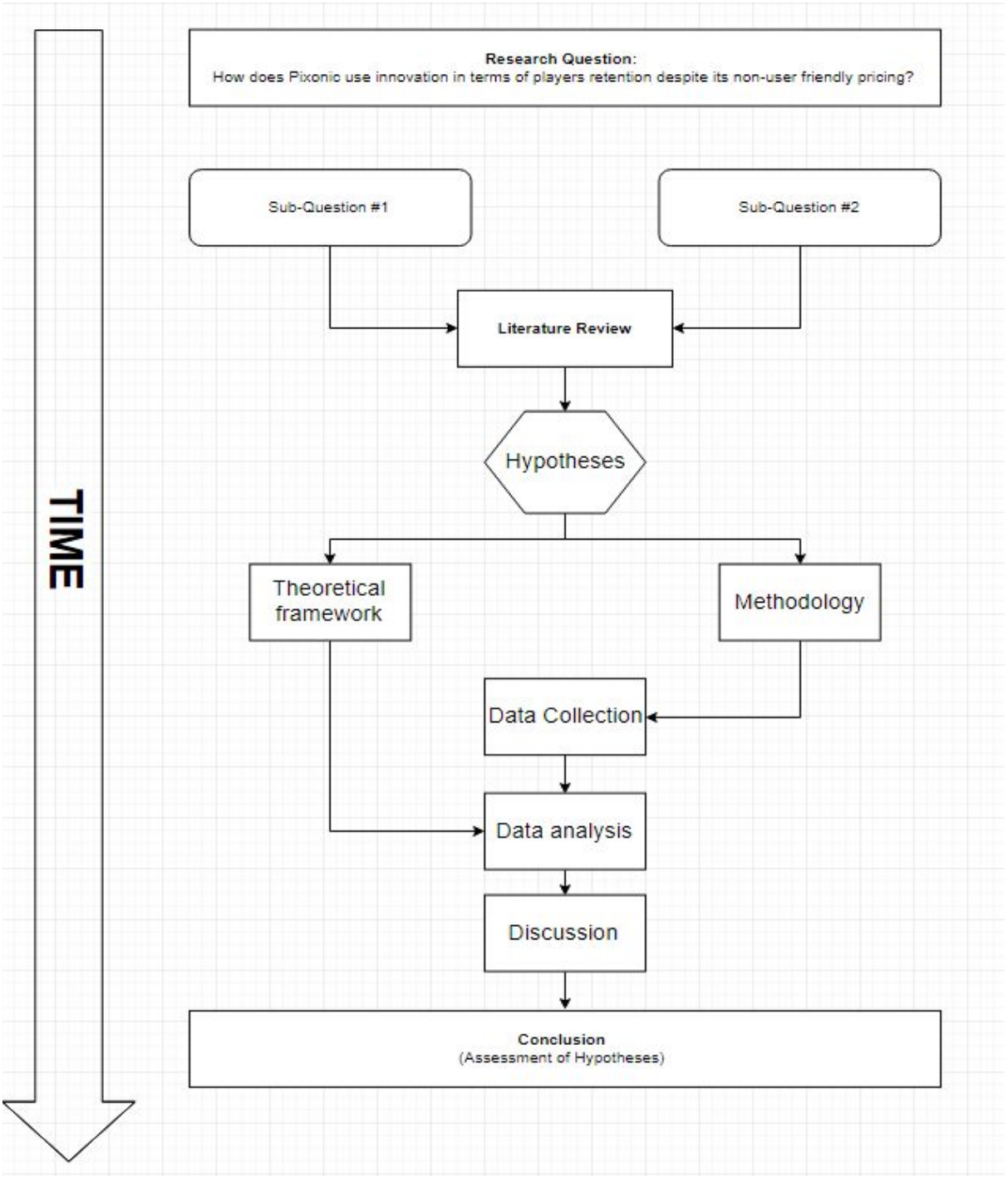

Figure 4: Research guide

4.4. The Case

4.4.1. Revenue streams of mobile games

This chapter of the project aims to deconstruct the mobile gaming market business models, meaning that we will talk about different types of monetization (way of earning revenue) techniques or revenue streams.

4.4.1.1.Free-to-play

Before we partake, Free-to-play model (or F2P) needs to be described. As the name suggests, F2P games are essentially games which offer free basic content, which most of the time requires players to pay real money later to access all of it.

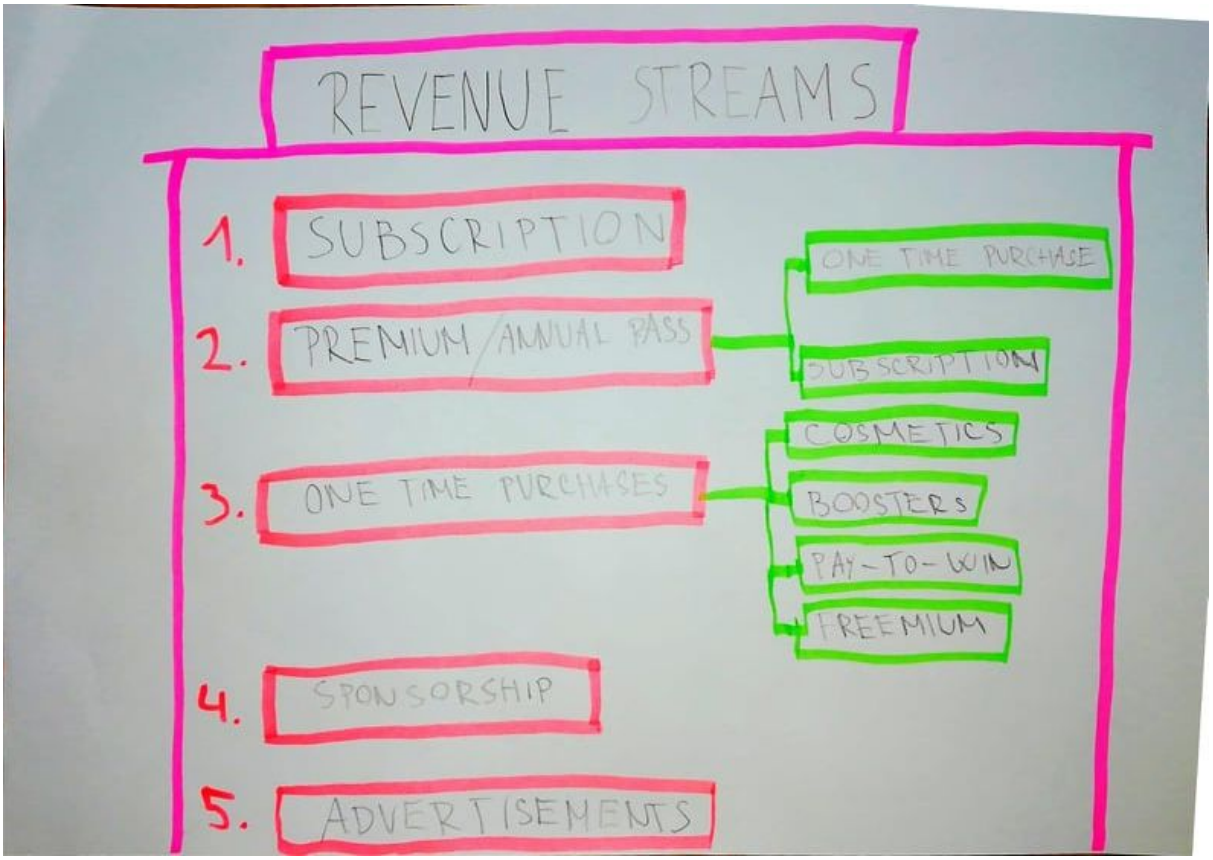

Figure 5: Free-to-Play business model revenue streams

There are several ways of how F2P games generate revenue, starting off with the in-app purchases or one time purchases (Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara, 2017). In-app purchases can range from cosmetics (being a different visual of content within the game) to

having an edge within the game and even further content (Freemium). Having an edge within the game could mean many things.

First, it could be an access to a stronger champion, faction, etc., which is more powerful compared to the users who are not making any in-app purchases - these games are referred to “pay-to-win” model (Tomić 2017).

Second, it could be anything that would allow users to continue improving their power within the game ,without having to wait for period of time (it can be short, five minutes or even a whole day - boosters). This gives players form of edge, as their rate of improvement increases drastically compared to the free users. Together with pay-to-win models are ways of revenue generation, however developers try to keep it balanced for the free players in order to not give too much of an advantage to the overpaying users (Locke and Uhrínová 2017, p.39).

Besides the direct monetization of user purchases, games are utilizing also advertisements, which are most of the time unskippable unless users pay for premium access or annual pass, or even triggered by users to receive rewards, which requires a monthly subscription or a one time purchase (Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara 2017). This way, companies can ensure that regardless of people playing the game, without paying anything, they get revenue in return.

This monetization technique is similar to sponsorship, which essentially utilizes the agreement between creators and sponsors, and create incentives for users to achieve goals in the game to receive discount for the sponsors products or services (Goncharova, 2017,p. 20).

Consequently, company either receives money from free users through advertisements or they get it from premium users (subscribed) and one time purchases or subscription.

There are also freemium models, which essentially is a F2P game, which requires a payment in order to unlock further content of the game. In short, some content is locked for free users, and not for the members or those who have paid for the content to be unlocked (Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara 2017). Finally, there is an additional way of monetization, which is subscription or as called by Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara “Premium”. This form works similarly as freemium model, but in order to unlock the content, user needs to be subscriber monthly (Ibid.). A fine example for this would be Runescape, which is a free-to-play game, having perhaps 20 percent of the content available for free users whereas the rest is locked only for members of their community.

All these variations of F2P model, however can be combined to reach desired goal of high revenue (Ibid.). They can all be used at the same time in one model. These techniques however, need to be cast with moderation as excessive monetization can prove to be counter-profitable. This model have advantages and disadvantages. Starting off with the advantages, the fact that F2P games are accessible for everyone is a huge advantage as it is able to attract and reach more audience.

Secondly, it creates more incentives for players to keep playing the game as opposed to the buy-to-play model game, which will be discussed later in relation to our theory. And lastly, due to its accessibility, it creates some sort of platform for people to connect (friends can play without paying money to begin with). As for disadvantage, the possibility of people paying money in a free-to-play game is questionable but can be overcome through large quantity of users. Furthermore, people can play the game and never pay money for anything. This means that, developers do not necessarily receive money instantly but over time.

4.4.1.2. Buy-to-play

This model is quite straightforward and basic as there is one transaction happening with all the games using this business model. Buy-to-play games are games, which require one payment in the beginning in order to be able to access the whole game. There is mostly no in-app purchases, no advertising and no other extra costs. This model has few disadvantages and advantages. As for advantages, creators will definitely receive profit as it is requirement to pay before users can play the game (Goncharova, 2017,p. 17). Regarding the disadvantages, compared to the F2P games, which do not require a payment before playing, it is difficult to persuade people to buy a game (Ibid:20). This particular model has recorded a downfall over the years from 2011 to 2017 by 50 percent of total app revenue (Ibid.). We can also see it from the statistics from Apple store, which shows that top 50+ grossing games are essentially using the free-to-play model (Thinkgaming 2019).

4.4.2.Pixonic

Pixonic is a Russian video game developing company which was founded in Moscow in 2009 and which focuses mainly on developing games for mobile phones. Today the company has four offices in Moscow, Berlin, Belgorod and Cyprus with more than 200 employees in total taking care of the games.

The company has launched several games throughout the short lifespan of the company, however, one game, War Robots, stand out in particular as the company's flagship and is a very successful mobile game currently (Pixonic). Aside from War Robots, then pixonic is currently supporting 2 other games called War Robots VR, which essentially is the same as War Robots, but takes the form of a 1st person shooter game with a point of view from the pilot in the Robot, and Robinson which is a survival game, where the protagonist crashes on a deserted island (Ibid.).

4.4.2.1.War Robot

War Robots is a multiplayer third-person shooter game, where players battle each other with robots designed after the players own preferences. The game takes place in different battle arenas which last up to 10 minutes. In these arena's, two teams consisting of 6 players on each team will seek dominance over the battle which can be archived in two different ways. the first one is capture and control as many as possible of the five beacons, which are divided across the arena. Securing control over these will generate points, that ultimately leads to victory. The other way to dominate the battlefield is simply to destroy all of the enemy players robots. Each player is a robot pilot who will be given a hangar with room for up to five robots, all of which are highly customizable so the player can select whichever player, they prefer. As the pilot progresses through the game, he/she acquires gold and silver which can be spent on buying new and more advanced robots and weapons or simply upgraded that of which the pilot already owns. According to gaming expert Vadim Bulatov, one reason behind War Robots success is because it is a niche market (Sigabatulin 2016).

An essential point in War Robots history is the 5th of July 2018. This day marks a turning point for the economy of the game, which in the common players tongue is referred to as old economy and new economy. From this day and forward Pixonix drastically changed the economy of the game by increasing the overall in-game cost of buying/upgrading content and through the amount of time it take to acquire and upgrade the content (War Robots).

4.4.2.2. War Robots Revenue Streams

As aforementioned silver and gold are the two different types of valuta, which exist in the game. Silver is the most common valuta which is used to upgrade the robots and weapons or to construct the new ones. Gold is one of greater value and it represents a more universal valuta, which can be used to a wide range of thing including a faster upgrade time of robots and weapons, can be converted into silver, buying exclusive and more advanced robots and weapons and more. Robots and weapon are divided into three categories depending on their rarity. The most common robots and weapons can be bought for silver. Robots and weapons which are a bit more advanced can be bought for gold and the most advanced stuff are constructed through components which also are bought for gold, however, it is vastly more expensive and takes a lot of time to acquire. Aside from the two aforementioned types of valutas, there is an in-game lottery where players can win different prices depending on the lottery ticket which is bought for keys. These are either acquired through playing (0-10 depending on performance) or bought for money. In the game, the robot is of the greatest value and they have a more significant impact on the game. More advanced robots tend to acquire special abilities which increase their survivability while simultaneously makes it easier for the player overpower the enemy robot. This also accounts for the weapons, which also acquire special abilities, however, the impact on the game is less significant meaning that a player with an advanced robot and beginner weapons can effectively compete at the higher level of the game, while the reverse situation with advanced weapons and beginner robots usually will leave players struggling as early as in the lower levels of the game. In the game, it is possible to use booster which as the name suggest, boost the player's performance within a specific area for a short period of time, Thereby gain a minor advantage through stronger in-game performance or an increased silver profit after the game. These boosters are bought for gold. Ultimately, there exits four subcategories of in-game purchases; gold, robot and weapons, keys and premium accounts. As War Robots are using a combination business model, they have several methods of generating revenue, one of these are ingame promotion, by which the player will acquire a small benefit or boost within a range of categories by watching small promotions for other games. All this types of revenue stream are, according to game designer Ivan Zvonarev, a reflection of an innovation strategy which focuses on giving highest po thessible result of satisfaction with lowest possible investment of resources. In this

context, he means the entrepreneur must offer customers a reward that is comparable or more valuable than the investment. Moreover, he argues that customers have desires which must be satisfied by adding new mechanics in the context of War Robots (Zvonarev 2019).

Currently, there exist two types of revenue streams in the game; in-game purchases by players and promotions of other games through commercials.

At some point in the game, all types of content will be available for the free non paying users. New content can usually only be bought or acquired through luck in various different types of giveaways/minigames in the beginning, but after an unspecified amount of time that usually last around 3 months, all content are to be released for everyone. This means that value which players receive isn't mainly through the exclusivity of the product, but rather measured in the amount of time it take to acquire them, as faster upgrading and acquisition of content are the main advantage of paying for it. Moreover, although the game is based on "pay to win" model, it mostly requires the strategy and techniques of players to compete against others with regular updates (Ibid.).

4.4.2.3. The streamers

A major part of War Robots is the community. It serves as the platform with multiple purposes including marketing, content feedback and general information sharing. Therefore parts of the community are supported by Pixonic. More specifically this includes many of the more successful youtube streamers, who are given what is called a "battle-rec account". These accounts have access to all content in game thereby allowing versatile content creation for the youtube streamers. Furthermore, the streamers are supported through social media, where streams and other videos are announced through the public War Robots pages. These announcements are sometimes accompanied by free giveaways, where a specific amount of viewers will be given gold, a robot or weapon.

Aside from the streamers, competitions are held where players can make colour designs for the various robots in the game, and those deemed the best will be implemented in the game so that player for gold can buy these new colour designs.

4.4.2.4. Clans

Clans are an essential part of the community within Was Robots as it is the way, which players connect with each other on a social level. Throughout the history of the game, a

substantial amount of innovation has taken place within the field of clans in War Robots. In the beginning, being in clan meant that players has a limited group of player's, whom they could play with in the team, but communication and even finding a clan was difficult and often required some involvement out of the game. Today, there is an in-game search engine, which matches players with potential clans, daily task for clan members, clan competition and ranking. However, the in-game communication are still lacking innovation thus resulting in players using programs such as discord as a communication and team-speaking platform, when playing together. Overall the way of which, the clans have been developed in War Robots is grounded is an innovative philosophy in which players need to learn how and why they use new features. Simplified, it means it is important for the players to feel motivated to use the new features, thus meaning it takes time to implement something new within the game (Zvonarev 2019).

4.4.2.5. Community

As the community in War Robots is an important aspect of both the game and this project, then it is important for us to define what is meant by the community in the project. In our project, the community is referred to the people, who are free-willingly engaging with the people of same specific interest, and actively participate in communication. The community also includes personalities such as streamers and other influencers.

4.5. Limitation

Limitations are limits posed to the research and researchers by the environment, their abilities as well as their situation. For us firstly, it is the time constriction limitation. This research was underdone under a strict deadline, which consequently limits the time during which research could have improved on. Furthermore, this research is trying to investigate a private company, which could not get in touch with. Since they are a private company, we do not have access to their statements and other potential valuable data, which could have been used to strengthen our arguments.

Moreover, our survey was taken in English. This poses a limitation towards certain nationalities as their mother language is not English and may consequently limit their comprehension of the questions.

Regarding the web-based survey, there may be some limitation to the people taking the survey. We are releasing survey into open social media channels, which most people can access without any issue. Naturally, there might be people who do not fulfill the requirement of playing the game on their phones but on their computers as these open channels do not limit people's access based on the platform. Others can also "troll" or make fun of the survey, causing some errors or incoherence in the data.

Furthemore, we have used some articles, which are in Russian language to describe mobile gaming innovation in the case of War Robots.

4.6. Time horizons

In terms of our methodological strategy or the "onion" we use cross-sectional design for time horizon design. Cross-sectional design is mostly dedicated for a research using multiple cases (Ibid:53), however due to it focusing at one point of time instead of a multiple points of time, meaning we chose cross-sectional design instead of the longitudinal design.

5. Analysis

This section will further analyse quantitative data as well as qualitative data, that is related to questions about the role of the community and the innovation behind the business model. For the analysis and also discussion, we will be using data from Appendix A (results from the survey) and Appendix B (coding).

In the case of the game War Robots, the Network Effect Theory has a high applicability, as without the players, there would be no reason to play the game. In the questionnaire, we asked the players; "*Were you inspired by someone to play the game?*" As the Network Effect theory argues that there is a positive correlation between the number of people playing the game and growing consumption. (Katz and Shapiro 1985, p. 424)

The answers suggest that only 19.8 percent of players were inspired to play the game by Friends, 12.6 percent by Social media, 8.1 percent by Streamers or other influencers. Interestingly 64.9 percent responded that they were influenced by "Other". Although we unfortunately do not know what "other" means, this finding does answer our questions regarding the friends of the players to have some influence on them to play this specific game. Moreover, the inspiration coming from "other" is still an inspiration, meaning that the players were inspired somewhere to play the game. Pei-Shan and Hsi-Peng (2014) have experienced similar finding in their research, where they concluded that players are significantly inspired to play games that already have large amount of people playing the game.

Although, we did not find out what "other" means, we did ask a following question; "*how did you learn about the game*", where 42.3 percent answered "Random search" which can be understood as store recommendations, or charts. 12.6 percent learned about the game because of "Friends", 18 percent because of "Social media" and only 5.4 percent because of "Streamers or other influencers". One could argue, that the 42.3 percent of players, who conducted a random search, were influenced by something during their search that convinced them to play the game.

In regards to streamers and the influence to play the game, we asked the players another question; "*Have you been inspired by the streamers or other players to buy in-game content?*" Where 23.4 percent of the sample answered Yes and 76.6 percent No. Which only underlines the analysis from the previous answers. It can be argued, that most of the players from our sample are not pursued by the sreamers or other players to buy in game content.

In order to fully understand the role of the community in the game, we followed with these questions; "*Are you member of a clan/group with which you play together?*". Here the answers were more clear, 84.7 percent answered Yes, whereas only 15.3 percent answered No, which suggests that being part of a community when playing the game is important for the players. And a following question; "*If you are member of a clan/group, is it because you enjoy being part of the community while playing the game?*", where the answers were similar to the previous question: 76.6 percent answered Yes and 23.4 percent No. Meaning, the community of the game, and the option for the players to interact, form clans and play together is very important. Pei-Shan and Hsi-Peng (2014) have had similar findings in their

research, where the enjoyment and interaction with other players were the major reasons for playing mobile social games in general.

Based on the Network Effect theory it can be argued, that since this game is also based on social interactions within the game, where players form so called "clans" in which they play against other clans. It is therefore a rather social game, where the direct network effects have a certain power over the players, and where the players keep playing not only because they want to, but because their clan friends need everyone in order to succeed in the game.

In the questionnaire, a follow up question was asked regarding clans; "*To what extent does your clan/group communicate with each other when you play together?*", where 52.3 percent of players use the "ingame chat". Meaning they use the text chat integrated in the game to text to each other. However larger number prefers to speak instead of write, as 58.6 percent of players use "Discord" or other similar voice chat programs. Interestingly, 31.5 percent of players speaks together directly. Therefore, it can be argued that at least the 31,5 percent of responders actually meet in person to play the game together, and to communicate in person while playing the game. Moreover, since more than half of the responders communicates at least on the basis of voice chats, the game can be understood as a social game. This understanding is well aligned with the analysis of the above theoretical analysis of the clans.

The interest of this research then went into questioning the power of the clan. As it seems from the analysed questions, for large amount of players it is important to be part of a group or a clan that players the game together, and sometimes even in the same room. This might be common when playing a computer game, however the game of War Robots is a mobile game, which was not a common device to socialise around. However, similar finding was reported by Pei-Shan and Hsi-Peng (2014), where they concluded that the fact that mobile games are played on a device, which is arguably much more accessible and easy to access any time (fx. During a bus drive or when waiting in a line), rather than a computer, has not been a an important factor in terms of players playing the game and socialising around it.

The power of the clan was further explored by question; "*If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it as because most of your clan members have specific robots/equipment and you bought it to be a part of the clan strategy*", here 40.5 percent of players believe that they were not motivated at all, 13.5 percent were moderately

motivated and 9 percent were highly motivated. Even though, the numbers for moderately motivated and highly motivated players are smaller than the percentage of people who were not motivated, the numbers are still rather high. Based on the Network Effect theory, and the adoption of a standard, one can argue, that the 13.5 of moderately motivated and the 9 percent of highly motivated players, had the desire to adapt to the same standard as the rest of the team. Bellow, one can see one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input that underlines the adoption to a certain standard;

> *"I have been playing for about 3 years I do purchase but only to help upgrade the new robots they come out with I cannot compete I am also ranked higher than my skill level because I've been playing so long and sometimes I just have to put it down"*

This player has been purchasing robots when they come out, because otherwise he would need to wait a long time to be able to compete on the same level and therefore progress in the game. He therefore adopts to a certain standard, that is put forward by the game makers at first, and then some of the players. It is moreover interesting to see, that there is a certain divide between the players who want to advance the the game, and the more casual players.

When seen through the glasses of the behavioral theory, this question is related to the social factors influencing players which in this project are status and community. These factors are strongly connected as status within the game mainly are archived within the clan itself, as communication with players outside of the clans or similar community groups is almost non-existing. Thus collecting data about one factor without the other becomes a difficult process. The aforementioned data shows that most people weren't influenced by these factors, while only a small amount were highly influenced. Therefore, our data suggest that the status and attachment within the community is not as important for the players as the practical factors.

A following question, we asked the players; "*Do you feel like you are getting enough value in return for your purchases?*" 27 percent believes they get the value they pay for, 44.1 percent believes they get less value than they pay for, 2.7 percent believes they got significantly more value and 4.5 percent more value than they pay for. One could therefore argue, that the results are very similar for the amount of people who believe that they got the value they payed for, or they got even more value for the price. Whereas other half that believes they got less value in return for the price. According to Rezaei and Ghodsi (2014),

"value perception is considered as a core business driver in successful business" (Ibid:260). Bellow, one can see one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input;

> *"I paid after a couple of years exposure to the game. I felt justified in my purchase because I had been delivered content which had provided entertainment for me for free up until that point. However compared to other games content is lacking and most prices don't mesh with my value perception especially when there are traditional games that deliver content for 50 dollars on initial purchase and semi annual expansions that give access to all content."*

The feeling that players have when playing something for free, and therefore justifying their purchases is very interesting topic that we have not initially looked into. However, this answer is interesting, as the person argues that he has been playing the game for more than three years, and even though he finds little value in the purchases he has made, he still keeps playing the game. It could be argued, that the players will continue to play the game regardless of getting enough value back for their purchases. However, it can be also argued, that they find different value in the game, such as the social setting of the clans that brings enough value for them to continue to play the game. As argued by Rezaei and Ghodsi (2014) It is crucial for the game makers to understand what their players value in the game, and structure it accordingly.

In order to sum up these questions, we asked; "*Do you think that it would be hard for you to quit playing the game, after you either established yourself in a clan, or you have friends in the game, or you bought some of the features in the game?*" where 21.6 percent answered that it would be Very Hard and 27 percent Hard. Whereas 16.2 percent answered a little, and 16.2 answered that it would not at all be hard. Therefore, more than half of the sample believes that it would be hard for them to quit playing the game, because of the social setting behind it, and also their investments into the game.

This seems to be inline with the Network Effect theory in terms of the direct network effect, where the players that are part of a clan become part of this society where they might experience a sort of a social pressure to continue play the game, to socialise around it with other clan members, and to do anything that will help the clan to succeed. Once they are embodied into this society, it is hard for them to leave because of the social pressure.

Moreover, based on this understanding, one can understand the reasons for War Robots to be a game where players can download it for free, and later on decide whether they

want to buy some in game purchases. It could be argued that there is a direct correlation between the amount of players, popularity of the game, and consequently also the value of the game. It is therefore logical to have free access to the game, where players would have the option to try it out, and keep playing it in case the game is good, in which case they might tell all their gaming or non-gaming friends to join the game. Once the player base is established, and the players adopt the standard, some players will start paying for some of the micro-transactions that the game offers, in order to advance in the game. And based on the last question asked, after the players establish themselves in a clan, and they invest their time and money into the game, it will be hard for them to leave the game. Bellow, one can see one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input;

> *"One of the best pvp games, high social activity like the aspect of getting friendship with peps all over the world. Also quite a good entertainment experience. Prices very high for online game and that is the most disturbing fact only the good community keeps me in not the better experience of buying new things ."*

This quote is interesting, besides it adds to the analysis of the society being important factor in people playing the game, this person says that his clan is actually keeping him from making in game purchases. This is something we have not thought about, however it only underlines the strength of the clan.

According to Jobs to be Done theory, the company has to create a value in a sense that customers are not only buying the products, they are fulfilling their desires by getting jobs done (Silverstein 2013,p. 3). When we asked the players, "*Do the "chores" such as daily login, daily quests, special events,etc. give you an incentive (gives you a motivation) to play the game?*" we observed that 68.5 percent answered "Yes". This indicates chores or jobs give users a big motivation to get back to the game or get retained more. Jobs are accepted by the players as a reward, which shows the value of Pixonic delivers to its clients. Although, 31.5 percent of the players answered "No", most of our sample has been persuaded by Pixonic's value creation.

In order to understand customer value incentives we followed questionnaire with the following question "*Have you ever purchased something within War Robots?*". More than half of players with 55 percent answered "many times" while 21 percent answered "never".

Related to Schumpeter's Innovation theory of profit, entrepreneurs of Pixonic increased the demand of the products (Cantwell 2000) as over half players considered making purchases as an investment due to the value they perceive from those purchases. On the other hand, interesting point is that one fifth of the players prefer to remain "free users" due to them not seeing value from purchases or not being attracted enough and therefore they decide to not take part in them.

The following question was connected to the purchases of players, where we asked them "*If yes then what price range covers your purchases?*" and they were allowed to pick several options. Therefore, one could argue, that most users prefer to make only the basic, not so expensive purchases, as 27.9 percent answered "cheapest" which ranges between 1-10 USD. It seems that the players are waiting for special deals containing more features, which are however not very expensive, and therefore the players satisfaction is increased. According to Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), money is not as important as people think it is however, we do see in the results of our data, the cheapest purchases accounts for the biggest part. When it comes to the pricing, it is often a very specific group of people within the B2C relationship, that respond to the pricing, this group is every economically conscious and saving money is one of the primary benefits of this group. This aligns with the cheap purchases made in-game, as they often are momentary good offers, that allows the buyer to save money on the purchase.

The category with the most expensive content received the second most answers with one fifth of the players (19.8 percent) have made purchases over 80 USD. It seems that this category of players may perceive they are receiving sufficient value from these high purchases or at least to some extent as only 30 percent of the players believe they get value in return. However, just 9 percent answered "slightly expensive" ranges between 50-80 USD. According to the data, players are not attracted by middle class items rather than paying a little more for the best ones. Furthermore, it could confirm that money is not as important to most people as it is often assumed as it also aligns with the theory of Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017,p. 82f).

In the case of War Robots, there are multiple different contents sold, such as gold (currency), premium accounts, special offers and others. Based on the explanation of Schumpeter's innovation theory of profit, Pixonic added several features to the game with the purpose of increasing demand which can be understood as part of an innovation process

(Cantwell 2000). In order to fully understand this issue, we continued by asking; "*What type of content did you spend money on?*". The answers were: 66.7 percent for gold, 38.7 percent for premium accounts, 34.2 percent for special offers, and 27.9 percent for special event currency. Two third of the players are willing to spend money on the virtual currency of the game, which is useful to buy robots, equipments, powers and etc. Linked with our result of the behaviour analysis, money seems to be one of the biggest motivators, thereby it generates the most value as they acquire positive outcome in terms of prices. One third of respondents are spending money on subscription base premium membership, which is 10 or 30 days packages. These packages are valuable mostly for players who spend long time in the game since they give them limited time advantages and therefore time constricted value. Surprisingly, special offers are not taken much advantage of, however players prefer cheapest purchases mostly. Anyway, value is more important for more than one third of respondents. In the end, almost one third seems to be active during special events in terms of their purchases. Here Jobs to be Done theory explains that the customers are attracted with new contents, opportunities and "jobs" such as daily tasks, they get done and achieve their goals by receiving reward (Ulwick 2005, p. 23). This inspires them to invest money as it brings value to them.

The following questions are related to motivation of players to achieve goals including saving time, upgrading or creating robots/equipment, saving money on good offers and etc. while they make purchases. We aimed to identify their sources of motivation how players try to reach their goals by getting specific jobs done (Silverstein 2013,p. 3). The first question was "*If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it to save time on upgrading or creating new robots/equipment?"*, which is one of the necessary question in this matter. From the results, the choices of "highly motivated" by 41.4 percent of the players indicates that players seek to save time by investing into equipments and robots. Undoubtedly, 50 percent agreed to the fact their purchases were based on time saving factors. Just 9.9 percent of users were not motivated perhaps due to their level of investment to the game, since their investment is low, they do not try to get "the most valuable content" within the game. Below, it is stated one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input;

> *"I have aquired every top gear atleast 1 of each after few days or sometimes weeks of release of that equipment through giveaways which would otherwise take several months to aquire for a free player."*

In this example, the player accepts the fact that he was motivated to make purchases regularly to save time, otherwise he believes take him more time as a free player. It could be argued that with each purchase players are more inclined to make more purchases in the future .

Within the field of behavioral theory, time is itself are expected to be of significant value in War Robots as general upgrading and acquiring new content can take up to more than one week for one new piece of content or one level upgraded. This would align with the theory, which suggests that time is of significant value to most consumers and that it is common for people to pay a little extra for a thing which saves them time such as high-speed train tickets instead of ordinary tickets (Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt 2017,p. 80f). When taking into account what type of item, which the players buy, the numbers one spot is gold with 66,7 % and the number two spot is premium accounts with 38,7%. This can further contribute to the value and significance of time, as both of these are the main sources of decreasing the amount of time, which it takes to acquire or upgrade new content.

As most of the users are looking for the cheapest content we questioned "*If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it to save money on a good offer?*", here 44.1 percent showed "highly motivated", while 17.1 percent showed "moderately motivated" and no negative answers were recorded. Most of the respondents seem to save money for their purchases, when good offers are made within the game. Ulwick (2005) suggests that if companies are creating special offers or discounts, it will automatically increase customers satisfaction as well as the value of their purchase. Furthermore, the results of the data is interesting because according to Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), time should be a stronger motivator, however, this data suggests more players were highly motivated by money as opposed to time (Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt 2017,p. 82f).

When a company launches new content, they are testing it to see how much value it might bring to the customer. Our next question was *"If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it to get something new, which wasn't available in the workshop yet?"* to identify customer's incentives towards new contents. Majority of users with 34.2 percent claimed that exclusivity does not bring them value and they were "not motivated" to try new features of the game. However, almost one fifth of respondents with 18 percent were "highly motivated" who had some preference for exclusivity but it is not as important as value of saving time.

Our questionnaire was followed by a simple question *"If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it to improve your overall performance through new and higher upgraded robots/equipment?"* to test if players make purchases to increase their power in the game. The results were 44.1 percent answered "highly motivated" and 18 percent answered "moderately motivated". More than half of sample were motivated to upgrade robots and equipments in order to save time, and also to increase their performance (having more power within the game).

For two thirds of players, improvement was a major motivation to make purchases. According to Schumpeter's theory it is considered as the outcome of entrepreneur's performance to create innovation and profit (Cantwell 2000, p.3). Below, it is stated one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input;

> *"I have been playing for about 3 years I do purchase but only to help upgrade the new robots they come out with I cannot compete I am also ranked higher than my skill level because I've been playing so long and sometimes I just have to put it down"*

As it is clearly explained there, this player is motivated to purchase new robots when they are available in the game in order to be stronger in a short time than others. Without following new contents he claims that he is not able to compete. It is defined as higher upgraded robots and equipments are major part of the game and they motivate players to purchase those items.

With enjoyment being one of our most basic needs and because enjoyment is linked to the performance in the game, then it is safe to say there is connection between purchases and achieving enjoyment through higher performance (Trepte & Reinecke 2011,p. 555f). Thus the results of performance because relevant to answering the enjoyment factor of behavioral theory.

If the amount the players spend is taken into account then the 19,8% which made the most expensive purchases becomes interesting, as the newest and most expensive content usually ranks amongst the strongest as well. Furthermore, more than 28% spend money on Robots or weapons in most categories which could suggest acquiring the newest content for improving the performance.

Amongst the emotional factors, self-improvement and pride and shame are those of main relevance to this project. Self-improvement is about reaching one's full potential or changing one's identity through purchases which people believe will lead to a change. As this

is a game, this could be “I spend all summer playing to upgrade my Robot X, thereby, increasing my ranking so I could join clan X”. As Improvement within the game linked to performance, which again is linked the how strong the player's robots and weapons are, then there is a relation between one's self-improvement and how new/upgraded the player's robots and weapons are. In this sense, money spend to improve the overall performance also becomes important in order to understanding the self-improvement factor.

The following question was similar to previous one as *“If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it to avoid dropping in rating?”* but the answers were unexpected as over the half respondents with 57 percent are not motivated at all. According to Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), the emotional factors of pride and shame are re related to how oneself feel, thus making it about rating within the system, as the in-game rating is a reflection of oneself’s performance. However, it seems that most of the players are not interested in the rating of their performance, in contrast only 7.2 (consisting of least amount of respondents) percent believe they their purchase was motivated to avoid dropping in rating. According

As pride and shame a When asked about how many players were motivated to buy content to avoid dropping in rating, 57,7 % answered that they weren’t motivated by this at all, while only 7,2% were highly motivated to make purchases to avoid dropping in rating (Ibid.)

As it is discussed previously, clans are major part of War Robots where players get to be a part of the same “family” and compete as a group. Being part of community has a big role in this game, which many of the players are influenced by, thus contributing to keeping the players attached to the game. That inspired us to ask respondents *“If you have made purchases or considered it, was your motivation for it because most of your clan members have specific robots/equipment and you bought it to be a part of the clan strategy?”* and answers were: 40.5 percent “not motivated”, 9 percent “highly motivated” and 13.5 percent “moderately motivated”. Based on these results, either most people do not seem to get the feeling of unity or community did not inspire them to make purchases. Whereas, one fifth of players were motivated to make purchases for the sake of clans.

Related to the idea that the more contents you buy the stronger you become made us ask a question; *“Does the advantages within the game (new robots) makes you more likely to buy (pay-to-win)?”* The answers were a little surprising, as few people with 15 percent responded “likely”, meaning there are still some players who are motivated to make

purchases in order to become better at the game, in contrast 55 percent responded "not likely", which can be understood as most players being against the idea of "pay to win" and they do not find value of this concept. Below, it is stated one of the quotes from the gathered qualitative input;

"The game is what you make it if you are a payer or a just a player."

Basically, what the players wants to say is that it depends on players either they can afford to pay for the contents and become stronger or keep playing as a "free user". It could be argued that in the context user differentiates "the payer" from "the player" is that some players are not motivated with pay to win model and the game offers many advantages to "payers" to be stronger than "players".

Perhaps it's not about the value, but maybe a simple lack of enjoyment from an unbalanced match, therefore people like that are either nudged into making a purchase, staying in the game without the aspect of enjoyment or just quitting the game.

However, the last question was followed by *"Do you feel like playing more War Robots, if there is a special event going on (Christmas, Easter, Anniversary of the game, etc.)?"*, In order to identify to which extent these kind of special events are valuable to players. Majority of the players answered *"significantly more"* and *"much more"* with 36 and 20 percent, while others answered "some more", "little more" and "not more" with 21.6, 9 and and 12.6 percent. In this matter, limited exclusivity became jobs for players and contain value incentives they perceive. Entrepreneurial innovation by Pixonic made players to get their jobs done and acquire benefits in return (Silverstein 2013, p.3) where more than 80 percent of players were inspired to be active in the game during special events.

6. Discussion

The motivators behind the behavior of the players in War Robots is primarily twofold, based on the knowledge from analysis the data with the behavioral theory, then it becomes clearly that the *practical factors* stand apart from the social and *emotional factors* with significantly higher scores. However, if one "digs" further down below the surface of the social factors, the picture will change. While the numbers are not as behind the practical motivators of money, time and enjoyment, a combined number of more than 20 percent were still moderately motivated or more, to buy content for them to participate in the clan strategy.

Furthermore, according to the behavioral theory, the social factors are stronger than the practical factors.

This position is strengthened by the network effect theory, which suggest that the network itself maintain a certain power over the players through the social network, which they have build. Essentially both of these theories in combination with the data paint a picture of smaller yet more dedicated group of players to which the social aspects of the clans are relevant. Building up a social network takes time, thus explaining why lesser players are influenced by the social factors, however, letting go of people, to whom players has socially interacted with and made friends with, are harder to let go, then a one time poster which offers a discount, thus explaining why the factors are stronger. According to the data, as many as 31,5 percent have met physically and played together thereby manifesting how strong the social bonds within the game are.

As mentioned in the literature review, there were several minor hypothesis to be tested in the project with one of them being *"The community is spuriously loyal to the War Robots, and therefore have trouble quitting it"*. The finding within this project suggest, that at least a smaller group of players, which are heavily influenced by the social network, will have trouble quitting the game. Furthermore, almost 50 percent of the answer within the data answered, that it would be hard of very hard for them to quit the game. Whereas around 30 percent answered that it would not be very hard to leave the game. Zeithaml et all. (1996) moreover argues, that customers have sometimes "spurious loyalty" towards the firm. Meaning that they are still buying the services, even though they are not necessarily satisfied.

This finding is interesting to discuss, because the data is aligned with other answers, such as the one where around 84 percent of players answered that they are members of a clan, and later on, around 76 percent of players answered that they are members of a clan because they enjoy the feeling of community. One can see a certain divide in the data, which arguably suggests that there is a certain divide between the players, which is then the determinant of their experience in the game. One can argue, that there is one part of the players, that is more invested in the game than the other part of the players.

In order to discuss one of our hypothesis; "*Adoption of the game as a 'standard' increases the relative value and demand for in-app products and services*" it has been analysed, that the clan has a certain power over the members of the clan. Where around 20 percent of players argued, that they are motivated to make purchases because of the social

pressure coming from a clan, whereas around 40 percent answered that they aren not. The clan can either make the members to make purchases, as that is needed for the advancement of the clan in the game, which arguably forms certain kind of social pressure. Whereas some clans, on the other hand do not allow their members to purchase anything. In general, around 44 percent of players argued that they are highly motivated to make purchases in order to improve their performance. Which suggests that the some of the players are buying in-app purchases in order for them to be able to follow the standard of the game, that is increasing with every new possible in-app purchase.

It can be argued, that the social factors are responsible for some members making irrational decisions when making in game purchases, especially for the players that are members of clans that wishes to advance through the game.

Practical factors	Time	41,4 % were highly motivated 14,4 % were moderately motivated
	Money	44,1 % were highly motivated 17,1 % were moderately motivated
	Enjoyment	44,1 % were highly motivated 18 % were moderately motivated
Emotional factors	Self-improvement	44,1 % were highly motivated 18,1% were moderately motivated
	Pride and shame	7,2 % were highly motivated 57,7% weren't motivated at all
Social factors	Status and community	9 % were highly motivated 13,5 % were moderately motivated 40 % weren't motivated at all

As aforementioned the practical factors clearly stand out in the data as a significantly higher amount of players answered that they were highly or moderately motivated them. According the Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt (2017), this is the *"weakest"* of the influential factor as it is

easier to make players pay for something, which is socially right, then it is with an appeal of making them save time. It could be argued that the reason why the practical factors received the most answer in relation to how highly they influenced players, is because they are the easiest and most superficial and relate to the broadest playerbase. Any new player could benefit directly from this and is therefore influenced, while the social and emotional factors requires, that the player has build a network with social connection within the game before they have any relevance.

Unlike as the theory suggest, time is not a stronger influence than money which should less influential than most assume. However, the data also shows, 66,7 percent bought gold while 28 percent bought premium accounts. These are the two main methods of reducing the time within the game, but they two type pf purchases and multiple function thereby creating a grey area, in which it is difficult to distinguish between influential factors. Some of the players may simply not care about shorter upgrading time, while others maybe have either of the two for other purposes, but as a result, have benefitted from the smaller upgrading times thus indirectly making them feel like time is not a major factor to them.

Lastly there is the emotional factors, however, the finding in the data suggest that it does not matter for the players if they drop in rating thus meaning that pride related to maintaining a certain status through ranking or dropping in this ranking does not matter for the players, which almost 60 percent answering this while only around 7,2 percent answered, that it mattered to them. In terms of self-improvement, the finding supported that players were more influenced by it, however, as the relationship between self-improvement and and improving the performance through buying new content is unknown, then this factors becomes a grey area, in which it is difficult to determine exactly how much, it influenced the players purchases. Essentially, this leaves this factor as the least influential of them all, even when one takes into account, that within the theory, it is stated that the emotional factors are stronger than the practical, the the findings of the project arguably has difficulties supporting that in the case of War Robots, thus leaving the practical and the social as the most essential ones.

In the case of War Robots, it has been launched with “free to play” model which allowed users to download game from Google Play (Android OS) or App Store (iOS) and play for free. Rissanen’s research (2006) showed that “buy to play” model has not been very successful in terms of sustainability, as mostly expenditure outperforms its profit. Therefore,

in terms of profitability, Pixonic has jumped on the profit sustainability bandwagon and started using the free-to-play model. That would essentially confirm one our hypothesis to some extent that *"the business model of Pixonics War Robots is offering the same value as business model of any other game"* as they are using same model, however in a combined manner. However, the fact that it's just free-to-play means that the potential attraction of receivers is considerably higher (Sang 2015) compared to the buy-to-play model as people are most likely to try the game before investing any monetary value. There is no doubt other factors playing out, such as the graphics, visuals, mechanical aspect of the game (Penttinen, Tuunainen and Rossi 2010), which are high attractants and therefore are one of the attraction motivators.

Since the game is free-to-play, and there are millions of people making the game, where will the revenues come from though? Designing a business model can now take different forms as there are many ways of gaining revenue. We have identified different variations, through the literature (Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara 2017, Tomíc 2017) and found that revenue can be collected through cosmetics or graphical change of design, content related or freemium model or privileged advantages. However, how does the game persuade the community to invest their money on these purchases. It revolves around value creation for the receivers (the community of War Robots). This is where Baghbaniyazdi and Ferdosara (2017) proposed a "Combination model". This model, combines different aspects of monetization techniques, offering premium, freemium content, cosmetical content, pay-to-win content, boosters, it can be everything. So everyone within the community have different value they want from the game, some things are heavily preferred and some are not.

The better ones seems to be chores, or jobs done by the community (Ulwick 2005) as they provide great incentive for the users, due to their reward. To some extent it goes together with exclusivity, where special promotions, events are at place and the community can gain some limited time only exclusive items through jobs, which can also include purchases as it is limited time only. However, it is quite strange as people apparently are not seeking exclusive rewards, but perhaps only exclusive jobs to do. Sang (2015) also mentions the importance of keeping the game up to date, in order to maintain its players base. This could perhaps explain people not wanting rewards, but still motivated to participate in seasonal events.

As already mentioned, "time is of the essence" (Khallash & Lerskov-Schmidt 2017,p. 80f) and shifts us to the point of time saving. Not only are they motivated to finish their

upgrades and get the job done, but also they seek power. Both of these aspects require payments and seem to be one of the main sources of their revenue.

In terms of enjoyment as an influential factor it is relatively strange, as a lot of players seem to seek the enjoyment which is related to performance, however are opposed to pay-to-win content. This could mean that the balance of the in-app purchases is an issue. They seek enjoyment through stronger performance, but are against people whose performance is determined by their monthly paychecks. Or as a respondent described it as in our survey:

"The game is what you make it if you are a payer or a just a player."

. However on the other hand, they do not care so much for the rating as their purchases are not motivated to get advantages. Is it because it is not necessary or is it because the community does not play it for the purpose of competitiveness. However, few people from the community think so. These are no doubt also triggered with special offers, as the community find it to be motivators from time to time.

Finally, in terms of clans it would seem that the community is actually encouraging people to not make purchases, however the built up of a strong network might have the opposite effect. If the community is active (if it will still be active), it might give a potential to draw in more people due to its social capabilities (Mäyrä 2015) and therefore higher chance for Pixonic to get revenue. Essentially, it indicates that Pixonic is actively using the construction of strong social community as a strategy to persuade players to spend more money in the game. Furthermore, this answers the hypothesis: Pixonic is using something new in accordance to the knowledge about value in mobile games, their business model and network, as it means that the highly social aspect of the community is what successfully contributes to War Robots inspiring and motivating their player to play and commit purchases in the game.

These prices apparently have been different as one of our respondents mentioned, as the game demands more time and therefore it requires more purchases to get somewhere. This could also be related to what Sang (2015) has mentioned how Tencent capitalized on the success of "The Kingdom of Rock". Pixonic's maintenance perhaps has increased and receivers were high, so the fact that they have increased the amount of purchases necessary for improvement should maybe not come as a surprise.

Overall, Pixonic has become flexible with it's monetization techniques changing, based on the situation (Schumpeter's innovation theory), combining multiple aspects of already functioning and efficient methods and capitalizing on receivers values.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion of the analytical findings, and in order to answer the research question it can be argued that the social aspect of the game has a larger value than it was initially thought. Throughout the analytical chapter and the discussion, there was a visible divide in the data, which ultimately suggests a certain divide in the players. It can be concluded that this is a group of players who are playing the game more as a social activity, where they are members of a clan and they only buy the cheapest in game content, they are also not necessarily influenced by the streamers or other influencers to make purchases. These players often meet in person in order to play the game, and they are not trying to necessarily advance very fast in the game. They have arguably also a better experience, as they feel like they are getting enough value from the game, without necessarily paying a lot. These are also the players which are most likely influenced by the practical values and therefore account for a bigger part of the cheap purchases as they are not as attached to the game.

On the other hand, it can be concluded that there is a second category of players, who see most value in advancing in the game, meaning that they often invest into in game purchases, especially those that will allow them to advance faster. Most of these players are likely do join clans, and then they switch in between them, in order to join the best one. These players will moreover continue to play the game, regardless of whether they feel that they received enough value back from the game, or from their purchases simply because they are so attached and invested in the social aspect of the game. Furthermore, these are likely the players, which account for most of the expensive purchases as the social factors are much stronger than the practical ones.

Moreover, it seems that Pixonic uses a combination model consisting of the traditional freemium model, in-app purchases and pay to win in relation to a very strong social community that encourage player through various methods including real life friendship, daily clan chores and similar jobs which assist in keeping the players attached to the game thereby simultaneously encouraging them to play the game.

It can be therefore concluded, that the players find value in the community that surrounds the game, which is inherently the reason why they stay and keep playing the game. Furthermore, Pixonic is trying to perform innovation process by creating strong customer value based on jobs (activities) players are executing successfully and improving the satisfaction.

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