Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

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The Blame Game: Tilting and Coaching in Esports

An exploratory study using SenseMaker® to look at how tilting affects esports athletes, and the role of coaching in relation to this.

Master's thesis in Counselling Science
Supervisor: Jonathan Reams
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Abstract English

Esports as an industry and as a spectator scene is growing bigger by the day, and their position as a sport is gradually being acknowledged across the world. As esports is still a new field it lacks the structures of traditional sports, and the organized support-team around. The focus within esports is often technical development and physical health, and thus, the focus on mental health within the field is narrow. A strong mental health, a good coach-athlete relationship and a supportive team is linked to better performance and well-being in individual athletes and could be seen in esports as well. Through early research and the use of an expert panel, the phenomena of *tilt* or *tilting* were discovered and helped concretize the research question. Tilting is acknowledged as a state of mind that negatively affects decision making and performance, and this negative state would spiral and lead to more tilting. Tilting is often set in relation to internal and external influences in the form of losing/dying in games, people problems or technical issues.

This thesis takes a closer look at tilting as a phenomenon, how players react and cope, where players put their blame, and what the coach role is in all of this.

This study explores the experiences of 67 esports players using a sensemaking perspective to discover what the players themselves experience while tilting through micro narratives. The esports players sent in their experiences using the tool SenseMaker and this created a big data set with qualitative narratives and quantitative data in the form of figures and tables. This included their coping mechanism, reactions, focus and opinions. Lastly, they were able to answer questions about teammates and coach role. It was seen that the role of a coach in esports is often combined with others, or that they have multiple coaches. The mix of quantitative and qualitative research created room for the respondents themselves to interpret their experiences, and with help from an expert panel these narratives were analysed and put in a system to look for trends and opinions within the field.

According to the findings, esports players have a negative view on tilting and their experiences. Players would in general blame either themselves or others, and their view on the coach tasks would differ from having focus on technical skills or personal support. There were also findings that showed the importance and relation to Adult Development theories, and that tilting could be seen as a tool for understanding and growth.

Lastly, the findings of this study shows that the field of esports is in need of a bigger mental focus, as well as a better structure of the team's organization.

Abstract Norwegian

E-sport som bransje og deres tilskuerscene vokser seg større for hver dag som går, og posisjonen som sport blir gradvis anerkjent over hele verden. Siden e-sport fortsatt er et nytt felt mangler strukturene til tradisjonell idrett, og det organiserte støtteteamet rundt. Fokuset innen e-sport er ofte på teknisk utvikling og fysisk helse, og derfor er mental helse innenfor feltet et lite utberedt tema. En sterk mental helse, et godt forhold mellom trener og idrettsutøver og et støttende team er knyttet til bedre ytelse og velvære hos individuelle idrettsutøvere, noe som også kan sees i e-sport. Gjennom tidligere forskning og bruk av et ekspertpanel ble fenomenene *tilt* eller *tilting* oppdaget, og bidro til å konkretisere forskningsspørsmålet. Tilting er anerkjent som en sinnstilstand som negativt påvirker beslutningstaking og ytelse, denne negative tilstanden vil ofte gå i en ond sirkel og føre til mer tilting. Tilting sees ofte i sammenheng med indre og ytre påvirkninger i form av tap i spill, menneskelige problemer eller tekniske problemer.

Denne oppgaven ser nærmere på tilting som fenomen, hvordan spillere reagerer og takler tilting, hvor spillerne legger skylden, og hva trenerrollen er i alt dette.

Denne studien utforsker opplevelsene til 67 e-sportsspillere ved å bruke et «sensemaking» [meningsskapende] perspektiv, for å utforske hva spillerne selv opplever mens de tilter gjennom mikrofortellinger. E-sportspillerne sendte inn sine erfaringer ved hjelp av verktøyet SenseMaker og dette skapte et stort datasett med kvalitative fortellinger og kvantitative data i form av figurer og tabeller. Dette inkluderte blant annet deres mestringsmekanisme, reaksjoner, fokus og meninger. Til slutt ble de bedt om svare på lagkamerater og treneren sin rolle, da det ble sett at rollen som trener i e-sport ofte kombineres med andre roller, eller at de har flere trenere. Blandingen av kvantitativ og kvalitativ forskning skapte rom for respondentene selv til å tolke sine erfaringer, og med hjelp fra et ekspertpanel ble disse fortellingene analysert og sett i sammenheng for å se etter trender og meninger innenfor feltet.

Ifølge funnene har e-sportsspillere et negativt syn på tilting og hva tilting gjør. Spillere vil generelt skylde på enten seg selv eller andre, og deres syn på treneren vil skille seg i form av trenerens fokus på tekniske ferdigheter eller personlig støtte. Det var også funn som viste viktigheten og relasjonen til Adult development theories, og at tilting kunne sees på som et verktøy for forståelse og vekst.

Til slutt viser funnene fra denne studien at e-sportsfeltet har behov for et større mentalt fokus, samt bedre struktur i organiseringen av laget.

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I never thought I'd be back in university after finishing my bachelors in 2015, but here I am, 2022 – and writing the last words on my master's thesis. As I said after my bachelors, *I will never study again!* I now know that you can never predict the future, so, you might see me with a PhD in a few years' time.

I want to thank the great team of professors that made this round of higher education interesting, motivating and encouraging. I want to give a special thanks to my supervisor Jonathan Reams, I know you as a pillar of inspiration. I've learned to trust the process and let it all happen as it tends to do, as we all get to the finish line one way or the other. With your wise words and my stubbornness, I made it. Thank you for helping me create research within the world of mixed methods, even when I was told not to by many others. Thank you for helping me see the possibilities and not the limitations while being realistic, thank you for interesting stories about your life and Sunday zoom-calls.

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I was grateful for the opportunity I was given to present my study at The Gathering: Online, for 200 people on a livestream. I've learned a lot from becoming a part of the twitter esports world, thanks to everyone that shared and partook in the study there. No names mentioned, no names forgotten. Thanks to everyone and no one – and thanks to myself, for being stubborn and strict, but adaptable enough to do this.

I am now more prepared for the future.

Let the games begin

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1 Introduction

Games and forms of "play" have been around since the dawn of humans, but the electronic games and competitions have only started in recent years. The field of esports has been up and coming for quite some time, and it's growing bigger by the day. As this field expands, so does the need of research within it. There are quite a few studies about certain videogames like League of Legends (LoL) and Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), and some from games like Rainbow Six Siege, Super Smash and Rocket League. There are studies about anger and frustration in- and outside of games, research focused on the physical dangers and needs within the sport that makes you sit still in front of a computer screen over time. On the other hand, there is still much to discover in this field, especially within mental health, mental skills and the phenomenon called tilting. Tilting is a frame of mind that is caused by experiences or emotions that negatively affects in-game performance and decision making. In this study I investigate esports players own experience with tilting.

Through understanding more about this phenomenon, we can try to understand more about what causes it, what can help one get out of it – and ultimately improve performance by giving the players better tools to understand and cope with it. The study was focused on Norwegian players, but players based in or from other countries were welcomed to send in their answers to broaden the study of a narrow field.

The Türkay et al. (2020) study *See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: How Collegiate Players Define, Experience and Cope with Toxicity* mentioned possible future studies:

> *Future studies may examine what leads to tilting which could then offer insight into how collegiate esports players can be coached on how to regulate behaviours associated with tilting and possibly prevent toxic behaviours.* (Türkay et al., 2020, p. 9).

My research takes up this invitation to study tilting and how the players should cope or be coached into regulating behaviours, and thus gain better performances. This is expanded on with their opinion on the future of esports training:

> *Professional esports training should include more than just skill improvement. As professional esports players may act as role models to other esports players, there should be mandatory training on how to cope with negative emotions and toxicity (…)* (Türkay et al., 2020, p. 10)

Türkay et al. (2020) open here for a broader picture of what esports is, and that we should focus on what it will be in the future. Understanding the concept of tilting and how the players experience it can help coaches identify triggers, how the tilt happens and where the failure of emotion regulation happens. This can become one of the foundations for a coach to be able to help players towards being more self-conscious, better at regulating emotions and by this, better at performing in games.

The scene of esports is still new and unknown to many people, but it is continuously growing and gaining more attention worldwide. As esports is a fairly new field, to this day it is widely discussed if esports have a place within the field of regular sports. Esports are recognized by organized competitions within videogames, both individual and as a team. In esports, videogames are often played with or against others, and not against a computer or artificial intelligence, and are mainly played using computers or gaming consoles. According to García-Lanzo et al. (2020), the sociological and philosophical explanation of

sports is that a sport includes *game, competition*, and *skills,* which we can find in esports as well since esports is strictly regulated and put in a system. There is also a trend that esports players often use the same amount of time on specialising and training within their field as regular athletes, (García-Lanzo et al., 2020; Tjønndal, 2020) which can be a sign of esports players and athletes in traditional sports to be of the same nature. These athletes, both in regular sports and esports have the same needs when it comes to mental and physical wellbeing, possible stressors and other needs (Emara et al., 2020; García-Lanzo et al., 2020; Poulus et al., 2020).

There are limited publications that bring up the topic of mental health in esports, but more is published daily. Most of the research within the field of esports are on the players' physical wellbeing and needs, as the sport is inactive in the form of competitors being placed in front of a screen for longer periods of time. This is also one of the main reasons the opposing forces don't want esports to be classified as a regular sport (Tjønndal, 2020). By using theories and research from traditional sports for my research, I can look at similarities and differences within the athletes needs as individuals, as a team and what they need from a coach.

1.1 Personal Reason for the Chosen Topic

I chose this topic and field because of my own experiences with videogames and online gaming. I have played on videogame consoles since I was able to hold on to one in the early 90's, and I can't remember a life without a computer in the house. Growing older I began playing more serious games, and I found online communities to be a room of great importance when it came to belonging and friendship, but it was also a place of frustration. I realised that people around me would rage [shout, swear, throw controllers, punch walls and tables], when they failed in games.

Raging was a serious issue for many, and I always wondered why I did not rage – often I tried telling them it was just a game. Looking back, I had some coping strategies and tried to regulate my teammates emotions.

Since I'm a student of counselling science, I've had a few courses within coaching and practical experience through the student business *Innsikt,* where I have coached a few other students. Coaching was for me an interesting way of counselling, as you would have to be genuine and direct, but open and questioning. Trying to light the fire and find the answers in your client. Through these experiences I found the methods and reasoning behind them as something that could be useful for my raging friends.

Expanding this view, I looked towards esports, gaming set in structure, where the gaming experience wasn't just a leisure activity, but it was their income. Would a focus on mental health be useful here? What did the coaches do for the players? And could they do more? This was the beginning of my topic and thesis.

1.2 My Research Question and Scope

The purpose of this thesis is to get insight into the esports players own experiences with tilting, getting insight into their way of coping and emotion regulating mechanisms, and through this look at the coaching role in these topics. This might show us trends that can

help us inspire the way for future coaches within the field. That's why I've created the following research questions:

What can esports players' experiences tell us about tilting?
And what is the esports players view of a coach in this?

I will look at these questions through using a sensemaking perspective, a mix of qualitative and quantitative studies. I wanted the numbers to back up my research but the individual stories to shine a light on personal experiences to show the complexity of the field. Through this I will explore the field of esports and players own narratives to try and look for themes and trends within the field.

1.2.1 Project scope

As my project originally wanted to look at the mental health focus in esports, I had a workshop with my expert panel, as presented further in the methods chapter, to concretize the thesis. This is where I found tilting to be my way into the world of esports and coaching. The questionnaire was created with a general knowledge of the field from academic papers and research – but the path needed to be concretized to fit into a master thesis scope and limitations in resources.

After gaining more knowledge, the aspects of tilting and coach responsibility were set in relation to emotion-regulation, coping mechanisms and adult development theories.

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis will have 6 chapters, this first one is an introduction to the theme and research question. Now we will move on to the theories framing the thesis, before we go into the methods chapter, presentation of data and discussion chapter, ending it all with conclusions, limitations, and possible future studies.

2 Theory

In this chapter I will frame my thesis by reviewing research in relevant areas found through my knowledge of the field, the expert team, my research questions, and the findings from my research. In the first half I have a literature review to introduce esports, the origin of the term tilting and how it is used in esports, and finally the role of a coach and teammates within esports. In the second half I will describe the theoretical framework of this thesis, covering the theme of emotion-regulation, as well as coping, and the self-awareness and maturity models of adult development.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Esports

Esports is the electronical equivalent of traditional sports, where individuals or teams compete within set rules to win contests and championships in both local and international tournaments. According to Billings and Hou (2019), the esports scene is said to have its origins as early as the arcade era between 1972 and 1989. The social desire to play games together and compete was able to move from arcades to the home through the advent of game consoles and the internet. South Korea was one of the countries that at the time didn't want to partake in Japanese culture and banned Japanese products such as the Nintendo and PlayStation, which caused a void when it came to technological leisure activities at home. This void was open to be filled by other options, que computer gaming (Billings & Hou, 2019). South Korea was at the end of the 90's the centre of modern professional esports through encouraging development of information technology, broadband infrastructure, and making their own way into the world of electronic games. In 2000 the Korean e-sports Association was founded. By 2001 there were more than 22 000 internet cafes filled with computers, and with help from the game StarCraft and other videogames, the number of customers increased and boosted the competitive video game culture (Billings & Hou, 2019). Over the next 10 years, the South Korean gaming culture had become a cultural phenomenon spreading to the rest of the world. Moving from 10 global events a year to over 260 tournaments each year, esports was becoming a global phenomenon (Billings & Hou, 2019). The increased attention, interest and the combination of better internet speeds and improved technology, esports would bring back the social competitiveness of the arcade – but with a worldwide audience, watching online streaming platforms 24/7.

2.1.2 Tilting

The word *tilt* or *tilting* has been used within the world of games for a long time, stemming from the old arcades. The earliest use of word tilting is from the pinball games, where tilting would show up on screen if you moved the game around (J. Reams, personal communication, January 2022). The later but more appropriate origin I will focus on is from the game of poker and the online poker world. According to Palomäki et al. (2013), tilting is linked to losing control due negative experiences and emotions from losing and/or making unfavourable decisions at critical moments. When it comes to the gaming field tilting is often associated with *frustration, rage, and deterioration of gameplay ability* (Wu et al., 2021), but often it has more to do with the players self-management, social-emotional skills and lack of self-control that are directly tied to players performances.

Tilting can be explained as a negative emotional reaction to events outside of, or in-game, related to other people or gameplay, that causes deterioration in gameplay through negative impact on both general gameplay and important decision-making (Wu et al., 2021). Tilting is an emotional/internal response to outside forces, usually caused by mistakes or bad games, that causes internal frustration for the individual player – that turns into bad plays, reduced team performance and repeats in a downward cycle. Tilting would cause internal conflicts, bad teamplay and bad plays could end in toxic behaviours (Türkay et al., 2020). Toxic behaviour will be briefly mentioned later.

Combining these various descriptions of tilting as described above, and from other sources such as the British Esports Association (British Esports Association, 2022), I would summarize tilting as *a state of mind that is caused by negative experiences and/or emotions that negatively affects in-game performance and decision making. Being in a state of tilt might cause more tilting as the negative consequences trigger more negative emotions.* This definition covers the internal responses to experiences, the visible deterioration of gameplay and decision making, out of-game and in-game influences, and that it is a state of mind. I chose to use the term state of mind as Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) explains it as *a person's mood and the effect that mood has on the person's thinking and behaviour* and Collins Dictionary (n.d.) describes it as *your state of mind is your mood or mental state at a particular time*, as tilting affects players mental state and affects their thinking and behaviour for a limited period of time.

2.1.3 Causes of tilting in esports

According to the exploratory survey of Wu et al., (2021) they saw that the most common tilt-triggers were team members, with 36% of the responses, "others" with 22%, oneself with 19%. Losing was the cause for 14% of the responses, while the game itself (technical) 3% and the opposing players only got 2% of the responses of what could trigger tilt. In Palomaki et al.'s (2013) study on poker players also present that tilting didn't necessarily come from major losses, it could also be created through external factors such as exhaustion, and multiple minor losses over time. According to Türkay et al. (2020) study, the research subjects were afraid that if they took the game too seriously and lacked a positive balance, they could become more toxic by being seen as "try-hards". The participants would explain their own toxic behaviour to often be a result of their experience of tilting. Some of these toxic behaviours were being passive aggressive (not doing things in-game on purpose) or raging (anger, lashing out, abusing the in-game chat, blaming others). Players' emotions could also be affected by the social environment of the team through criticism by teammates, being yelled at or disagreements, or affected by social life outside of the team as social factors was often a stressor (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). There are also studies stating that individuals affect the team's collective emotions, and the team affects the individuals' emotions (Kou & Gui, 2020).

Further in Wu et al. (2021) study, the main response of people experiencing tilt was to exit the game (32%), while 25% would come up with a strategy to positively deal with the negative emotions in the moment, and 22% reported that they had negative responses such as becoming angry and 18% would not have a positive or negative response to tilting but would rather accept or just not deal with the tilt. Lastly, 3% didn't report any cases of tilt. Staff also reported that they would experience different responses to tilt depending on the person, some would go silent others would get vocally loud, and most of them would play worse than when they were not in a state of tilt (Wu et al., 2021). As it's clear that

tilting would cause negative experiences, behaviours and bad results for a limited time, there are clearly some coping processes behind getting out of tilt, as I will present further in the next sections.

2.1.4 How to handle tilting

According to Koui & Gui (2020), players are not passive in consuming emotional content, they are able to actively experience, influence and regulate their emotions, but it must be learned and kept up to date. Wu et al., (2021) asked in their survey if the participants of the study could change how easily they became tilted: 67% of players saw tilt as something they can interfere with or improve, 21% didn't know if it could be changed and 12% reported "no", as in they didn't think they could change how easily they were tilted. Further they found evidence of more positive strategies in those who saw tilting as formable. Looking at tilt as something that can be changed, controlled and formable lead to more positive responses, while the study shows that they who see tilt as something fixed would more often have negative responses, especially towards other players.

Palomäki et al. (2013) wrote about poker players ways of coping with tilting through their expanded understanding over time. One of these was the ability to see and distinguish events that are out of our control and see them as something we can't and shouldn't worry about. This was presented as something that could lead to better regulation of negative emotions, as it was acknowledged that it was something outside of us, and that would lead to higher success rates in the individuals. These attributes were, according to Palomäki et al. (2013), often gained over time, and there is a significant difference in experienced and inexperienced players. The term "emotionally immature" comes up when it comes to inexperienced esports players (Kou & Gui, 2020), and shows that playing over time or getting more knowledge and experience could also help the players regulate emotions, which I will at in the discussion chapter.

Koui & Gui (2020, pp. 10-14) present different ways the players use emotion-regulating strategies in League of Legends as presented in the following table:

Table 2-1: Emotion regulation strategies in individual players

Emotion regulation strategies in individual players	
Emotion Self-regulation	Avoiding situations that a player expects to create negative emotions. Most common way of avoidance is taking a break.
Situation Modification	Changing the situation, e.g., by turning on calming music or muting players/chats
Attentional Deployment	Shifting focus onto something else than what can cause negative emotions, e.g. creating smaller goals within a game for one self rather than a "victory", often used when a player expects a loss. Refocusing on improving, learning, and trying new things. From external factors as winning/teammates to internal ones like individual skills.
Cognitive Change	Reinterpret the situation by assigning it new meanings. E.g., in midst of a stressful situation step back and realise it is just a game to regulate emotions, or step back and realise the people swearing and being rude are negative people, and you don't have to blame yourself.
Response Modulation	Directly managing a players own expression of emotions. Taking a break is also a valid way of regulating the response of emotions, other ways was explained as avoiding using the chat function to vent or write comments that could come across as a source of negative emotions for others.
Social Interaction	Regulating emotions by talking to friend or being a part of a community related to the game, those who can understand the experiences and recognise the feelings and emotions

Further, they present how players would use the emotion-regulation strategies in their competitive-gameplay through emotional self-care as individual players actively and consciously make efforts in taking care of their own emotions and wellbeing. One way of doing so is to close the game and take a break or mute other players to not be affected by them. Another way could be to separate the self from the game, as the game is merely a tool and an inanimate object that should be seen as so, even when it's allowed to change our emotions in the moment. By reconstructing the view and meaning of the game a player could take a step back and regulate the emotions.

According to Türkay et al. (2020), some coping mechanisms to deal with tilting and toxic behaviour would include changing to a less serious game mode, play with different people or play a different game that was less competitive. The second method to deal with tilting and one's own toxic behaviour would be to *take a break* in the form of leaving the game, leaving the console/computer for a short period of time. Further it was shown that passive acceptance and/or avoidance was the most common coping mechanism when it came to toxic behaviour. The toxic behaviour wasn't necessarily the action itself, but more of the intention behind the action, something that could be hard to differentiate between in certain situations as when it came from friends it was seen as constructive feedback from someone that would want them to succeed.

Wu et al. (2021) article stated that tilting is often caused by teammates (36%) and good communication within the team is essential to counteract the tilt. It is harder to deal with the tilt caused by blaming oneself (19%), as a lot of this can come from stress and anxiety

in life outside of esports. Here there is an opening for e.g., a coach to focus on preventing tilt from occurring and focusing on the players positive self-talk and goals of learning instead of winning. The coach could also have more training around emotion control, self-communication, self-care and working against general toxicity to help the individual players and the team (Wu et al., 2021).

Kou & Gui's (2020) study looked at how the esports players regulate, manage and experience the emotions within themselves, teammates and opponents by using theories from sports psychology. Koui & Gui (2020, pp. 10-14) present strategies of emotion-regulating teammates and opponents as shown in the table below.

Table 2-2: Emotion-regulating strategies in teammates/opponents

Strategies for emotion-regulating teammates and opponents		
Teammate emotion regulation	Situation Modification	One of the most common teammate strategies. Starting games by having a positive attitude towards everyone's capabilities, performances and having a positive view before, during and after a game, knowing a positive message could better the others mood.
	Attentional Deployment	Supporting teammates who experience negative emotions (e.g., tilting), by positive reassurance and motivational communication.
Opponent emotion regulation	Situation Modification	By trying to hinder opponents' performances, taunting in form of using emotes/stickers, creating tilt by consciously trying to create negative emotions or tilting in the opposing team

This can show the importance of other people in the individual players emotion regulation, as teammates and opponents have the possibility to affect the individual player as an opponent or teammate in both positive and negative ways. Ways of emotion regulating, and coping is both an individual and collective responsibility, and a coach can possibly bridge the knowledge gap and facilitate this learning.

2.1.5 Coaching in esports

The British Esports Association (n.d.) states that an esports team often consists of multiple players, one or more coaches and organizers. Often a team will have one coach with a combination of multiple roles, but this depends on the team's size and level of competition. Bigger teams have more resources and often more people that take care of, lead and organize the team presented in coaches, analysts, managers, and specific mental coaches. The following sections will look at the similarities between sports psychologists and coaches, to frame the word coaching for this thesis and to present why I will use the word coach for the combination of roles.

2.1.5.1 Sports psychology and coaching.

According to O´Broin and Palmer (2014), early coaching literature is based on sports psychology, therefore coaching and sports psychology are closely related, and one can draw clear lines between the two fields. Further, they present that to create a foundation for growth and development, a coach will have to consciously strive to create a relationship with the athletes. This includes being pedagogical and helpful in change processes, working towards set goals and help the athletes feel mastery, hope for the future and the ability to create goals for themselves. The relationship between the coach and athlete is strengthened by empathy, honesty, support, acceptance, cooperation, and positive recognition, and it is fundamental for the athlete's success and development (O´Broin & Palmer, 2014). There are great similarities in esports and ordinary sports, the use of sports psychologists can benefit the esports scene with the mental skills trained in traditional sports according to García-Lanzo et al. (2020) and Poulus et al. (2020).

In esports there are often mixed roles for coaches and the similarities and the differences between a sports psychologist and a performance coach in esports is presented in Watson et al.'s (2021) study. Here it's seen that the two roles often are combined in one person, as a team often has one coach to begin with but having the two roles as separate was shown to increase the value of the team greatly. The performance coach is more in charge of the team, they will work on the team's communication and mental skills needed in the game/field. Pedraza-Ramirez et al. (2020) also write about the usefulness of a sports psychologist, as they can help satisfy the players psychological needs. They will make room for and help with learning and improvement through motivation, individual goals, co-operation, improving skills, autonomy, and bring awareness to the affect winning or losing has on the individual players. Further, Watson et al. (2021) write about the sports psychologist role, and that it has more to do with the individual players, their mental and psychological health, and having strict confidentiality. The biggest issue presented when it came to having these roles combined into one, is that a player wouldn't know what to share with their coach, if it's in confidentiality or if it will be a team matter. Clear descriptions of the role(s) are needed in both ways of organizing a team, also it can be good for a combined coach to be clear about when he's in what role. As the roles of an esports coach are often combined, and tilting is complex, what are the needs of the esports players? This I will present further I the next sub-chapter.

2.1.6 The players needs

After an incident at an esports event in USA 2018 where shots were fired, questions were asked about the emotional and psychological needs of esports players who did not know how to deal with losses and the feelings that arise afterwards (Miah, 2020). Poulus et al. (2020) present the importance of giving the players the necessary knowledge and tools such as acceptance and cognitive flexibility, which is important when it comes to coincidences and events that are "out of the players' control" in the games. Knowledge and lessons on acceptance-mastery to increase emotional control could help increase the performance while reducing the perceived stress intensity (Pedraza-Ramirez et al., 2020; Poulus et al., 2020).

According to Purcell et al. (2019), Lundqvist (2011) and Lazarus (2000), there is a need for therapeutic, preventive work and extra attention around knowledge and skills that should be given to the players, their coach, organizers and close relationships. More

knowledge is generally needed about the importance of mental well-being or happiness, and the stigma of seeking help must be significantly reduced and it must be normalized to seek help both within and outside the esports field. When players seek help, it was also seen as an advantage that the person they get help from was part of the team or organization, to reduce the threshold for seeking help and at the same time reduce the stigma surrounding seeking help (Purcell et al., 2019).

According to Wu et al. (2021) will players, by learning how to manage tilt, have an opportunity for growth and the possibility of gaining skills that will make them able to self-regulate. Self-regulating emotions and gaining communication skills could improve the tilt-response and might also help counteract the tilt itself. Direct interventions by (more experienced) coaches could help discourage negative responses and improve the ability to self-regulate emotions and responses.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Emotions, emotional intelligence, emotion-regulation and coping are four terms that have to be explained together to be understood in the way that is needed for this thesis. To frame relevant theory for my thesis, I will firstly present these topics, before briefly presenting elements of theories from adult development.

2.2.1 Emotions and stress

Emotions are short term feelings caused by an internal or external factor (Duncan et al., 2014). Both emotions and mood are experiential entities that are a felt or sensed in a subjective state (Larsen, 2000), but emotions are rapid transitional responses to specific events whereas moods last over a longer period of time and are more complex (Duncan et al., 2014; Gross, 2015; Larsen, 2000; Larsen et al., 2013). According to Lazarus (2000) motivation, attention and concentration are the most important mental functions that can be affected by emotions, and some of the most important qualities one uses in sports. Moods are also said to affect the surroundings, as a single athlete's mood will affect the entire team, as well as the opposite (Duncan et al., 2014).

There is a trend in the literature that states that stress is both a state of mind, a mood, a separate entity over time, or a feeling. In this thesis I will look at stress as a feeling, as the stress in esports is often acute, but can also be built up over time in certain situations. Stress is, according to Larsen et al. (2013), the feeling of being overwhelmed by events we cannot seem to control, and is subjective to individuals, as the same event might create different levels of stress in others. Events that cause stress are often opposing tendencies, strong or extreme, and uncontrollable, and can be called stressors (Larsen et al., 2013).

According to Gross (2015) and Larsen et al. (2013), emotions can be helpful or harmful, depending on whether they are something we have or if they have us. They can help us stay motivated or demotivate us, help us motivate socially appropriate behaviours in ourselves, can make us more or less focused, and help us recognise emotions in others as well as their behavioural intentions.

Koui & Gui (2020, p. 8-9) found four factors that would evoke players negative or positive emotions, either singularly or in combination with each other:

- Achievement-related situations: a player's expected performances. If a player would experience worse or better performance than what they expected.
- Teammate-related situations: other teammates poor or strong performances, and/or teammates behaviors and communication styles.
- Game design-related situations: caused by regular updates in games, how the game matched teams and opponents.
- Social identity-related situations: situations where individuals would identify or disassociate with a community or a group.

Emotions and stress are clearly seen as something affecting individual and team performances, and one way of dealing with these emotions could be through emotional intelligence and emotion regulation.

2.2.2 Emotional intelligence

According to Duncan et al. (2014) chapter about *Emotional intelligence: Framework for Examining Emotions in Sport and Exercise Groups*, emotional intelligence is said to start with perceiving emotions, where you feel your own emotions and seeing emotions in others through their facial expressions or body language. As emotional intelligence grows through knowledge, understanding each other's emotions can create a safe space that also makes room for more sharing, understanding and thus more knowledge.

As emotions can be visible, they can also affect and change the mood or emotions in others. Therefore, emotional intelligence can be seen as a cornerstone in interpersonal situations and especially in group functioning as emotional intelligence can help the athletes in traditional sports to behave, respond and show emotions in socially approved ways (Duncan et al., 2014), this can also be seen as valid in the world of esports.

2.2.3 Emotion regulation

According to Gross (2015), emotion regulation develops over a lifespan. Through a growing language and understanding, there is greater possibilities for emotional regulation strategies. There are individual differences in how one regulates emotions, also in how or when they develop the tools. Emotion regulation happens in many different ways, from taking a break, run, deep breath, nap, or in extreme situations to shout or punch something (Gross, 2015), as recognised from how esports players deals with tilting. According to Duncan et al. (2014) effective strategies for emotion regulation include positive self-talk, while supressing feelings is an ineffective strategy. Another way is through management, this is about giving room for the emotions, both positive and negative but putting them to beneficial and good use.

Reading emotions in others gives us the ability to stop them from overloading, and correctly perceiving emotions in one self and in others are linked to performance (Duncan et al., 2014). Emotion regulation can be sorted into two main fields. Intrinsic emotion regulation; wanting to regulate our own emotions, and extrinsic emotion regulation; wanting to regulate others emotional responses. Ways of regulating emotions will often have to do with increasing or decreasing positive or negative emotions, both intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation could be seen in the world of esports through teamwork (Gross, 1998, as cited in Gross, 2015).

2.2.4 Coping

There is an overlap between emotion regulation and coping, but coping is here focused on as the action oriented attempts and intrapsychic methods we use to influence the emotions that are experienced (Gross, 2015; Taylor & Stanton, 2007) to avoid harmful life strains (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) and deal with the demands created by stressful events (Taylor & Stanton, 2007). In other words, coping is: the things we *do* when we respond to specific situations to deal with stressful events or major life events (Larsen, 2000). According to Taylor and Stanton (2007) is coping through avoidance shown to play a stress-generating role in the coping strategies over time, but was effective when facing short-term controllable stressors as can be seen in sports such as esports.

Larsen et al. (2013) write about the attributional styles in coping, where a person typically puts the blame when things go wrong, as external or internal blame. Internal blame is when we blame ourselves for the events or reactions that are happening, seeing our faults even when it might be external forces that helped cause the situation. External blame on the other hand, is blaming sources outside ourselves, where our own fault in the event is put aside and something external were said to be the cause.

When it comes to coping, there are two main resources, social resources and psychological. Psychological resources are the things we have, personality traits, self-esteem, mastery, internal strengths, these internal traits affect how we cope through influencing situations (Larsen et al., 2013; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Social resources are on the other hand crucial support from the outside through family, friends, interpersonal network, and in this thesis: teammates and coach. All of these social resources are at our disposition in developing coping mechanisms (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Seeking social support as a coping strategy has shown to avoid stress, help motivation and inspiration, it causes less burnout, more confidence and increased belief in one's own competence (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). According to Taylor and Stanton (2007), social support can be protective when it comes to our mental and physical health outcomes and leads to a higher sense of well-being. The opposite, social isolation and loneliness, has a negative impact on our coping mechanisms and can create psychological distress.

Tamminen and Gaudreau (2014) present two perspectives on coping, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Intrapersonal coping is what is done inside the individual, and interpersonal is between multiple people, or in other words it's the coping between us. In teams this is separated by coping *in* teams, how individuals cope themselves, and coping *of* teams, how the team is coping as one. Players need to manage their own coping mechanisms and emotions to better their own performance, but also be aware of their influence on teammates, coaches and others (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). As coping and emotion regulation is done within individuals and within teams and will develop and grow over time, it can be seen as related to the adult development theories of Kegan, as presented next.

2.2.5 Adult development theories

According to Kegan (1994, as cited in Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 29) transformation happens when we develop the ability to step back and reflect on something that was taken for granted or hidden for us, and make decisions about it. Kegan's orders of Mind theory, or as I will refer to them, stages of adult development, are one of the things that can help describe our current worldview and our actions, but also affect our relations with others. According to Kegan (1982) humans are in constant development, and so is our subject-

object state. The subject is our embeddedness in something we can't necessarily observe, while the object is the self we can show our relationship to from the outside.

The first order is that of a child and will not be of importance in this thesis but is worth mentioning as the foundation of the adult development theories. The second order is something you generally reach in early adolescence, where people are more self-centred, things are black/white or right/wrong, others are either a helper or a barrier for your own winning and it can be compressed into the ego-centric mind (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan, 1982). The third stage is the socialized-mind where one outgrows the simple black and white worldview and develop into empathic beings. The individual is formed relation to others and would rather avoid conflict. Here ideologies, political views and organizations shape our values and faith (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982). The third order is more about meaning and relations. It's more self-reflective around one's own actions and how it affects others, and it's important to note that others here set the standard of life. People in the third order are affected by peer pressure, colleagues, culture, and surrounding environment. The fourth and fifth order are not of importance in this thesis, but should be mentioned as further developmental stages (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Kegan, 1982).

Eigel and Kuhnert (2016) present ways a person on stage two can develop into level three, through seeing the limits of their own personal agenda and realising working with and understanding others will bring greater success. Less focus on win-lose, more perspectives and slowly learning. Maturing from one stage to the next doesn't mean we lose the past stages, we just incorporate them and understand them through a new lens. This transformation can be reached alone, but can also be facilitated by a coach, as we will look further into in the next sections.

2.2.6 Coaching

Coaching as a method is an awareness process to help make the unknown known. Performance coaching on the other hand is solution focused, to better something we're already doing, freeing someone's potential on a certain area to focus on goal achievement, from current condition to wanted condition (Kaas et al., 2007). As previously mentioned, an esports coach often has a combined role, and in this section, I will write more about the importance of having a good leader, or a coach.

If you want to understand another person in some fundamental way you must know where the person is in his or her evolution (Kegan, 1982). Here Kegan shows the need of understanding someone, you need to understand their world and how they see it. It's more important to have the appropriate leadership skills than to be the best player, to be fit for a role as e.g. in game captain or coach (Hopton et al., 2014). It is worth mentioning that as esports coaches often are previous players themselves – their stage of adult development could affect their coaching abilities when it comes to leading a team.

There are specific leadership functions built into certain types of coaching relationships, especially in team coaching. According to (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014) it is important to have a good coach-athlete relation to promote optimal performance through supportive coaching that encourages physical, mental and technical skills to achieve optimal performance through emotional control, leading the players to a favourable emotional state. The coach can also help the players to find a better way to use their emotions, so they are not suppressed, but used for good (Duncan et al., 2014). Emotional leadership would also be beneficial through taking care of or actively influencing teammates wellbeing

or emotions. By encouraging teammates, standing up for them, having a positive attitude even when losing and owing their own failures, could help a team to stay away from negative emotions and have a positive effect (Kou & Gui, 2020).

Psychological and physical wellbeing of individuals can affect the team through motivation and performance (Hopton et al., 2014), and a coach should be a source of different kinds of support through open communication and by creating collective coping strategies within the team (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014) . As social ties are often a cause for both negative and positive consequences. One of the positive sides are support-seeking that often has a positive outcome in performance, achievement, enhanced relationships, and task-oriented coping mechanisms. The negative aspects are often caused by conflicts between team mates or coach, criticism, concerns from personal life or negative emotions, all of these are causes of stress There are also signs that a personal positive mood affects the collective mood to be better, and here it's also an overlap between the personal and collective emotion regulation, and coping mechanisms (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014).

These are the theories and the research I've used to frame my thesis, and the lens that I will look at the data through. The next chapter will introduce the methods used to produce this research.

3 Methodology

I was introduced to sensemaking and the SenseMaker program by my professor, and now master supervisor, Jonathan Reams. He gave us the chance to look at the SenseMaker tool in one of our lectures, and I was attracted to the combination of qualitative and quantitative data collected. After a discussion last semester (fall 2021) the SenseMaker method was chosen to be my way into the esports world. I was going to get both general numbers to show trends of the field, but also narratives to explore deeper.

In this chapter I will present the background of my choice of methods, SenseMaker and the sensemaking process before presenting the design, analysis and limitations of the study.

3.1 Background and Theory Related to the Choice of Methods

According to Henricson (2014), the chosen method should be based on what one wants to research. I choose to create a thesis with a mixed method, as I can see the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research on their own. The qualitative data in this thesis is presented as the respondents' experiences and comes from their own truth (Ryen, 2017), and the presentation of data and discussion of this thesis will try to represent this as well as possible. The quantitative method of a "survey" was used to reach a wider group of people within esports without geographical limitations or time restrictions to do interviews, but still gaining the qualitative data collected through the respondents' experiences that gives us insight into their life deeper than an ordinary questionnaire.

3.1.1 Mixed methods

Mixed methods is a mix between quantitative and qualitative methods and is shaped by the characteristics from both, even if they have often been seen as incompatible opposites (Allwood, 2012). Using a mixed method gives an ability to look at complex phenomenon that might lie closer to the truth (Henricson, 2014).

Quantitative data is based on numbers, and often it needs a bigger number of respondents to be reliable, and it often has a bigger reach than qualitative research. On the opposite side we find qualitative data. This is often text based, like transcriptions of an interview or in this research as written text about one's own experiences in a survey and can be based on fewer informants (Ringdal, 2013). Qualitative research is often used in fields that are not explored, and to look at different phenomena in those fields, while quantitative research often looks at the correlations and relations between topics and phenomena (Ringdal, 2013). This thesis has a goal of exploring both the unknown field, and the relations within the topic at hand.

According to Harrison et al. (2020), mixed methods combine the statistical trends in quantitative research, and the lived experiences found in qualitative research. This combination creates a better understanding as human nature is complex. Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (2006, as cited in Harrison et al., 2020, p. 475) say that mixed methods add value by increasing validity in the findings in the field of business. This shows that mixed methods can increase the validity of certain research, and I will look at the field of esports in the same way as business, as it is built up of teams (businesses), leaders

(manager, coach), and workers (athletes/players). Through using mixed methods this study will show us results on individual level, but also trends and views of the field itself. According to Gibson (2017, as cited in Harrison et al., 2020, p. 475) mixed methods studies can present four main values to a researcher.

- Elaboration: adding more information or a new explanation.
- Generalization: obtained through similarities gained from different sources, creating trends and stating the obvious or finding stereotypes.
- Data integration: combination of different data to form a whole.
- Interpretation: the action to explain and create meaning from experiences.

Using a mixed method can thus produce richer results than choosing just one of the methods. A future analysis might also differ according to what method has more data from the field, or data with more depth. Qualitative data can help shape a quantitative study in this thesis through deep and personal experiences, while the quantitative data can show signs of how a field might look at the topic at hand (Ryen, 2017).

In this thesis qualitative and quantitative methods are integrated into a combined methods study using the sensemaking perspective and SenseMaker as a tool which I present later.

3.1.2 Inductive, deductive and abductive method

Sensemaker and sensemaking is presented as abductive research, since it is exploring patterns and relationships of the unknown and can create surprises to what is previously known (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

This study became abductive as it started off with initial knowledge and theories which were surprising and new, that formed the design of the study created in SenseMaker. SenseMaker is a program used to capture the essence of experiences through narratives on a bigger scale than traditional qualitative methods. This created new and interesting findings through narratives, that needed more exploration within empirical research. Using this method in my study, I had both a foundation and an open view of the data collected and analysed, as the data were mainly based on the respondents' experiences presented in their narratives. Narrative research is complex, and a component of my method which is presented next.

3.1.3 Narrative research

"Narrative research aims to explore and conceptualize human experience as it is represented in textual form*" (Salkind, 2010, p. 2).* As Salkind (2010) shows in this quote, narrative research looks to explore human experiences in textual forms. Instead of using interviews to create text to analyse, this research uses the Sensemaking tool to capture people's short, written experiences in a data collector.. Van Der Merwe et al. (2019) presents ways that SenseMaker combines the narratives with the statistical rigor of quantitative data in a combined method. By constructing narratives we bring meaning and sense into the unknown, and also how we perceive ourselves, others and the world from this point of view Using personal narratives can give insight and the ability to explore social patterns, uncovering public truths or emerging trends (Salkind, 2010; Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

Narrative research is not created to generalize populations, it is representing variables within a population by highlighting certain experiences and looking at previous known theoretical views or new emerging ones. Knowledge is presented in the results and analysis, but the generalisations are up to the reader themselves. Narrative research is giving voice to the field and in certain environments to people who tend to be unheard. Meta-narratives can help us with that and readers are challenged to understanding their own selves or the culture through this research (Salkind, 2010).

As I've mentioned sensemaking I will now present the sensemaking perspective and the SenseMaker tool.

3.1.4 Sensemaking and SenseMaker

Sensemaking is both a tool and a method, allowing many voices to be heard through the SenseMaker program that combines quantitative and qualitative methods (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). Sensemaking is, in simple words, to *give meaning* to any situation or experience, through creating a connection and a meaning to one's experiences, and to make sense of ones' actions while facing new and unknown situations (Dervin, 1998; Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking in daily social interactions affects and shapes how we behave, how we see the world and express ourselves. Our cognitive structures are made to make sense of the unknown or *what* might come. Sensemaking is therefore often an interpretation of information and meaning, used to make sense of our own or others behaviours (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

Sensemaking is not used to find the right answer, but to explore human experiences (Dervin, 1998) and to help us explore complex social systems, relations between experiences and inner and outer positive or negative forces or influences, while discovering a field of unknown trends and mindsets (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). According to Dervin (1998) humans comes out of situations with new narratives, by facing gaps and building bridges across the gaps. As we make sense of peoples' narratives, the language we use and the chosen words are important in the sensemaking perspective, as reality is created through language and actions (Weick et al., 2005).

The process of using the SenseMaker tool asks participants to describe an experience within a specific field, then they elaborate on their experience using a variety of tools, as dyads and triads to mention the most important ones, to interpret their own experience in retrospective.

The dyad is presented as a slider with two ends, where the two ends often represent two opposites with the middle being the neutral spot (or a bit of both, see figure 3-1). Here they will place a "point" on the line according what fits their experience the best, often related to what their experience did to them, e.g., how much a coach should help or how they coped with tilting on their own (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

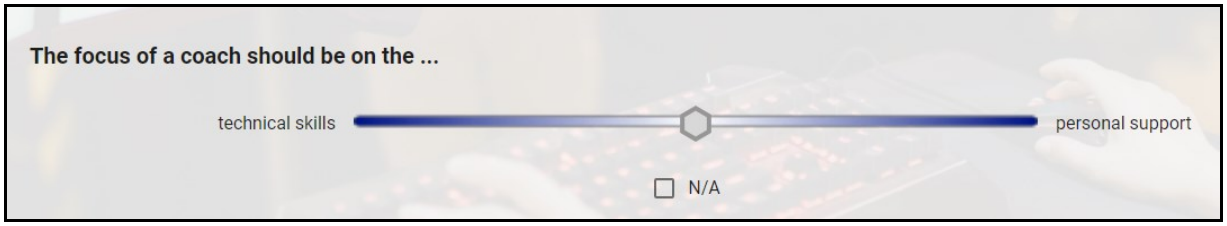
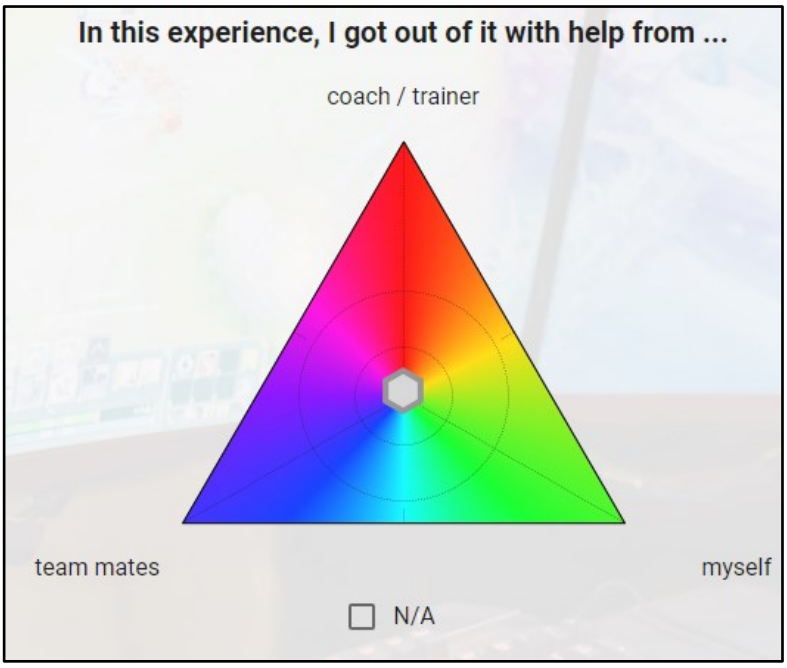


Figure 3-1: Dyad example



In the survey there are also tools such as the triad with three opposites that represent what affected the situation (or a combination of these, see figure 3-2). The example of this shows how the player got out of his or her experience with tilting: through help from "myself", team mates or coach/trainer. All three concepts are of relative importance and it's not a black and white answer, as all three could have influenced the individual (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). Using visual tools might help the individual responders to visualize their experience, but also help them explore their own experience through sensemaking, and it shows data in percentages of what influenced them.

While SenseMaker opens the possibility of qualitative research in online data collection, it also opens for quantitative data to be produced. By combining the qualitative and quantitative data the truth of the individuals gets combined into a bigger set of experiences from multiple respondents, and their replies can show trends and differences through quantitative data (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). The qualitative data in this thesis has to be presented as the respondents' experiences comes from their own truth (Ryen, 2017) through presenting micro-narratives and giving the narratives hashtags, and showing different causes and outcomes in these through the use of dyads and triads.

3.2 Design Process

Choosing the design of a study is often a matter of choosing the method and the goal of the results. Choosing to create a digital data collector for a thesis made to research esports athletes experiences was a choice made to reach as many as possible, and still use a tool that they will be comfortable using with their technical skills. By inviting in representatives from the esports scene into participating in the design process, I ensured that the themes, concepts and the language used in the survey were recognizable and relevant for the respondents (Van der Merwe et al., 2019). In SenseMaker, the design and framework often must start with constructs within a field. Through identifying or choosing said topics, the detailed design of the survey can begin. By preparing the online data collection instrument, the framework laid out the foundations of the concepts that I analysed after data was collected.

My observations of the esports field, through reading academic articles from the field and talking to representatives within the field, created a perception of *the esports field lacking a focus on mental health*. This framed the first workshop with the expert panel containing esports athletes, coaches and managers, framing it into the field of mental health.

3.2.1 Recruitment to expert panel

Late January 2022 I arranged a workshop in collaboration with my supervisor, to introduce my current thoughts on my thesis, and get help from the field to concretize it and get insight. As SenseMaker as a tool is culturally sensitive, both the tool as a tool, but also the words chosen and used in the data collector, it is crucial to get knowledge from within the field while creating it. People in the field must understand the questions, concepts and individual words just as much as the survey as a whole. The researcher therefore needs a clear structure that fits the demographic one want replies from (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

To be introduced to the social formulations, slang, language, meaning, knowledge, and beliefs within the field of esports, I recruited an expert team through my personal network of friends and acquaintances. It is important to get input from people with relevant experience and knowledge of the field in the design process to make the questions and subjects relatable and understandable to the recipients. The people invited were known through volunteering at The Gathering (a computer party held in Hamar, Norway, every easter since early 90's), Jotunheimen E-sportsenter and through connections in NTNUI E-sport.

3.2.2 Creation of content in SenseMaker

It was fundamental to the quality of my research that the questions, dyads and triads in SenseMaker were prepared on the basis of the research question, by inviting in representatives from the environment that was being examined into participating in the design.

The goal was to have 10 representatives from within the field, I reached out to about 15 different people, but ended up with 1 manager, 1 caster [esports commentator], 1 coach and 1 fan in the first workshop, and with two new participants (1 mental coach and 1 sports psychologist) in the second workshop. By chance all of these were mainly representing teams and players with knowledge of League of Legends (LoL), so the following information is based on their thoughts and might not be valid for the wide field of esports that consists of an ever expanding number of games and genres.

The workshop used a process for identifying complex issues in the field where the initial theme was to find out what affects performances in esports. The outcome of this was specific topics (Appendix A) that the participants were told to place on a line that went from EASY – MEDIUM – HARD to visualise and sort the things that could affect players and teams (Appendix B). This was done anonymously, and it was up to the individual whether they would comment on their statement or the placement upon the line of difficulty. The advantage of this was that the participants were not affected by each other's opinions. Most of the statements were placed on medium with different explanations of why they were placed there, both made by the writer of the statement but also other interpretations of the placement.

After discussing the different topics "tilting" was one that stood out, as it was placed towards hard/difficult, but through the conversations in the expert panel explained it was related to both the player itself, and also the team and outside sources. It also presented a combination of the other statements that was put on the scale. It provided me with a very specific topic related to my broader interest, that made the research more concrete

and focused. Other topics to consider were motivation, communication with/from coach and management, mental health, team communication, team dynamics and individuals/team affecting each other in different aspects. These subjects were used to find literature within the field and used to create the dyads and triads in SenseMaker.

After the creation of the data collector, the expert panel along with other friends and acquaintances within esports were asked to test-run it to give feedback on the design, chosen words and use of dyads and triads. Using the expert team as test-subjects for the survey in usability tests (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019), the initial design was created and later revised to fit the language within the field, and made to be understood by esports players themselves. After a few rounds of feedback, the data collector was posted online on Twitter and the expert panel re-tweeted the survey for their followers to see and partake.

3.2.3 The data collector

On the front page of the data collector (Appendix C) they are presented with the language option and short information about the study and questions, links to more information about the research (Appendix E), and one for data protection (Appendix F). The survey was made in both English and Norwegian, as many esports players move countries or are on teams located elsewhere than where they live. On the same page as the research is presented, there is a check-box for the users consent, that allows the gathered data to be used in this thesis. It's also informed that the survey is anonymous, and therefore the study did not have to be sent in/applied to the NSD (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata) as SenseMaker does not obtain IP data or anything that could be applied to individual responders (Appendix F).

After the initial presentation of the study, they are asked to describe an experience with tilting, then follow up questions related to their experience through dyads, triads and multiple choice, a detailed description and screenshots of the actual data collector are found in Appendix C together with the front page and questions. This can be seen as an exercise of one's own judgement – exploring, sensing, discovering, pondering one's experiences (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). The best stories to work on are experiences they have lived themselves, but in this thesis the experiences observed by others will also take some place. As coaches and other people close to the esports team can see their team members from an outside perspective and might have knowledge on how they deal with tilting from an outside point of view.

3.2.4 Reflexivity and ethics

How does our own cognitive, theoretical, language, political and cultural possibilities and surrounding affect our interpretations of data? (Tjora, 2021, p. 278)

As the quote by Tjora (2021) shows, it can be beneficial to look at how one is affected by such things, especially in the sensemaking process. Being aware that our past and current self can and will affect our research to some degree, from the second we decide on a topic, while we present the results and while we're writing out discussions is a key ingredient in a good thesis. Being aware of this instead of being embedded in this, can show the reader our reflexivity and show the researchers understanding and awareness of this in the research process (Tjora, 2021).

My knowledge and relation to the field of videogames, the social world of gaming and esports is both a liability and an enrichment. My research has been shaped by having previous knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs on how people behave, react and an outside view of how they cope with emotions while playing videogames. My early interest was in looking at the mental health focus in esports, as I myself could see the lack of knowledge and willingness to change to become better, both when it came to performing better in the games and being able to control one's emotions in game and real-life situations.

By using the expert panel my focus went from the wide and broad "focus on mental health" into the narrower field of tilting. Within this field my interest and knowledge about the emotion-regulation and effects emotions have on performance influenced the research question and the questionnaire itself. My knowledge of the field and contacts I've gained through both my youth and adult life led me to my expert panel members, as they are from the esports scene with multiple connections both local and international, this also helped me share and spread the questionnaire within the community. It should also be noted that the expert team also have some of this local knowledge and opinions, and the collective sensemaking will also affect the questionnaire and the data analysis.

My knowledge also shaped the results and discussion chapter in some way or the other, as the data must be compromised, and specifics have to be presented, there is always a danger of my views overshadowing other findings. I've tried to show this and present it in Appendix G, through showing all my chosen filters and combinations to look at varying results and possible outcomes of the study before deciding to pursue one with help from my expert panel. According to Tjora (2021) ethics consists of trust, confidentiality, respect and mutuality in qualitative research. These four themes are also important in mixed methods studies. Using SenseMaker the confidentiality is covered if the respondents don't mention details that can compromise someone's anonymity. Trust is gained by being open and honest about the research project, showing the respondents and the field what is my plan and what is done to achieve data within the field, this is also represented in the respect you get as a researcher and the mutuality as I as the researcher, want to research this and look at trends that the esports scene would also benefit from.

3.2.5 Researching online

According to Mann and Stewart (2000) and Ryen (2017) one of the main difficulties online is building trust and making people respond, then the worries are if one gets enough data and if the data is good. This includes that online the only focus is on the written word, not body language, voice, micro expressions or any opportunity to go back and re-check or ask follow-up questions. While worries in the quantitative side of the study would be to reach a wide variety of people, having enough numbers to be able to say something about the field and how many people were reached. Positive sides to sharing a survey online is that there is no such thing as distance as it's open for everyone and they share what they want to share. Respondents also get time to reflect on their own and that helps the in-depth experiences we ask for in this research. On the other hand, we can also find some translation issues from Norwegian to English, and from English to Norwegian, included when the respondents reply in English even if their mother tongue is different (Mann & Stewart, 2000; Ryen, 2017).

Other issues relevant to sharing a survey online arose as my questionnaire was shared on Twitter, it was re-tweeded over 30 times and the link had been clicked close to 200 times

in total, but we only got 67 respondents. Even with fewer respondents than I wanted, it is well within the limits of what is enough in this study to present quality in my study. As SenseMaker is a tool used to reach numerous people, it is said to aim for minimum 200 stories (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019). As esports is a newer field, and my target group was narrow and not a general population, it was my choice to use any amount of entries with a goal of around 50. With a longer time perspective and possible rewards to answering the survey, it would have been quite possible to reach more individuals from the sub-group. This is something that might be looked at for future studies within the field.

3.3 Analysing the Data

Presenting the choices made regarding chosen methods and describing them to the reader can create a better understanding of what the researcher did and why. This is what I have done in the previous chapter and will do in the following sections as I present the analysis of this thesis.

3.3.1 Sorting the data into categories

Sorting the experiences into descriptive themes and categories can help see the big lines or the trends in the data. It can also help reduce the amount of data to analyse but keeping the originals to read if there are uncertainties. While categorizing the collected data (experiences) one also starts the analyse while using one's own perceptions, knowledge and cultural background (Ryen, 2017).

Using SenseMaker as a tool, you are presented with a dashboard full of visuals and filtration options, as seen in Appendix D. By collecting all the shared experiences in one document that I printed out I started to colour coordinate themes as they appeared in the narratives, I defined multiple themes. Some of the main ones were blaming teammates (others), blaming myself, emotion-regulation, coping, motivation, toxic behaviour, coach role, importance and influence of teammates, performance and self-insight.

After defining the main themes, I organized a second workshop with my expert team, and this time I invited some new acquaintances from the twitter esports scene. Both were coaches with some sort of mental focus. One was a sports psychologist and both had knowledge from the world of traditional sports but are now working within esports. The expert team were helpful in the analysis of the data collected to make sense of words used (slang, abbreviations, and such), together with new acquaintances who became interested in my study after it was shared on twitter.

In this workshop we were 6 people in total, and we looked at the experiences sent in through SenseMaker together. The expert group got some specific tasks to filter out experiences based on coach role (technical or personal support), and the aggressive vs passive players. They were also encouraged to look and chose filters themselves to explore. One of the main themes the expert group noticed was the conflicting data, where players wrote about their experience, they blamed themselves or others, they got out of it with help from themselves and/or teammates, but all of them wanted coach to help players cope with tilting to some degree. There was also inconsistency in what the coach should focus on. This is the main theme that is presented in the following results chapter.

3.3.2 Analysis

Through being asked to narrate an experience of tilting as simple or broad as the respondents wanted, the data consisted of both one sentence experiences and paragraphs of text that had to be analysed. Some respondents replied with short one-line sentences such as "I do not tilt" while others wrote paragraphs of their opinions of what tilting was. The narratives I would focus on were their own experiences with tilting, and as mentioned later – the narratives that were presented as having a significant impact on the respondent.

Narrative analyses were created by looking at the individual texts, breaking them down into smaller portions, coding them, and extracting some of them into the discussion (Salkind, 2010). In this analysis I was looking for patterns within one story, but also across the stories, combined with the data from the dyads and triads. By using a thematic and narrative analysis, together with the quantitative visualisations created in SenseMaker, one can use the narratives in sensemaking to make sense of and look at trends and wider understanding of the respondents' experiences (Ryen, 2017; Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

Using the thematic analysis of the respondents' stories and the notes from the workshop with the expert panel, I defined two main topics and split chapter 4 in two main themes, with subthemes to present this. *Can we see a difference in the data for people that blame themselves or others for tilting? And do they look at the role of a coach the same way?* First, I am going to look at those who blame themselves in their experience and those who blame others, then present 4 narratives for each. Second, I will present these 8 narratives again, but with their view of the coach and the coach role in relation to tilting, looking for any similarities or differences in these two groups. In these chapters the narratives are presented with use of the qualitative data, to integrate the two data sets and to use the mixed methods actively. Other topics that were discovered that could have been explored includes those who gained motivation from tilting, the difference in passive and aggressive respondents, data around age and maturity. The reason I chose to focus on emotions and coping, and the blame the players would put on themselves or others, was mainly that it was within my own focus of interest, as I could relate my previous experiences and make sense of previous encounters with theories and examples from the research field.

3.4 Quality in Research

3.4.1 Quality in the shape of reliability and validity.

The quality related to research is often presented as validity and reliability. Validity is related to the relation between the context and research, reliability is about the context within the research and how it's presented in the report or thesis (Tjora, 2021). Reliability in quantitative research is about how reliable and credible the operationalization of latent concepts is. This demands that the concepts are connected both theoretically and empirically through measurement reliability and consistency. Validity on the other hand can be explained as theoretical validity and can show if the results are measuring what they want it to measure. The reliability can be seen and discussed through looking at general source criticism, here it is also important with good questions that provide real answers, searching and correction of errors (Ringdal, 2013).

Trustworthiness, quality and rigor is often presented as important terms when it comes to mixed methods studies (Harrison et al., 2020), as they can lead to better quality studies. One of the ways one can report rigor is through GRAMMS (O'Cathain et al., 2008, as cited

in Harrison et al., 2020, p. 476) that consists of the researcher reporting a justification within a mixed methods study. This consists of the design type, the components of the method, data integration in the study, limitations and the insights gained from the combined data.

3.4.2 Delimitation and chosen focus.

According to Tjora (2021) one of the challenges within research is the matter of delimitation of the research material, and how to get strategically chosen units, and the reasoning behind the chosen and the unused research has to be well justified. My delimitation starts with the research question, as my focus was split in two; *what is tilting*, and *what is a coach's role*. It was also beneficial to look at the data without the focus of gender as the main population was male, and there were not any apparent differences in male and female respondents. I also decided to look away from other big topics that arose, one of them was motivation from tilting, as this would be better for a paper or research with that as a main theme.

3.5 Limitations

There are some limitations and criticism to the method of using SenseMaker. Technological limitations can affect the amount of people responding, or their general answers. They might refresh the page by accident, might be busy replying to a survey "on the go", they might use slang words that are used in text but easily misunderstood and they might write less than they would speak in an interview. Numerical data might also be weak as it is hard to quantify social phenomena. It can be presented as inhuman and de-personalised science, and should not be over-analysed as humans and their experiences are complex. While using a sensemaker perspective or the SenseMaker tool, the researcher has to remain open to surprises and gain help from the outside to word the survey for others to understand it correctly (Van Der Merwe et al., 2019).

There are also some limitations to narrative research, which might reflect my own previous reflections and knowledge. I can frame the answers according to my opinions and thus not be able to see new information, as presented by Salkind (2010). The language used is distinct within the field of esports as they use different words and will give the words different meanings. This can create limitations, especially as it is written and not spoken, and can cause confusion or misreading and lead to faults in the analyse and results (Ryen, 2017). This is something I have to take into consideration, and one of the reasons for my use of an expert group.

4 Presentation of Data

4.1 Data Presentation

In this chapter I will present the data collected using the SenseMaker program. First, I will present the quantitative data, then present the main themes that appeared through the expert panel workshop. After this presentation I will integrate the qualitative and quantitative data to look deeper into the narratives by using my research question and to look at the complexity with help from the expert panel to decipher their meaning.

The SenseMaker data collected provided much rich data and revealed more themes than I have the space to adequately address in this thesis. The focus of the thesis will be on the blame players seem to have, if they blamed themselves or others, and the role they think a coach should have.

4.1.1 Quantitative data

First, I will look at the general information about the participants, and their background information, before moving over to the qualitative data. In some sections it can be seen that there is less than 67 respondents, as multiple questions could be answered with N/A (not applicable), and where it's presented with more than 67 replies, they were able to respond with multiple choices.

As seen in Table 4-1 most of the participants were males between the age of 15 and 30 years old, more than half the respondents are team members/players, while coaches (18%) and managers (12%) were well represented. If you look closely, you can see the total respondents on the question about roles is 82 replies, but there are only 67 participants. This is because they can have more than one role in a team(s) at the same time. Almost 80% of the participants had been on an organized team less than 4 years, with 24% of the respondents who had less than 1 year total. There was also 4,5% that mentioned being on an organized team for more than 10 years, and that is a long time for western esports, as mentioned in the theory. 53% of the respondents were currently on a Norwegian team, while only 46% responded that they were from Norway, this comes from esports players being on teams across country borders, so it is likely that some of the 46% of Norwegians also are based on teams in other countries.

Table 4-1: General information and background information

Filters		Number of experiences related to the filter	%
Gender	Male	62	92,53
	Female	5	7,46
Total		**67**	**100**
Age	Under 15	1	1,49
	15-17	13	19,40
	18-20	14	20,90
	21-24	23	34,33
	25-30	13	19,40
	31-25	1	1,49
	Over 35	2	2,99
Total		**67**	**100**
Role on esports team	Team member / player	43	52,44
	Coach / trainer	15	18,29
	Manager	10	12,19
	Independent player	6	7,32
	Other*	5	6,1
	Analyst	3	3,66
Total		**82**	**100**
Years on an organized esports team	Less than 1	16	23,88
	1-2 years	19	28,36
	2-3 years	9	13,43
	3-4 years	9	13,43
	4-5 years	1	1,49
	5-7 years	8	11,94
	7-10 years	2	2,99
	More than 10 years	3	4,48
Total		**67**	**100**
Where are you from?	Norway	31	46,27
	Other**	29	43,28
	Other Scandinavian country	7	10,45
Total		**67**	**100**
Where is your team located?	Norway	35	53,03
	Other***	22	33,33
	Other Scandinavian country	9	13,64
Total		**66**	**100**

Note:

**Other: CS:GO Caster, Caster/host, Owner, Parent, Co-owner.*

***Other: USA (7), Canada (3), Germany (3), Greece (3), United Kingdom (2), The Czech Republic (2), France (1), Bulgaria (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (1), Ireland (1), Na (1),*
****Other: USA (7), The Czech Republic (2), Germany (2), Italy (2), The United Kingdom (2), Belgium (1), Greece (1), Canada (1), International (1), Na (1), Get (1)*

Figure 4-1 and 4-2 presents the participants answers regarding their experience: what impact it had on them and how they would describe their experience. Further in chapter section 1.2 I decided to look deeper into the narratives with significant impacts on the players.

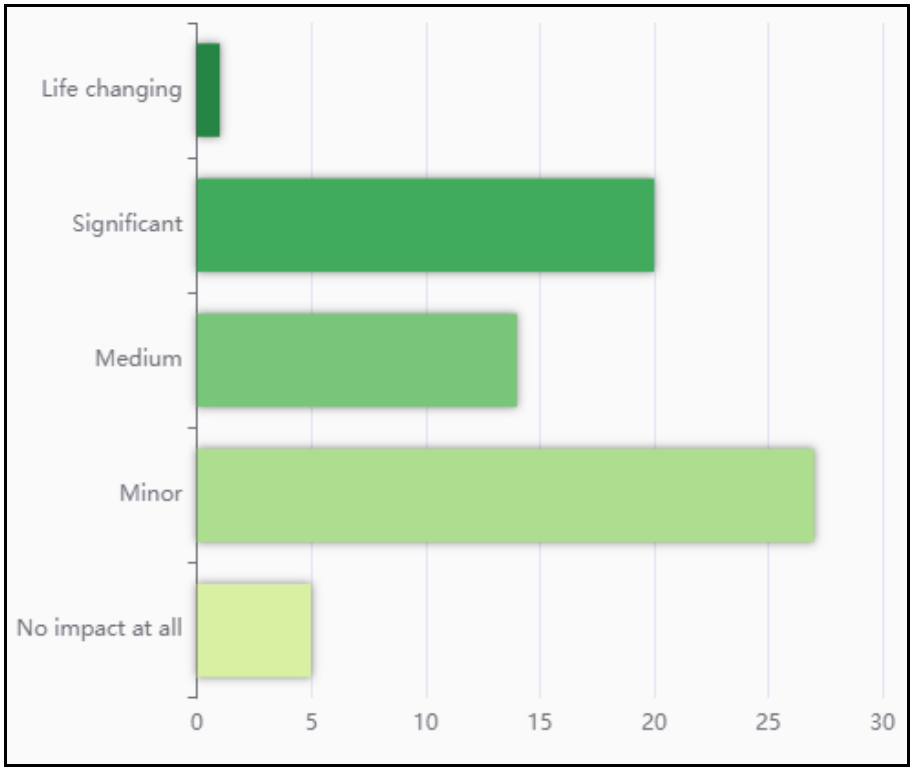


Figure 4-1: Level of impact

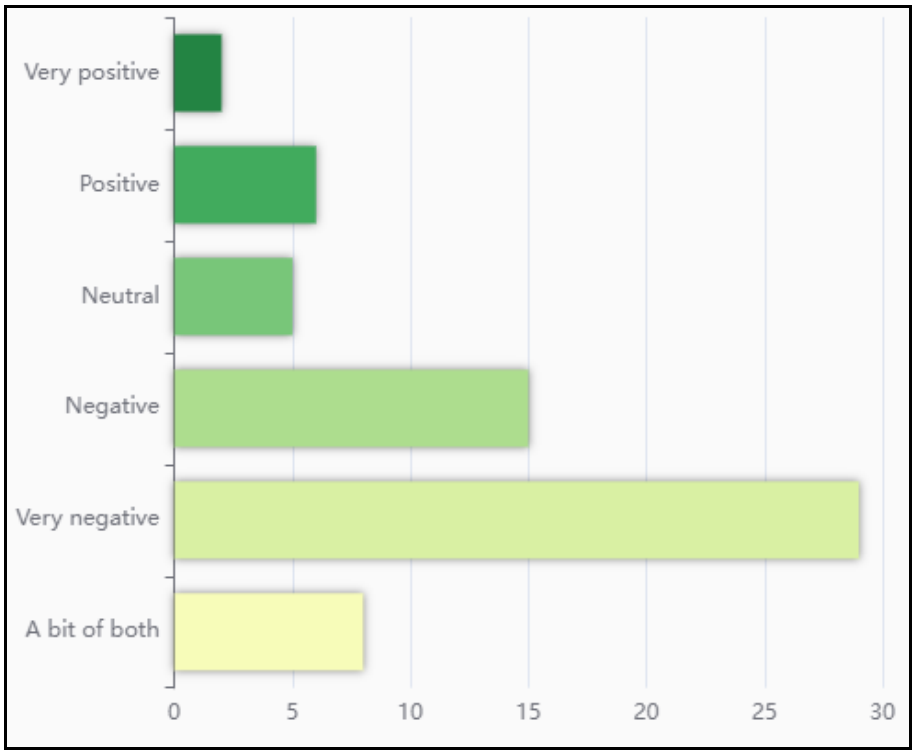


Figure 4-2: Experience described as

The following dyads are the participants answers regarding their tilting experiences, split into two opposites with the neutral or the "both" zone in the middle. Figure 4-3 shows if they had a mental or technical focus, Figure 4-4 showed that players became aggressive or passive, with more towards aggressive. Figure 4-5 showed if Players drove their attention into themselves or out on to others, and Figure 4-6 showed that it was a vide diversity when it came to players wanting to quit or continue playing.

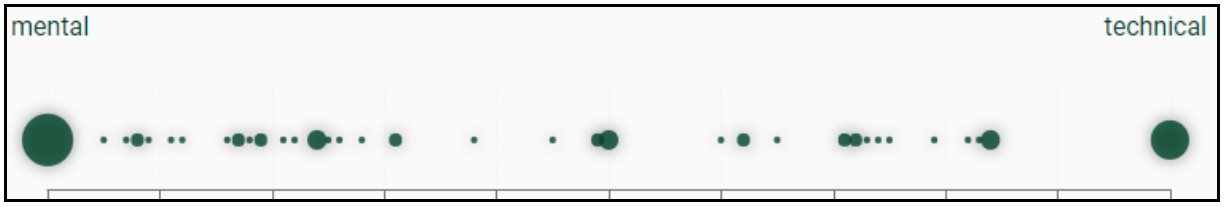


Figure 4-3: In my experience, I was focused on the

62 respondents. Mental 0-33 (32). Neutral/both 33-66 (11). Technical 66-100 (19)

Figure 4-4: In my experience, I became

62 respondents. Passive 0-33 (18). Neutral/both 33-66 (10). Aggressive 66-100 (34).

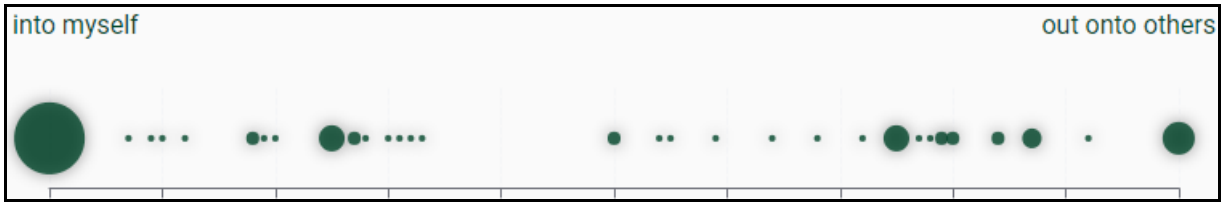


Figure 4-5: This experience drove my attention

60 respondents. Into myself 0-33 (30). Neutral/both 33-66 (6). Out onto others 66-100 (24).

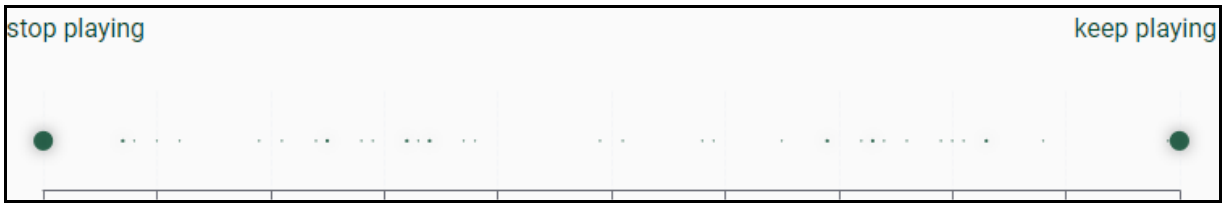


Figure 4-6: In my experience I wanted to

63 respondents. Stop playing 0-33 (27). Neutral/both 33-66 (9). Keep playing 66-100 (27).

In the following Figure 4-7 four triads are presented, here the participants answers regarding their tilting experiences are presented. The three points each represent a factor, where one can be affected by one, two or three factors and is presented as a self-interpretation of their own experience, in proportion to the three factors at once.

Figure 4-7: A show us that no one was totally blaming technical problems when it came to their experience. Most of the respondents blame making mistakes and people problems, or a combination of them. In figure B most of the respondents got out of their experience with help from themselves, and in combination with coach and teammates. There were only 2 respondents that mainly got help from the coach, and a few more that got out of it with mainly help from their teammates. Figure C shows that most players responded to their experience with frustration to some degree. There is a big cluster that shows frustration and motivation to better in combination. A cluster got motivation to do better, while no one responded with feeling indifferent. Figure D shows that most players coped with their experience through a change of focus, taking a break or a combination, while there is a lesser number who muted others.

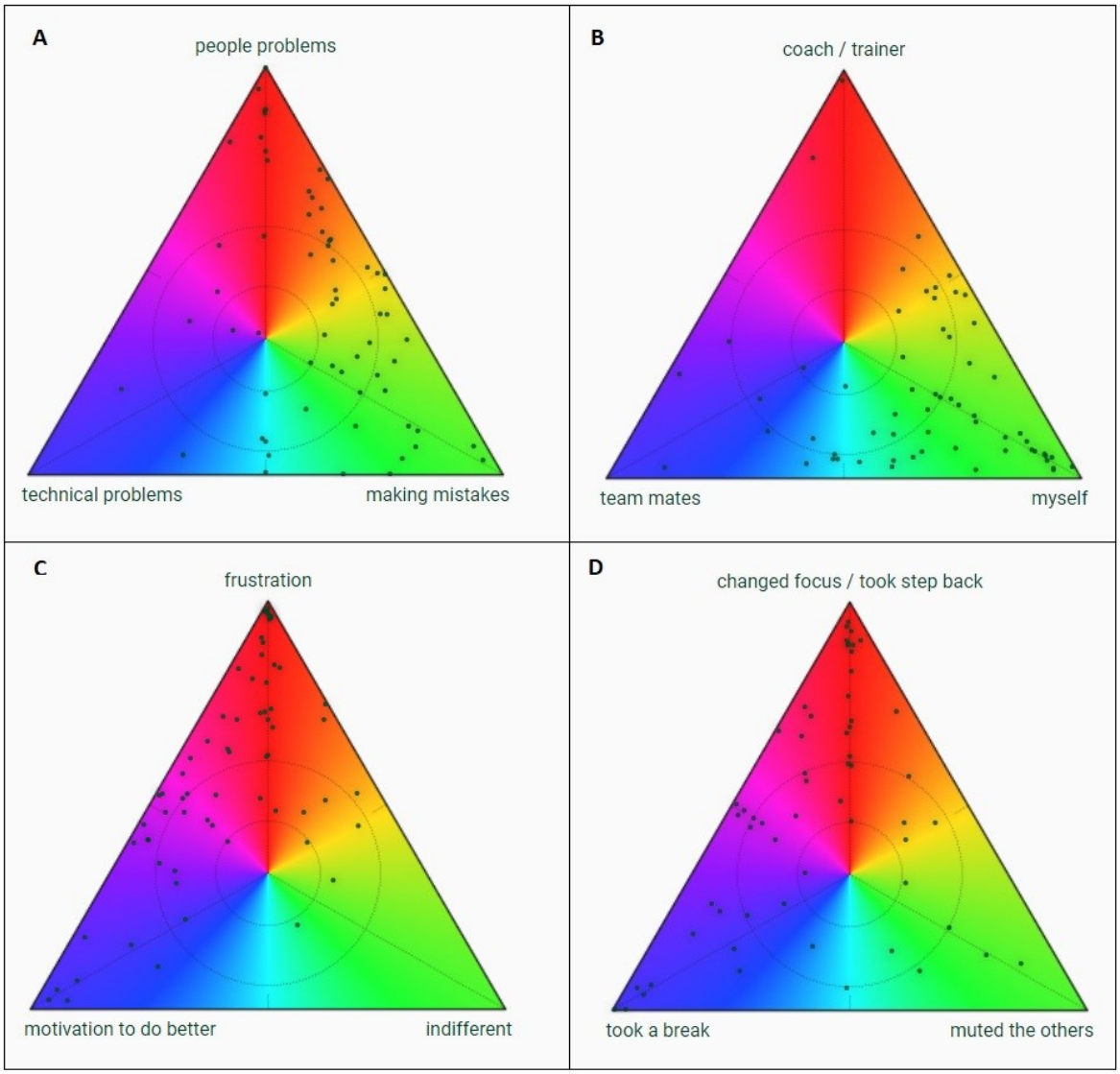


Figure 4-7: Influence, help, reaction, coping

A: In my experience I was influenced by People problems / Technical issues / Making mistakes. 65 respondents. **B:** In this experience I got out of it with help from Coach / Trainer / Myself / Teammates. 62 respondents. **C:** My response to this experience was Frustration / Motivation to do better / Indifferent. 67 respondents. **D:** To cope with my experience I Changed focus, took a step back / Took a break / Muted the others. 60 respondents.

In figure 4-8 most respondents blamed their own skills, their teammates or a combination of these. Five respondents seemed to blame their experience on the enemy team.

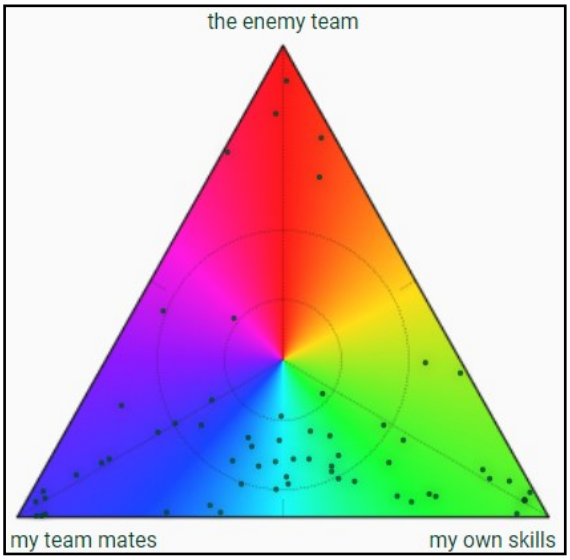


Figure 4-8: Blame

The enemy team / my teammates / my own skills. 63 respondents.

The following dyads and figures present the participants opinion on coach role in their experience, and in esports. Figure 4-9 shows that all the respondents indicated that a coach should help to some degree.

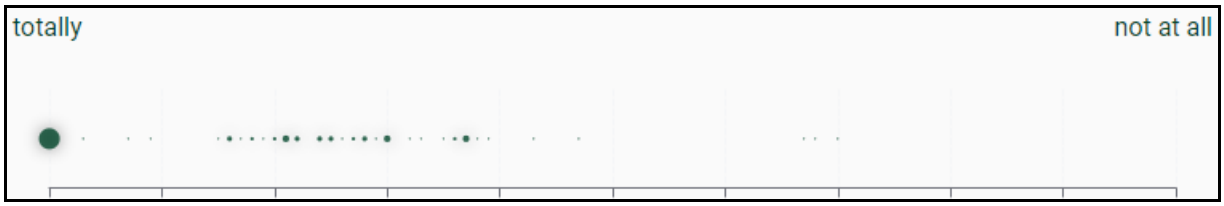


Figure 4-9: To what degree should a coach help

67 respondents. Totally 0-33 (53). Neutral/both 33-66 (13). Not at all 66-100 (3).

Figure 4-10 presents the respondents view of a coach's focus. Most respondents indicate that a coach should have a focus on both the technical skills and personal support, but with more respondents leaning towards personal support than technical skills.

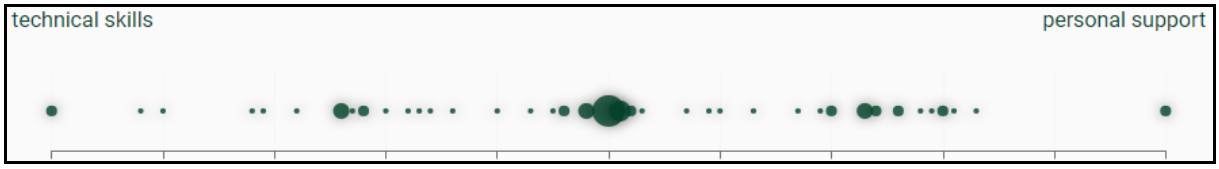


Figure 4-10: The focus of a coach should be on

63 respondents. Technical skills 0-33 (16). Neutral/both 33-66 (28). Personal support 66-100 (19).

Figure 4-11 shows that the players had a clear view of tilting being their own job and the coach's job to help cope with tilting. Teammates also had a big role in the individuals coping process. The *other* replies consisted of mental health coach/manager, close environment, and associates such as a therapist, family and friends, as a combination as respondents could check of for multiple replies.

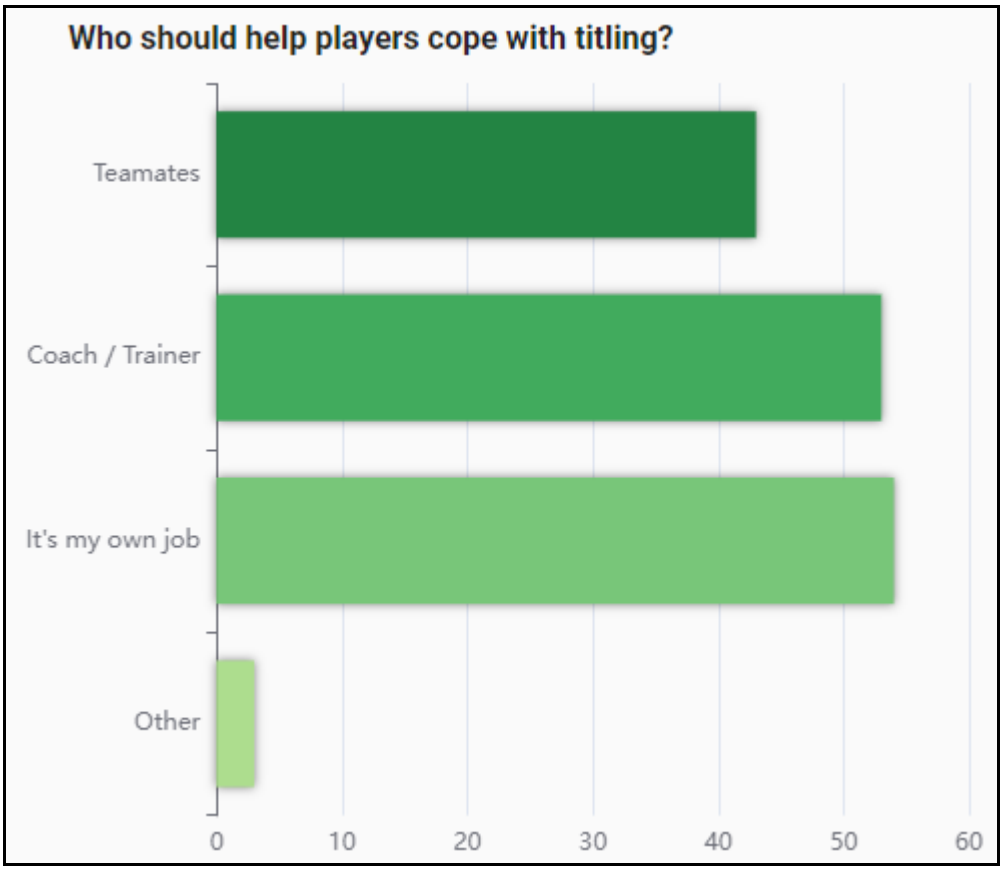


Figure 4-11: Who should help players cope with tilting

67 respondents. Teammates (43). Coach/trainer (53). It's my own job (54). Other (3); mental health coach/manager, the environment, close associates: family, a therapist, etc.

4.2 Influence of the Expert Panel

As stated in the methods chapter, the expert panel helped me form the theme of the thesis and the signifiers for the questions used in the SenseMaker software. After collecting data, the same group with some new members were invited to a new workshop focused on the results. The focus group then made comments and observations of the data, narratives, themes and topics, such as seen in Appendix H.

The expert panel identified a number of themes, such as contradictions between players helping themselves and yet wanting a coach to help them cope, the lack of culture around coach's way of facilitating or attending to personal or mental issues. Other themes they recognized were the importance of coach help but difference in personal or technical focus whereas they observed trends in players that had a technical focus had narratives related

to in-game skills and changes. If it was a mental focus, they wanted a coach to help more towards personal support. The expert panel also noted that teams' sizes also mattered, as smaller teams had combined roles for coach, but bigger teams would have issues in who the teammates should contact with different issues. From their experiences within the field, they recognized a lot of the experiences and narratives presented. They often see that a coach is an older player who's gaming capabilities are reduced, that is now coaching younger players.

The comments and reflections made by the expert group has helped me frame the topic and shaped my presentation in form of data included and shaped my analysis to some degree. They had some main topics I moved away from, and I decided to focus more on the players experience of tilting and their view of the coach.

4.3 Narratives: The Quantitative and Qualitative Combined

The focus in this section is on the blame players seem to have, if they blamed themselves or others, and the role they think a coach should have. In this section the narratives with significant impact on the esports athletes are filtered to be in focus, as this had a meaning for the respondents.

First, I will present general data from each subcategory, then their narratives before I look at their view on a coach and summarize the results at the end.

4.3.1 Your fault: Blaming Others

Using the SenseMaker dashboard I looked at the experiences that had a *Significant impact,* Figure 4-1, and *Blamed the enemy team/teammates* in the triad in Figure 4-8. This reduced the results from total of 67 entries to 20 (significant) down to 9 (blaming others). Some of the following replies are on the border of blaming myself, but on weighing on blaming the teammates side of the triad.

The experiences of players blaming others rather than themselves included themes such as:

- Blaming others
- Being surrounded by teammates that would constantly notify them of un-useful things in the game
- Players stole their kill even if they were notified about not doing so
- Normally calm and quiet players became loud
- Realisations around their need of doing well and showing off
- Realising they need more emotion regulation in their lives
- Being affected by life outside of the games
- Teammates not listening or being unreasonable.

These experiences were described as a trigger for negative emotions, but could also be experienced in a positive way if they were happening with close or good friends.

The overview in Appendix I shows those who shared an experience with a significant impact and who blamed others (enemy team & teammates). It was mostly male respondents, none under the age of 15, with most responders between the age of 18 and 30. They were team members/players (45%), coach/trainers (36%) with 1 respondent being a manager

and 1 parent, here one can also see the total adding up to 11 as the respondents can have multiple roles as mentioned before. The respondents time on an organized team was evenly split, with no one over 10 years of experience.

The signifiers I decided to look at in the relation to tilting were their focus, attention, became and wanted to in figure 4-12 and their blame, coping, influenced by and response in figure 4-13. Also, I will add the numbers from the signifier around who helped them out of the experience, more seen in the figure 4-19 under the sub chapter coach role.

In Figure 4-12 of the dyads, we can see that most of the esports athletes were focused on the mental, their attention was driven out on to others, they become more aggressive than passive.

Figure 4-12: Focus, attention, became, wanted to

In figure 4-13 we can see that they got out of it with help from themselves and teammates, most of them coped with taking a step back/changing focus, some on having a break and one muted other. When it came to what they were influenced by, most were focused between making mistakes and people problems, with one outlier towards technical issues and people problems. All of them reacted with frustration and/or motivation to do better, with more people responding with frustration than motivation.

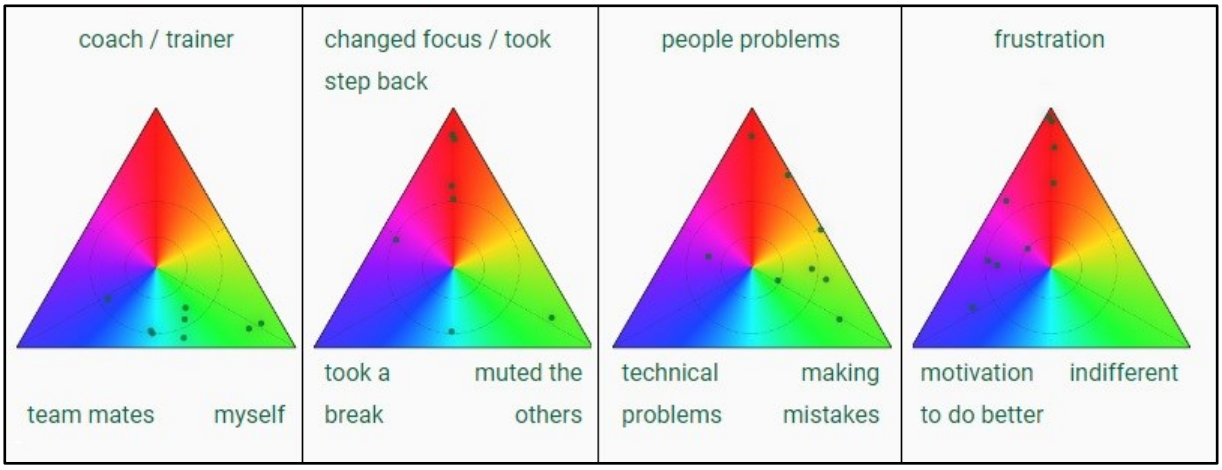


Figure 4-13: I blamed, coped, influenced by, response

The following tables present the individual data and narratives of different esports athletes, here named as "Players" and a set number, related to the multiplayer games where players were numbered. The narratives are split in half, with the first half being related to their experience with tilting, and the second half with their view of coach and coach role. The narratives could come with additional thoughts, and these are presented in the coach section as they relate to that topic. These tables present the percentages for each dyad and triad. For the dyads it's based on how far the respondents' replies are towards the left or right, where 50% is the neutral or "both" option in the middle of the dyad, and a high percentage can still be influenced by the other, or towards the middle.

Figure 4-14: Example of triad

The triads, here as shown in Figure 4-14, are presented with 3 different options, where percentages below 10% can often be a design fault, percentages over 20% is likely to be placed on purpose, and percentages over 90% are often their main answer. Following Figure 4-14 is presented to explain this. Here the percentages are presented as: coach / trainer 79%, teammates 17%, myself 4%. But as the visual shows, it's clearly seen that their main influence was coach/trainer, but not *just* the coach/trainer. The 4% of "myself" is not useful as their placement is far from the green corner. It's also very little towards the teammates side, as the purple field between coach and teammates would be the spot for the combination of the two.

In the following narratives we see examples from the participants blaming others, specifically their teammates, and sources outside of themselves as a significant point to their story.

Table 4-2: Player 1.0 #goingmentalincomp

Player 1.0 Male, 21-24, coach/trainer, manager, 7-10 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #goingmentalincomp
Experience: Once i played a Tournament after a 10 Hour Workday. Things didnt went the way i thought they would, i died a few times ingame. Then i went completely "mental", flamed my Teammates in the chat and went away from my Keyboard.			
Description of experience: Very Negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 100% Mental 0% technical	**Attention:** 13% Into myself 87% Out onto others	**Became:** 13% Passive 87% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 32% People problems 12% Technical problems 56% Making mistakes
Blamed: 8% My own skills 69% My teammates 24% Enemy team	**Response:** 55% Motivation to do better 36% Frustration 9% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** n/a	**Coping mechanism:** 45% Changed focus/ took a step back 49% Took a break 6% Muted others

Table 4-3: Player 1.1 #[redacted]YouBitch

Player 1.1 Male, 18-20, team member/player, 5-7 years on an organized team.			Hashtag: #[redacted]YouBitch
Experience: I was playing on a team with friends and we were slamming a game e.g. smashing our opponents, and as the ADC I was about to get a Penta (a team wipe/ace in League of Legends) and even called it but then my jungler took it and I am usually a quiet player so scream at him [redacted]what have you done to me you bitch" , everyone found it hilarious as I don't usually talk or tilt but was super annoyed by this. Now its on youtube and if we ever play together its referred to, it was funny because I was genuinely angry at him but was surrounded by friends in a more relax environment (scrims) and so it was played off and enjoyed, I am sure in a more heated place it could've gone differently. But it made me realise how much I cared about doing well and "flexing" on people in the game, and was a good place to realise and work on controlling my emotions as if I had shouted at people who weren't my close friends it coudve been a very different experience			
Description of experience: Very positive	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 0% Mental 100% technical	**Attention:** 100% Into myself 0% Out onto others	**Became:** 15% Passive 85% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 100% People problems 0% Technical problems 0% Making mistakes
Blamed: 3% My own skills 93% My teammates 4% Enemy team	**Response:** 2% Motivation to do better 96% Frustration 2% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 45% Myself 49% Teammates 6% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** 90% Changed focus/ took a step back 5% Took a break 5% Muted others

Table 4-4: Player 1.2 #TeamB4Me

Player 1.2 Male, 18-20, team member/player, coach/trainer, 2-3 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #TeamB4Me
Experience: During my time as a player, I would often get frustrated when my teammates refused to listen to the team captain. There were other times when I would get tilted, mostly due to someone on the team being unreasonable with.			
Description of experience: Very negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 83% Mental 17% technical	**Attention:** 87% Into myself 13% Out onto others	**Became:** 77% Passive 23% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 73% People problems 0% Technical problems 27% Making mistakes
Blamed: 4% My own skills 96% My teammates 0% Enemy team	**Response:** 36% Motivation to do better 62% Frustration 2% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 46% Myself 49% Teammates 5% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** n/a

Table 4-5: Player 1.3 #spamping

Player 1.3 Male, 25-30 years old, coach/trainer, 4-5 years in an organized team			Hashtag: #spamping
Experience: A recurrent tilting process to me it's identified in ally pinging useless information to me			
Description of experience: Very negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 74% Mental 26% technical	**Attention:** 13% Into myself 87% Out onto others	**Became:** 17% Passive 83% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 12% People problems 11% Technical problems 77% Making mistakes
Blamed: 46% My own skills 45% My teammates 8% Enemy team	**Response:** 2% Motivation to do better 98% Frustration 0% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 59% Myself 38% Teammates 3% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** 5% Changed focus/ took a step back 48% Took a break 47% Muted others

These four narratives have blaming others, mostly teammates in common. A few of them were focused on the technical opposite of the mental, and their attention was both driven inwards and out towards others. Most of them would become aggressive, also acting out like shouting and expressing toxic behaviour. Most of them became frustrated from the other's behaviours, both from lack of communication to events in the game, but even if they were frustrated with others and making mistakes, half of them would drive the attention into themselves. Their hashtag section also represented their negative

experience, related to the thing that made them tilt, or a reaction they had during tilt. One of the experiences had a very positive experience (table 4-3) but presented the narrative as he knew the situation would have been different at another place and time with other people. It is also a trend in the athletes' responses in "got out of it with help from", where the coach had almost no importance, but it was themselves and partially their teammates who helped them through their experience. Team, communication and tilt responses are themes I will bring into the discussion later, also the coach role in this.

4.3.2 Self-blame: Blaming My Own Skills

Using the SenseMaker dashboard, I once again looked at the experiences that had a *Significant impact* on the respondent, Figure 4-1 and *Blamed the my own skills* in the triad in Figure 4-8. This reduced the results from total of 67 entries to 20 (significant) down to 10 (blaming my own skills). Some of the following replies are on the border of blaming teammates, but on weighing on the side of the triad that contains blaming my own skills.

These experiences that were affected by self-blame show us experiences of players:

- Comparing their self-worth to their in-game skills
- Realise that tilting is a bad circle of complaining and doing bad
- Knowingly looking at the game results even when it makes them feel bad
- Noticing what teammates can do to prevent tilting in others
- Focusing on the positive side of what a team can bring
- In-game pressure leading to tilt faster than other times
- The pressure of having a bigger role on a team
- Possibly being the cause of the team losing
- Getting feedback about being too focused and too serious to play well
- Being in need of giving themselves a break

These people would see the issues and bad plays within their team or in the specific games, and still blame their own skills, even when affected by outside sources. Negative experiences were to happen, but with the help from teammates, a healthy culture on the team to talk and support each other, and with help from themselves they would get out of tilting or help prevent tilting in the future for others.

The overview in Appendix J show those who shared an experience with a significant impact and who blamed their own skills. It was mostly male respondents, none under the age of 15, with most responders between the age of 15 and 24. They were team members/players (58%), coach/trainers (17%) and managers (17%), here one can also see the total adding up to 12 as the respondents can have multiple roles as mentioned before. The respondents time on an organized team had more players with less than 3 years' experience, and a few with more than 5 years of experience.

The signifiers I decided to look at in the relation to tilting were their focus, attention, became and wanted to in figure 4-15 and their blame, coping, influenced by and response in figure 4-16. Also, I will add the numbers from the signifier around who helped them out of the experience as seen in the figure 4-22 under the sub chapter coach role.

In figure 4-15 of the dyads, we can see that most of the esports athletes were focused on the mental and technical, their attention was mostly driven into themselves, they became mostly aggressive with a couple becoming passive.

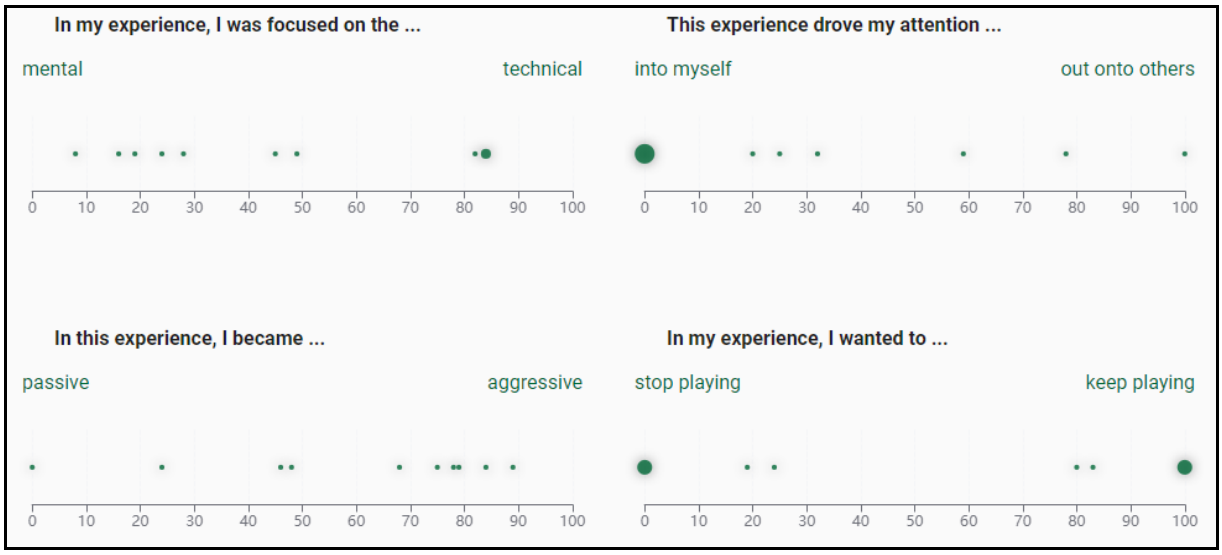


Figure 4-15: Focus, attention, became, wanted to

In figure 4-16 we can see that they got out of it with help from themselves and teammates, also two with equal help from coach and themselves. Most of them coped with taking a step back/changing focus, some coped by having a break and a few muted others. When it came to what they were influenced by, most were focused between making mistakes and people problems. All of them reacted with frustration and/or motivation to do better with most of them responding with both.

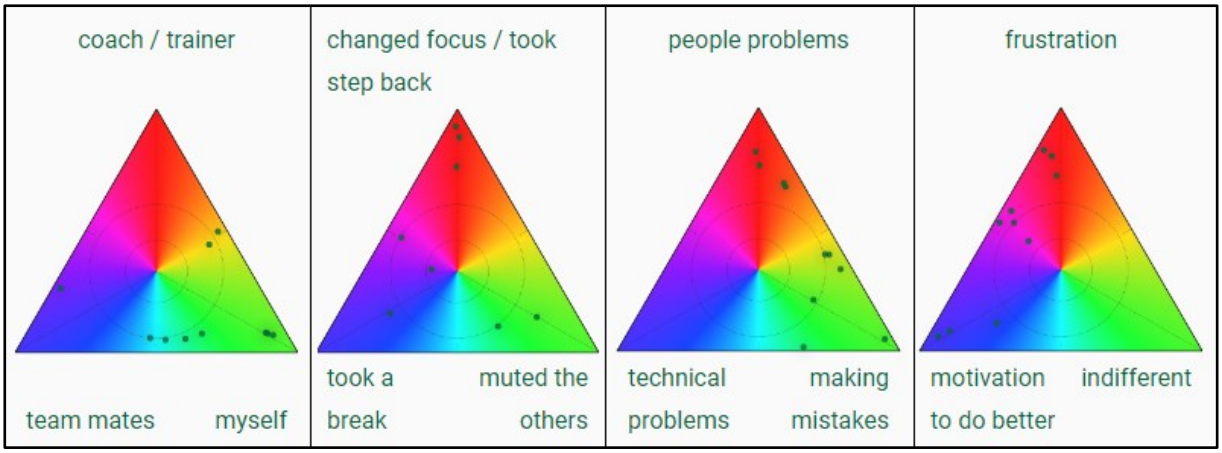


Figure 4-16: I blamed, coped, influenced by, response

In the following narratives we see examples from the participants blaming themselves and their own skills in the game.

Table 4-6: Player 2.0 #fuckme

Player 2.0 Female. 21-24 years old, team member/player, less than 1 year on an organized team			Hashtag: #fuckme
Experience: I tie my self worth to how well I do in game, which results in my tilt being self directed and self deprecative			
Description of experience: Very negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 18% Mental 82% Technical	**Attention:** 100% Into myself 0% Out onto others	**Became:** 68% Aggressive 32% Passive	**Influenced by:** 56% Making mistakes 39% People problems % Technical
Blamed: 89% My own skills 7% Enemy team 3% My teammates	**Response:** 45% Frustration 39% Motivation 16% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 90% myself 3% Teammates 6% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** n/a

Table 4-7: Player 2.1 #fulltilt

Player 2.1 Male, 15-17 years old, team member/player, 2-3 years on an organized team.			Hashtag: #fulltilt
Experience: One time where i went "full tilt" i was playing CS:GO. I was performing badly and NOTHING, and i state again NOTHING went in my favour. I was constantly complaining, getting annoyed and i just couldn't escape this evil tilt circle that i had fallen into. After the half, we were down 3-12 and after those hectic first 15 rounds i only had 3 kills. The worst thing you can do while performing bad is pressing tab and look at scoreboard. Its the worst feeling ever being the one that lacks.			
Description of experience: Very negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 84% Mental 16% Technical	**Attention:** 100% Into myself 0% Out onto others	**Became:** 89% Aggressive 11% Passive	**Influenced by:** 3% People problems 2% Technical problems 95% Making mistakes
Blamed: 94% My own skills 3% Enemy team 3% My teammates	**Response:** 84% Frustration 14% Motivation 2% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 3% Myself 72% Teammates 25% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** 94% Changed focus/ took a step back 4% Took a break 2% Muted others

Table 4-8: Player 2.2 #TeamSpirit

Player 2.2 Male, 18-20 years old, team member/player, 1-2 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #TeamSpirit
Experience: In general playing in teams i feel like one of the biggest and most important things is supporting eachother mentally. You should always try to build up your team mates, and if you can tell they are starting to get tilted (for an example, you hear them sighing, or notice someone who usually talks alot start to go quiet) something as simple as a quick joke or a simple positive "you got this" or "dont worry about it, you'll get them back later" can work wonders when it comes to helping out your teams mental. After playing around with several teams and rosters, its insane how big of a deal team atmosphere has on peoples performance.			
Description of experience: Positive	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 51% Mental 49% Technical	**Attention:** 75% Into myself 25% Out onto others	**Became:** 52% Passive 48% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 68% People problems 6% Technical problems 26% Making mistakes
Blamed: 77% My own skills 19% My teammates 4% Enemy team	**Response:** 93% Motivation to do better 5% Frustration 3% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 45% Myself 50% Teammates 5% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** n/a

Table 4-9: Player 2.3 n/a

Player 2.3 Male, 21-24 years old, team member/player, 2-3 years on an organized team			Hashtag: n/a
Experience: For myself, it was a lot of pressure that I would put on myself. This would accelerate the tilting process as now instead of being tilted after a handful of losses or mistakes it only took around one or two. This would be heightened by the fact that I was the in game leader for my team and any mistake I made would do much more than just slightly hinder my team, but would potentially lead to my team to losing the game out right. At some point, I would relinquish the in game leader role to someone else and the largest criticism I would get from my coach and teammates is that I wasn't relaxed enough to play well or that I was taking it way too seriously and not giving myself room to breath when mistakes happened.			
Description of experience: Negative	**Level of impact:** Significant		
Focus: 16% Mental 84% Technical	**Attention:** 100% Into myself 0% Out onto others	**Became:** 21% Passive 79% Aggressive	**Influenced by:** 33% People problems 3% Technical problems 64% Making mistakes
Blamed: 94% My own skills 2% My teammates 3% Enemy team	**Response:** 39% Motivation to do better 58% Frustration 3% Indifferent	**Got out of it with help from:** 51% Myself 45% Teammates 4% Coach/trainer	**Coping mechanism:** 47% Changed focus/ took a step back 47% Took a break 6% Muted others

These four examples have the coach focus both on the technical and the mental in common. All of them had their attention driven into themselves, and most of them became aggressive, with one person going passive. Making mistakes were here the most influential with people problems as the second most. All of them blamed their own skills. There were two who responded with a combination of motivation and frustration as a response, while 1 said motivation and 1 said frustration. All of them got out of tilting with help from themselves and a coach and coped by changing focus /taking a step back and having a break. One of the respondents had a positive experience (table 4-8), and through his experience one can see it was related to a good team, team support and ways the team affect the individuals. It was here also a trend to see that the coach did not help the players get out of tilting, but themselves and teammates were central to that job. Team, communication and tilt responses are themes we will bring into the discussion later, also the coach role in this.

4.4 View of Coach

After looking at the players narratives and how they tilt, what they experience and who they blame, I want to look at their view of the coach. As seen in Appendix K, the respondents could add additional thoughts to the data collector, 22 out of the 25 additional thoughts were related to coach and the coach role. Here it's seen that most players agree a team should have different coaches with different names. If the team does not have multiple coaches, they should have a combined role with a technical and personal focus with differences in opinion of where the main focus should lay. There are also presented some outliers whose opinions are that a manager should help with the mental aspect, a coach is like a second parent and should be a role model, or that the mental focus should be the job of someone with greater knowledge within the field of human psychology and not a coach.

4.4.1 Blaming others: View of Coach

In this first section I will look at those who blame their teammates and the enemy team, before presenting the individual experiences again later. The first two figures 4-17 and 4-18 are based on the general statistics of those who blames others, and therefore there are fewer datapoints as all the others are filtered out.

Figure 4-17 shows that those who blame others think a coach should help more than not, most of them have placed their marker towards totally agree, with a couple leaning towards not at all, but are near the neutral middle.

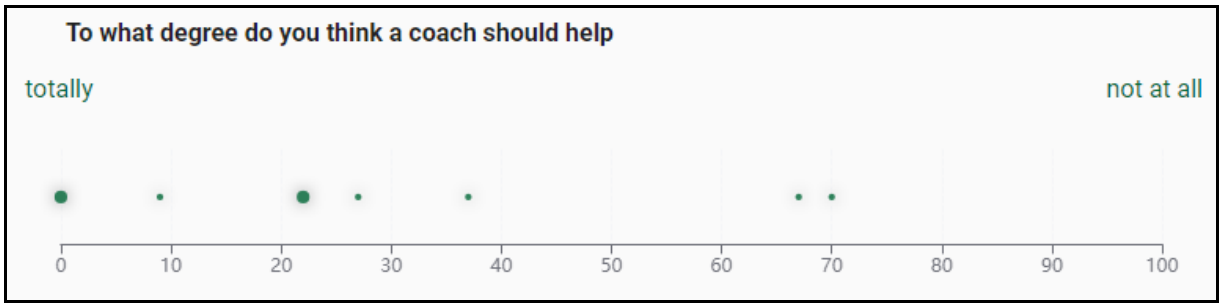


Figure 4-17: To what degree should a coach help

Totally/not at all. 9 respondents. Totally 0-33 (6). Neutral/both 33-66 (1). Not at all 66-100 (2).

Figure 4-18 shows that most of the respondents think the coach's focus should be on both technical skills and personal support, but with more participants leaning towards more technical skills and less personal support.

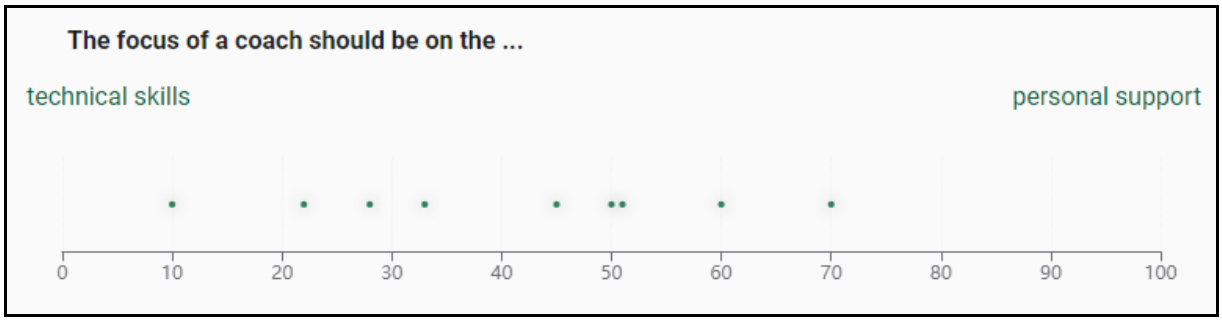


Figure 4-18: The focus of a coach should be on the

Technical skills/personal support. 9 Respondents. Technical skills 0-33 (4). Neutral/both 33-66 (4). Personal support 66-100 (1).

Figure 4-19 shows their opinion on who should help players cope with tilting and who helped them out of their experience of tilting. Here its mostly their own job to get out of it, but teammates and coach should also help. The triad here shows that all of them got out of their experience with help from themselves and teammates, with no responses near coach.

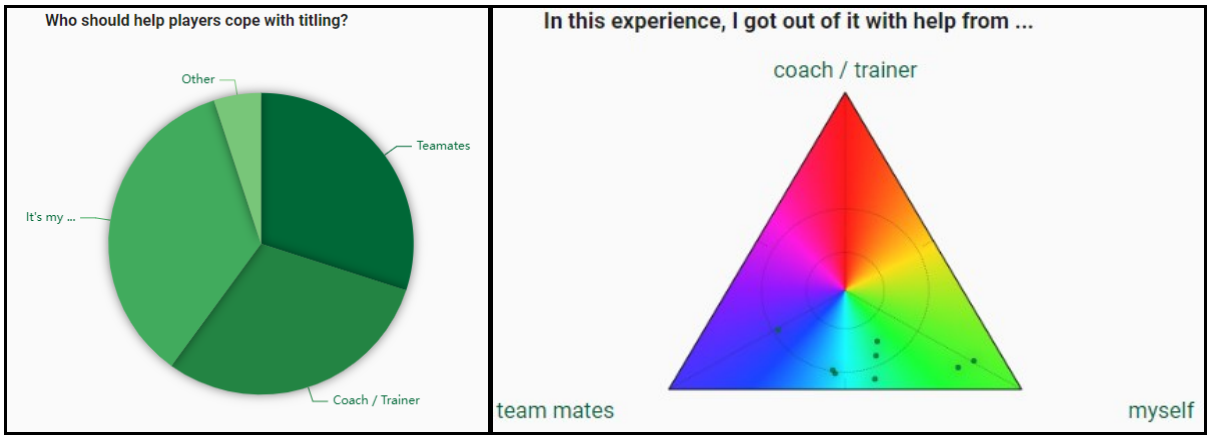


Figure 4-19: Who should help, who helped me, blaming others

The following narratives are the Players who blamed others in their experiences' opinions of coach role.

Table 4-10: Player 1.0 #goingmentalincomp

Player 1.0 Male, 21-24, coach/trainer, manager, 7-10 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #goingmentalincomp
Experience: Look at table 4-2			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
n/a	Teammates, coach/trainer, it's my own job	63% Totally 37% Not at all	60% Personal support 40% Technical skills
Additional thoughts: Hard to answer but overall i think that everyone should learn how to deal with Tilt and Emotions and how to control them, but coaches, Teammates and so on can have an important role in helping an individual person with it. Also it depends which kind of coach you are e.g a Mentalcoach will focus more on personal support but overall Coaches should be capable of doing both 😊			

Table 4-11: Player 1.1 #[redacted]YouBitch

Player 1.1 Male, 18-20, team member/player, 5-7 years on an organized team.			Hashtag: #[redacted]YouBitch
Experience: Look at table 4-3			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
45% Myself 49% Teammates 6% Coach	Teammates, coach/trainer	91% Totally 9% Not at all	10% Personal support 90% Technical skills
Additional thoughts: I put the coach being focused on technical skills mainly as they should, however coach is a branching term and for example a team I now work with has a main coach, assistant coach and a mental health coach. If they have one who is specified it is much easier but without someone set out to focus on it I believe the team manager should be the one to make sure players are doing well and their mental health is being prioritised (as well as their actual health)			

Table 4-12: Player 1.2 #TeamB4Me

Player 1.2 Male, 18-20, team member/player, coach/trainer, 2-3 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #TeamB4Me
Experience: Look at table 4-4			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
5% Myself 49% Teammates 46% Coach	Teammates, coach/trainer, it's my own job	73% Totally 27% Not at all	33% Personal support 67% Technical skills

Table 4-13: Player 1.3 #spamping

Player 1.3 Male, 25-30 years old, coach/trainer, 4-5 years in an organized team			Hashtag: #spamping
Experience: Look at table 4-5			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
59% Myself 38% Teammates 3% Coach/trainer	It's my own job	33% Totally 67% Not at all	72% Personal support 28% Technical skills

These four Players thought a coach should help them get out of tilting, but there was disagreement on whether a coach should have a technical skills or personal support focus. The additional thoughts present their opinions around the topic at hand include that, one of them wrote that everyone should learn how to deal with tilting themselves, but coaches and teammates can have an important role in this. The person also mentions a mental coach as someone with more knowledge on the field, but a coach should be able to do both. Another player thinks a coach should focus on technical skills, but it's a branching term. This person thinks that it's easier if the role is clear and given to someone, but if it's not the role of mental and physical support of the players, it should be the one of a manager and not the coach.

4.4.2 Blaming myself: View of Coach

Those who shared an experience with a significant impact and who blamed themselves got out of it with their own help, their own + teammates, their own + coach help, they were positive to a coach helping.

this section I will look at those who blame their own skills, before presenting the individual experiences again later. The first two figures 4-20 and 4-21 are based on the general statistics of those who blame themselves, and therefore there are fewer datapoints as all the others are filtered out.

After looking at the players narratives and how they tilt, what they experience and who they blame. In this case, those who blame themselves. I want to look at their view of the coach. The first two tables are based on the general statistics of everyone who blames themselves, before presenting the individual experiences again later.

Figure 4-20 shows that those who blame themselves think a coach should totally help, with a few being placed in between neutral and totally.

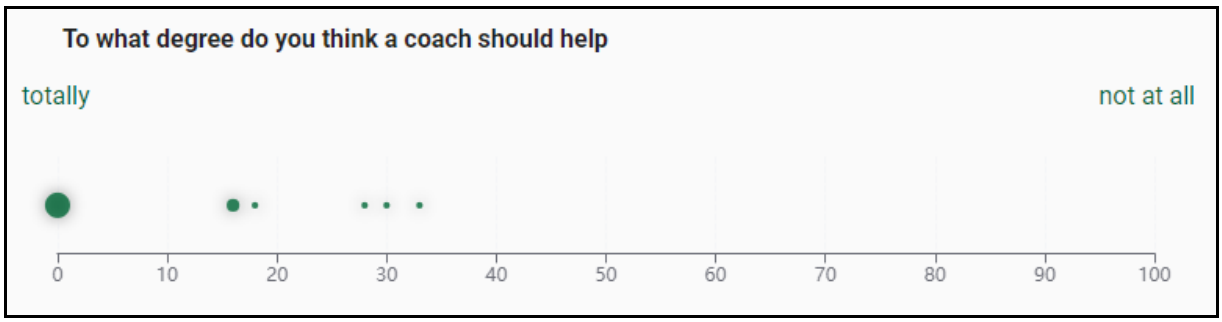


Figure 4-20: To what degree should a coach help

10 respondents. Totally 0-33 (10). Neutral/both 33-66 (0). Not at all 66-100 (0).

Figure 4-21 shows that most of the respondents think that a coach's focus should be on both personal support and technical skills, but with a cluster of participants leaning towards personal support with one outlier more towards technical support.

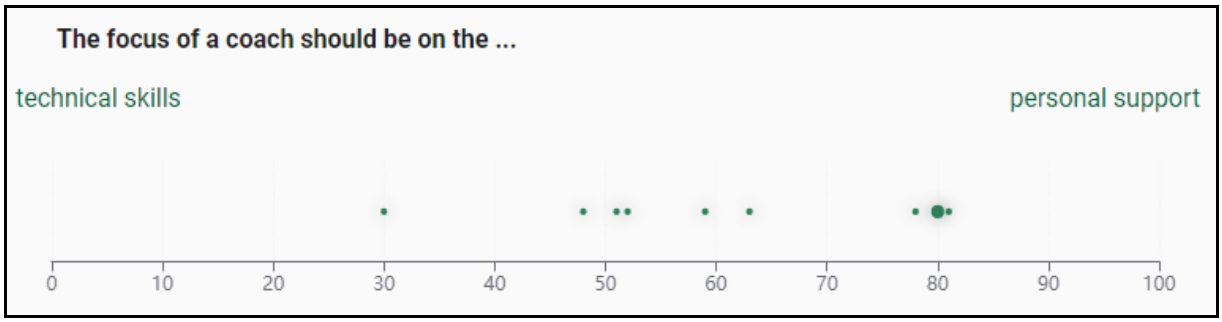


Figure 4-21: The focus of a coach should be on the

Technical skills/personal support. Technical skills 0-33 (1). Neutral/both 33-66 (5). Personal support 66-100 (4).

Figure 4-22 shows their opinion on who should help players cope with tilting and who helped them out of their experience of tilting. Here its mostly their own job and the coach's job to help players get out of it, but teammates should definitely also help. The triad here shows that all of them got out of their experience with help from themselves and teammates, only themselves, or with help from themselves and the coach.

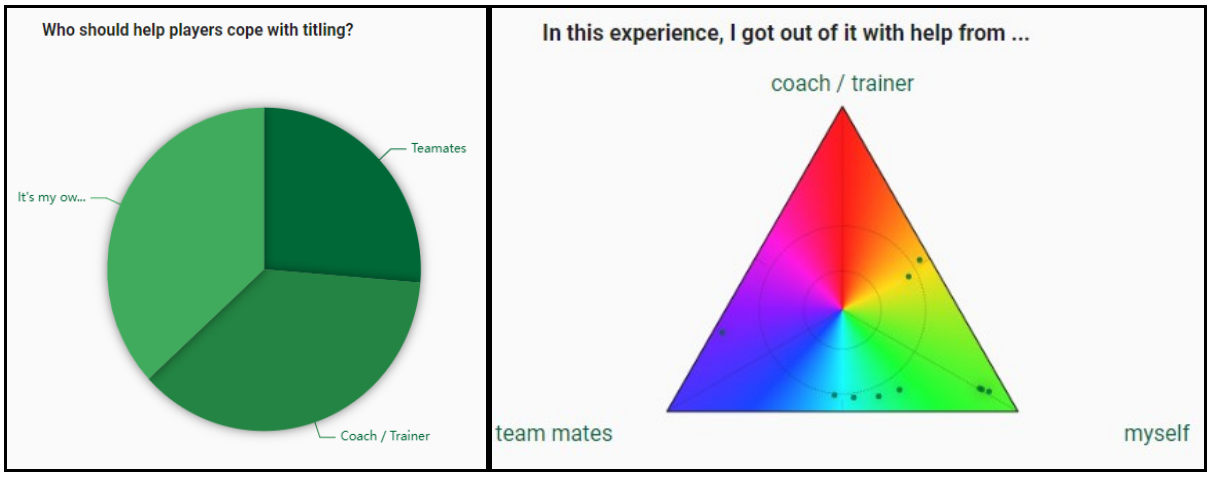


Figure 4-22: Who should help, who helped me, blaming myself

The following four narratives are of those who blame themselves in their experience, and their view of coach role:

Table 4-14: Player 2.0 #fuckme

Player 2.0 Female. 21-24 years old, team member/player, less than 1 year on an organized team			Hashtag: #fuckme
Experience: See table 4-6			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
90% Myself 3% Teammates 6% Coach/trainer	Coach/trainer	82% Totally 18% Not at all	52% Personal support 48% Technical skills
Additional thoughts:			

Table 4-15: Player 2.1 #fulltilt

Player 2.1 Male, 15-17 years old, team member/player, 2-3 years on an organized team.			Hashtag: #fulltilt
Experience: See table 4-7			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
25% Coach/trainer 72% Teammates	Teammates, coach/trainer, it's my own job	100% Totally 0% Not at all	59% Personal support 41% Technical skills
Additional thoughts: A coach should focus on technical skills equally as much as personal support. Maybe even a bit more personal support, but nowadays esport organizations have their own mental coaches that focus purely on that aspect of this, but if you have just one it should be split 50/50.			

Table 4-16: Player 2.2 #TeamSpirit

Player 2.2 Male, 18-20 years old, team member/player, 1-2 years on an organized team			Hashtag: #TeamSpirit
Experience: See table 4-8			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
45% Myself 50% Teammates 5% Coach/trainer	Teammates, coach/trainer, it's my own job	100% Totally 0% Not at all	81% Personal support 19% Technical skills
Additional thoughts: Its everyones job to help eachother out, but in the end the biggest job is gonna be working on yourself			

Table 4-17: Player 2.3 n/a

Player 2.3 Male, 21-24 years old, team member/player, 2-3 years on an organized team			Hashtag: n/a
Experience: See table 4-9			
Got out of it with help from:	**Who should help players cope:**	**To what degree should a coach help:**	**The focus of a coach should be on:**
51% Myself 45% Teammates 4% Coach/trainer	Teammates, coach/trainer, it's my own job	70% Totally 30% Not at all	30% Personal support 70% Technical skills
Additional thoughts:			

These Players though that a coach should help them get out of tilting, none less than 70% towards coach totally helping. But it was a difference on whether a coach should have a technical skills or personal support focus, with half of them thinking a coach should focus on both. The additional thoughts present their opinions around the topic at hand, one of them wrote that a coach should have a focus on both, but more on personal support. Teams often have mental coaches for this purpose, but if there is only one coach, they should do both equally. Another wrote that it's everyone's job to help each other, but in the end, we can only work on ourselves.

4.5 Summary of Findings

By looking back at the research question, sub-categories and the extra questions made from the expert panel and workshops there was seen some connections in the data.

The findings in this study show that tilting is a negative experience caused by internal and external factors, focusing on both mental and technical factors. Most players cope by taking a break or changing focus. The players seem to blame factors outside of themselves or their own skills depending on the situations, and react with being passive or aggressive, with frustration or gain motivation to do better. Their narratives all talk about things that make them tilt, and most of them mention their teammates either being the cause of tilting or the help that makes them not tilt or help them get out of tilting.

Following the trend of players seeing teammates as a source of help with coping when it comes to tilting, it's also seen that they all think it's their own job to deal with it, and they all indicate that a coach should help to varying degrees. On the other hand, it's seen that a coach is not the main help any of the individuals had to get out of tilting in their experiences, even if some of the players blaming themselves had some support from coach.

There is clearly a trend of those who blame themselves wanting a coach to be more focused on personal support, in contrast to the players blaming others as they want coach to have more of a technical focus. There is also a conflict in players getting out of tilting by themselves or with help from teammates, while the majority wants a coach to help them in their experiences.

In the following discussion I will draw lines from the theory chapter to these presented results, to see how the findings are informed by theories.

5 Discussion

This chapter will discuss the results of the research by using relevant research, theory, and the perspectives from the expert panel. I will do this by focusing on my research question:

What can esports players' experiences tell us about tilting?
And what is the esports players view of a coach in this?

Through the narratives, three themes emerged: tilting, blame and support. These three subjects will be presented and explored in the same order as stated, through the lens of coping mechanisms, emotion regulation and adult development theories, before finishing the chapter off with a short summary.

5.1 Tilting

One of the main themes of this thesis is the esports athletes' experiences with tilting. As presented in chapter 2, I describe tilting as *a state of mind that is caused by negative experiences and/or emotions that negatively affects in-game performance and decision making. Being in a state of tilt might cause more tilting as the negative consequences trigger more negative emotions*. As tilting is a mental state of mind it is likely to be seen as something that is both a cause of and response to negative influences. Data in chapter 4 shows that players were more focused on the mental than the technical when it came to their experiences, and this could help describe tilting as being linked to both technical performances in-game but also their mental state of mind.

5.1.1 How do the players cope?

Coping with tilting is as essential as recognising the tilt itself. In this section I will look at the coping and emotion regulation strategies of individual players, starting with recognizing the reasons for tilting.

Emotion regulation is developed over time, as we mature and grow into new stages of adult development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982), and can be done through taking a break, meditating, having physical reactions or avoidance, the latter being less efficient and more problematic over time (Duncan et al., 2014; Gross, 2015). Emotion regulation and coping have overlapping methods and strategies, as coping is the actions and methods that we use to influence experienced emotions to avoid stress, or deal with stressful life events (Larsen, 2000; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Taylor & Stanton, 2007). According to Tamminen and Gaudreau (2014) players would cope by intrapersonal coping, summarized as coping inside of one self to manage their own emotions and how to better their own reactions and performance by themselves. This can be seen in this data when the players would drive their attention into themselves or out onto others (Figure 4-5), and most of the players got out of their experience with by themselves, or in combination with help from a coach or teammates (Figure 4-7).

The majority of players responded to their situation with frustration, motivation to do better or a combination of the two (Figure 4-7). This can be supported by Palomäki et al. (2013) research with the poker scene's responses to tilting. Poker-players would look at certain incidents as out of their control, while some acknowledged their own lack of skills, and therefore acknowledged that there was a room for improvement, which could be seen as

coping mechanisms. This can be related to the esports players who gained motivation to do better from their experiences, as they saw room for improvement. The belief in their own abilities though personal control and mastery could lead to better psychological health and better coping strategies when facing stress (Taylor & Stanton, 2007). Motivation can be seen as a positive outlook of the future, where the individual is focused on change and improvement, and it can be used as a coping strategy. Frustration on the other hand is seen as an emotional response to tilting, but it should also be seen as a coping strategy and not just a response, as we will get into in the following sections.

Table 2-1 refers to Kou and Gui (2020) emotion regulating strategies for individual players and these strategies can be seen in the data of the general respondents (Figure 4-6, 4-7). The players coping responses had big clusters on changing focus or taking a step back and taking a break, and quite a few responded to the situation with a combination of the two (emotion self-regulation, attentional deployment, cognitive deployment), whereas only a few muted others (situation modification). As situation modification in the form of "muting others" can be hard to achieve in professional esports as it is a team sport where communication is key, it can therefore be seen as reasonable that emotion self-regulation, attentional deployment and cognitive deployment got more replies than situation modification in these results.

Wu et al. (2021) and Türkay et al. (2020) presented both similar and different coping responses of those experiencing tilting, where they also included negative responses as becoming angry or vocal. This is also seen in emotion regulation through extreme situations where people would shout or punch something (Gross, 2015). These narratives present such actions as a coping response or as emotion regulation:

> *[…] the largest criticism I would get from my coach and teammates is that I wasn't relaxed enough to play well or that I was taking it way too seriously and not giving myself room to breath when mistakes happened.* (Player 2.3, table 4-9)

> *[…] Then i went completely "mental", flamed my Teammates in the chat and went away from my Keyboard.* (Player 1.0, Table 4-2)

These narratives can be seen as showing a lack of (or the wrong use) of emotion regulating or coping mechanisms that could have been useful for both personal and skill development. As player 2.3 was told that he was "*not giving myself room to breath when mistakes happened*" is a good example of not using emotion regulating or coping mechanisms, and it was noticed by his teammates. Hearing the constructive feedback from teammates and coach could make a difference in certain individuals to help them towards growth as their previous way of coping is not working, this can show signs of development within the stages of adult development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982). Giving negative feedback to teammates before leaving could also affect the team and this is something I will look closer into in the section about support.

The majority of players became aggressive, but becoming passive was also greatly represented in the data, which was also found in the research done by Türkay et al. (2020). Both passive and aggressive tilting could be the cause of, or the response to toxic behaviours. This is described in the following narratives:

> *Then i went completely "mental", flamed [going mental/flaming teammates = being vocal, toxic] my Teammates in the chat and went away from my Keyboard.* (Player 1.0, Table 4-2)

> *[…] I was about to get a Penta (a team wipe/ace in League of Legends) and even called it but then my jungler took it and I am usually a quiet player so scream at him "[redacted] what have you done to me you bitch"* (Player 1.1, Table 4-3)

> *I was constantly complaining, getting annoyed and i just couldn't escape this evil tilt circle that i had fallen into.* (Player 2.1, Table 4-7)

These narratives present a way of getting their emotions out by expressing them in ways that are perceived by others in either a good or bad light. The player would scream at teammates, leave the game and complain when they reacted to their experience of tilting. Player 2.1 named the tilting as an *evil circle* that he couldn't escape and saw the tilting as a fixed state that we'll look at closer in the next few paragraphs. Their experiences (table 4-2, 4-3 and 4-7) showed their collective responses as being aggressive and frustrated to different degrees. This can possibly show that toxic behaviour and tilting are related, and that they can help explain each other.

As mentioned, tilting can be recognized by negative responses and Player 1.1 presented toxic traits as writing or shouting negative responses (Table 4-3). That incident could have been a source of negative emotions in others, but if we look at Türkay et al. (2020), the toxic behaviour could also come from a good place from friends, as motivation to do better. This is presented further in the narrative as Player 1.1 is aware that the situation he was in allowed it to be positive:

> […] *everyone found it hilarious as I don't usually talk or tilt but was super annoyed by this. […] it was funny because I was genuinely angry at him but was surrounded by friends in a more relax environment (scrims) and so it was played off and enjoyed, I am sure in a more heated place it could've gone differently.*

This was also expressed by the expert panel, as "trash talking" [negative comments said in a jokingly way, to promote motivation and support] is an implicit social norm in the gaming environment (Appendix H), but also something that can be difficult to differentiate for individuals as it is often not related to the action or words themself, but the meaning behind them and from who it is sent (Türkay et al., 2020). Toxic behaviour and tilting have signs of existing side by side, being both the cause of and the response to each other in the players narratives and in relevant research and theories. Mature or experienced players would gain knowledge of these norms over time and would more likely be less affected by them than inexperienced players.

As tilting is a state of mind that creates negative emotions and outcomes, it is also worth mentioning that it is something that goes away. Looking at the research of Wu et al. (2021), they saw that players who saw tilting as something they could work with or something flexible were more likely to have positive outcomes in their dealing with tilting, in contrast to those who saw their tilting as something static and uncontrollable. This can draw lines to Dweck and Leggett (1988) theory of fixed and growth mindset, where those with a growth mindset see abilities and talents as learnable and therefore improves them through effort, and those with fixed mindsets think that the same qualities are unchangeable and struggle to improve them through little to no effort. This can be recognised in the experience of Player 2.1 that stated: *I was constantly complaining, getting annoyed and i just couldn't escape this evil tilt circle that i had fallen into.* He saw his tilting experience as something that he could not escape, and something static that made him have negative reactions as complaining to teammates and getting annoyed, and players with this view could struggle to cope with tilting on their own.

One way of dealing with tilting might be by getting experience over time. By gaining knowledge and maturity, horizontal and vertical growth (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016), the players will gain experience as seen in poker (Palomäki et al., 2013), and as experienced poker players would experience less tilting – so might be the possibility for esports athletes. This could also be done with support from teammates and coach, as social and supportive resources would help the coping experience.

5.2 Blame

In previous research, tilting is said to often be caused by teammates, others, one self, losing or technical issues (Kou & Gui, 2020), and when the cause of tilting is laying outside of the individuals, it is safe to say that the blame would also be outside of the players. This will be presented in this section together with the presentation of data where people problems and making mistakes had a great influence on the players, where the majority blamed teammates, their own skills, or a combination of both with a few outliers that blamed the enemy team.

The following narratives tend to look at it as the individual's fault, but often the blame and reasons of their mistakes comes from outside sources or a combination of the two. As emotions affect performance (Lazarus, 2000) and emotions are caused by internal or external factors (Duncan et al., 2014) there seems to be a connection in the data and narratives when external factors are to blame. The following narratives presented some of these views, of outside sources affecting them in their experiences:

> *[...] I was performing badly and NOTHING, and i state again NOTHING went in my favour.* (Player 2.1, Table 4-7)
>
> *Once i played a Tournament after a 10 Hour Workday. Things didnt went the way i thought they would, i died a few times ingame. (*Player 1.0, Table 4-2)

The narratives present something outside of themselves as the source that affected their own gameplay, and that they were not in charge of what went wrong. This can also be seen as a way of framing the blame onto something else than themselves, while also blaming their own skills or the lack of and can see that it was their own fault or shown through their own lack of performance, this can also be seen in relation to the second stage of adult development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982) as presented in the next section.

5.2.1 Blaming others

As both internal and external sources cause our emotions to change and could affect our performance, tilting could stem from outside sources as well as internal ones (Larsen et al., 2013). The data consisting of blaming others was a combination of teammates, others and the enemy team (Figure 4-8) as found in Kou and Gui (2020) research. Silent players would become loud and have toxic traits, and then realise their need of support as seen in Player 1.1s narrative (Table 4-3):

> *[…] I was about to get a Penta (a team wipe/ace in League of Legends) and even called it but then my jungler [teammate] took it [stole the kill] so scream at him "[redacted]" what have you done to me you bitch." Everyone found it hilarious as I*

> *don't usually talk or tilt but was super annoyed by this. […] it made me realise how much I cared about doing well and "flexing" on people in the game, and was a good place to realise and work on controlling my emotions*.

This experience was presented as a positive one, as he was playing with friends and his tilting was framed as a source of humour and laughter on the team, as mentioned as an implicit social norms of esports. The blame was still presented as someone else's, just as in the following examples from other players narratives (Table 4-2 to 4-5):

> *I would often get frustrated when my teammates refused to listen to the team captain. There were other times when I would get tilted, mostly due to someone on the team being unreasonable with.* (Player 1.2)

> *A recurrent tilting process to me it's identified in ally pinging [marking items/locations in the game by the use of light/sound] useless information to me (*Player 1.3)

> *Then i went completely "mental", flamed [acting in a toxic way, by voice or text chat] my Teammates in the chat and went away from my Keyboard.* (Player 1.0)

A common theme in these narratives was other teammates unnecessary communication, lack of communication, negative communication or as Player 1.2 stated, players he saw as being *unreasonable.* Blaming others could be coming from a black and white view of the world, and as the expert panel presented in chapter 4.2 and appendix H, many blame others to not deal with their own issues. This could also be recognized in Kegan's order of adult development theories (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982) as a trait of those on stage two, where their needs are in the centre, others are to blame for failures and the reason to work with others are to trade values to increase personal goals, without empathy towards others.

5.2.2 Blaming myself

On the opposite side we find internal blame as described by Larsen et al. (2013), those who blame themselves in their experiences, those who drove their attention into themselves and blamed their own skills. This was also seen in the expert panel's statements (Appendix H) as tilting was always the individuals' issue, no matter if it stemmed from technical or personal/social issues. Some of the examples found in the players narratives were as follows (Table 4-6 to 4-9):

> *I tie my self worth to how well I do in game, which results in my tilt being self directed and self deprecative* (Player 2.0)

> *[…] we were down 3-12 and after those hectic first 15 rounds I only had 3 kills The worst thing you can do while performing bad is pressing tab and look at scoreboard.Ie worst feeling ever being the one that lacks* (Player 2.1)

> *For myself, it was a lot of pressure that I would put on myself. This would accelerate the tilting process as now instead of being tilted after a handful of losses or mistakes it only took around one or two […]* (Player 2.3)

Player 2.0 showed evidence of what the expert panel presented in Appendix H: *Many stays in LoL (league of legends) because they get good at it, and they're not necessarily good in other places of life,* and it is clearly a relation between Player 2.0s self-worth and their

performances in esports (Table 4-6). This is also seen in Player 2.1 and Player 2.3 as their narratives present that they would feel worse and blamed their in-game performances and the pressure created by themselves. As teammates were the second biggest help to cope with their experiences (Table 4-6, 4-7 and 4-9), the help received could have been related to positive and motivational feedback as we will look further into in the next section about support from teammates.

According to the expert panel, players would often go from being lonely to being on a team, and as they were now a part of a greater whole, they would feel bound to them. This is one of the themes presented further in Player 2.3s narrative (Table 4-9):

> *This [tilting] would be heightened by the fact that I was the in game leader for my team and any mistake I made would do much more than just slightly hinder my team, but would potentially lead to my team to losing the game out right. At some point, I would relinquish the in game leader role to someone else […]*

This narrative can be connected to Kegan's (1982) and Eigel and Kuhnert (2016) adult development theories, and the third order, or the socialized mind. In the socialized mind our social surroundings shape the individual, empathy for others is central and they are wary of conflict while trying to fit in and be accepted. Player 2.3 was clearly worried about his performances and them making the team lose, so much that he gave away his role as an in-game leader. Player 2.3 chose to step out of the leading role, as he didn't see himself as fit for the role, and in the next section about support we will look further into the possible needs and expectations of the support from a coach or teammates.

5.3 Support

Two sources for coping are presented as psychological, who we are, and social resources (Larsen et al., 2013; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978), and the latter includes the resources we gain from a coach and teammates. Seeking social support is said to reduces stress, motivate, create confidence and increase the sense of competence in the individuals (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). In this section I will look at the importance of teammates and a coach in the individual players coping and emotion regulating, and the general role of the coach.

In the presentation of general data (Figure 4-7), the majority of respondents in the survey got out of their experience by themselves. There was also a cluster showing they got out of it with help from themselves and teammates, and a cluster between themselves and coach. There were multiple respondents that got out of it mainly with help from teammates, but only a couple respondents that mainly got help from the coach. There is clearly a trend in the esports players that they know it's their own job to cope with tilting, but they want equal responsibility to be on the coach and teammates (Figure 4-11). Social support is said to be protective against stress, and the lack of social support can create psychological distress (Taylor & Stanton, 2007), so teammates and a coach being able to facilitate and help individuals in coping with tilting could be beneficial.

5.3.1 Teammates

As written by Tamminen and Gaudreau (2014), social support reduces stress and increases motivation, and one of the presented perspectives on coping is interpersonal coping. This

is explained as how the team copes as one, being aware of their influence on each other and to help support each other, and a way of showing the world that it's not the individual vs. the world, it's the team vs the world, "us against them", as a combined source of skills, mastery and performance. This can be seen as a possible way of coping with tilting, as it can be presented as one of the general tasks for the team as a whole. One of the narratives that presents this is Player 2.3 /Table 4-9) that stated:

> *This [tilting] would be heightened by the fact that I was the in game leader for my team and any mistake I made would do much more than just slightly hinder my team, but would potentially lead to my team to losing the game out right.*

This showed the player blaming himself and that his tilting and actions could affect the rest of the team in a negative way, in this incident, by losing. By understanding one's own emotions and gaining emotional intelligence, it is easier to understand others feelings, behaviours and reasoning through a higher sense of emotional intelligence (Duncan et al., 2014). Player 2.2 (Table 4-8) was one of the respondents whose tilting experience showed the importance of supportive teams. It showed how teammates could hinder tilting in others, and that players have a responsibility in supporting each other, and that this support could lead to better performance and team spirit:

> *(…) one of the biggest and most important things is supporting eachother mentally. You should always try to build up your team mates, and if you can tell they are starting to get tilted (for an example, you hear them sighing, or notice someone who usually talks alot start to go quiet) something as simple as a quick joke or a simple positive "you got this" or "dont worry about it, you'll get them back later" can work wonders when it comes to helping out your teams mental. (…) its insane how big of a deal team atmosphere has on peoples performance.*

This narrative includes the strategies for emotion regulating of teammates, and the team-related situations that would evoke players emotions presented by Kou and Gui (2020) in Table 2-2. Having a positive attitude towards the team and individuals' capabilities would be a strategy of situation modification, and supporting teammates who experience negative emotions by motivational and supportive communication could be seen as attentional deployment. This is also seen as extrinsic emotion regulation as the player wants to regulate others emotional responses (Gross, 2015), and as previously stated, it can be related to the socialized mind (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982). In player 2.2's experience, it was seen that the team's atmosphere and positive attitude towards each other had great importance and through coping and emotion regulation, this could lead to better team performances. As social ties often are said to be a source of both negative and positive influence on a team, with emphasize on the fact that positive emotions seems to affect the collective mood to become more positive (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014), there might be a need of a bigger focus towards the positive influence of teammates within esports as it could increase motivation and reduce feelings of tilting. This is something that someone in the staff might be able to teach the esports athletes through interventions, classes and practices.

5.3.2 Coach

After reviewing the similarities in esports and sports (Emara et al., 2020; Garcia-Lanzo et al., 2020; Poulus et al., 2020; Tjønndal, 2020), and the similarities between sports psychology and coaching (O'Broin & Palmer, 2014; Watson et al., 2021), I would like to

propose that an esports coach can often hold the role of both traditional coach and sports psychologist at the same time. As a combined coach, they should focus on a relationship with the athlete that is built on trust and honesty, and create a safe environment for development, processing emotions and how to deal with stress (O'Broin & Palmer, 2014) which also overlaps with the players' mental health and needs.

In contrast to previous data that showed that most players got out of tilting with help from themselves, Figure 4-9 shows that all the respondents think a coach should help to some degree, with the majority leaning towards thinking that a coach should "totally" help. Traditional sports teams often have emotion regulation training and sports psychologists to help players cope with emotions and improve mental and physical health (Kou & Gui, 2020; Pedraza-Ramirez et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2021). This can also be seen in my data as there seems to be a visible need and expectation from the respondents that a coach should focus on both the personal support and the technical skills within esports, with a few leaning more towards personal support than technical skills (Figure 4-10). The comments from the expert panel (Appendix H) presents remarks when it comes to the lack of resources in Norwegian esports and that there is no culture for the mental focus in Norwegian esports as of now, this is also seen in the appendix H and chapter 4.4, and that should be taken into consideration.

Building on the lack of resources and a culture for mental coaching, the expert panel stated that coaches are often previous high-level players that have a great amount of knowledge within the game itself but not necessarily any knowledge within emotion regulation or coping on an individual or collective scale. There was a big portion of respondents who were coaches or managers, and according to the general data they were also younger than 35 (Table 4-1). This can also strengthen the expert panels experiences with coaches being knowledgeable with the game itself as they are previous or current players but might not have a greater understanding of mental skills and tools that are gained over both lateral and vertical development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016).

It's still a trend both nationally and internationally that a coach often has multiple roles combined in one (British Esports Association, n.d), depending on a team's resources, and there is research showing that teams could benefit on having a separate performance coach and sports psychologist (Pedraza-Ramirez et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2021). The additional thoughts in the chosen narratives were related to the combination of the roles a coach has, or the different coaches that a team consisted of. The expert panel also presented this statement in appendix H, where it is said that there are limited resources in Norwegian esports, so the roles are often combined. This is shown in the respondents' additional thoughts:

> *[…] Also it depends which kind of coach you are e.g a Mentalcoach will focus more on personal support but overall Coaches should be capable of doing both* 😊 (Player 1.0, Table 4-10)
>
> *I put the coach being focused on technical skills mainly as they should, however coach is a branching term and for example a team I now work with has a main coach, assistant coach and a mental health coach.* (Player 1.1, Table 4-11)
>
> *A coach should focus on technical skills equally as much as personal support. Maybe even a bit more personal support, but nowadays esport organizations have their own mental coaches that focus purely on that aspect of this, but if you have just one it should be split 50/50*. (Player 2.1, Table 4-15)

Mental (health) coach and sports psychologist are synonyms within the world of esports, and these players narratives tells us that their teams have specific staff that would deal with the players psychological needs, but that a coach should be able to focus on both the technical skills and the personal support, especially if the team only has one coach in a combined role. It could be seen as a need from the players narratives that a combined coach should be able to connect the technical skills and personal support, to facilitate both personal and technical development, but split roles would be preferred.

The expert panel also presented that bigger teams often have multiple roles to fill the teams' different needs, but then the players could struggle to see who they should go to with different issues. This can be seen in Player 1.1 (Table 4-11) response in their additional thoughts

> *[…] If they have one who is specified it is much easier but without someone set out to focus on it I believe the team manager should be the one to make sure players are doing well and their mental health is being prioritised (as well as their actual health)*

Here it is seen that player 1.1 wants a manager to have the main responsibility, in contrast to any other players or theories. The expert team presented this as caused by the lack of staff and stories of specific managers taking this up as a personal job, but that it was not a normal job for a manager. This also supports the expert panel's opinion of esports not having a good structure of who does what.

Further the players also had opinions on whos' job it was to help the players deal with specific things as tilting and emotions:

> *[…] overall i think that everyone should learn how to deal with Tilt and Emotions and how to control them, but coaches, Teammates and so on can have an important role in helping an individual person with it.* (Player 1.0, Table 4-10)
>
> *Its everyones job to help eachother out, but in the end the biggest job is gonna be working on yourself* (Player 2.2, Table 4-16)

These narratives show signs of coping/regulating being the players own job to learn, but teammates and staff could help. In chapter 4.3 it was shown that Player 1.0 was one of those who blamed others in their experience, and player 2.2 blamed themselves in theirs, but they still agreed that tilting and emotion control is mainly our own job to deal with, with or without help from others. This can be seen as intrinsic emotion regulation (Gross, 1998), as the athlete wants to change one's own emotions with resources drawn from currently available mental and physical resources, to gain a specific outcome. These narratives showed the importance in the resources coming from the team members, but as a resource for the individual's development and coping mechanisms.

Different players views of a coach were shown in the presentation of data where players blaming themselves, wanted coach to help more towards personal support (Figure 4-21), and the players blaming others wanted coach to have more focus on technical support (Figure 4-18), but the general trend in the respondents (Figure 4-10) showed that a coach should have focus on both the technical skills and personal support. If we draw the line to the socialized mind (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982), the people blaming others that wanted coach to focus on the technical skills, would make sense for someone on stage two that wants coach to train them to better performance, but still blaming others for their own faults. The players that seem to care more about the team dynamics, team spirit and how

the team does, while also blaming themselves for tilting and team performance could be closer to or within the third stage of adult development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982) as they wanted personal support from the coach and as someone on the third stage would want to avoid conflicts, as personal support could often be related to inter- and intrapersonal issues.

5.4 Summary

As a summary, the players narratives present visible traits of blaming themselves or others, and a mixed opinion in who should help them out of the situation or help them cope. These differences also shine brighter through the lens of adult development, as those who blame themselves and those who blame others had different traits, and different opinions about the coach's job. As tilting is presented by both aggression and frustration, I have also tried to present these traits as being a source of positive coping mechanisms, as these emotions should not be ignored but used for good. The same goes for toxic behaviour as one of the topics that is both a cause of and a reaction to tilting. It can also be seen as supportive trash-talk from friends and teammates but has to be experienced as a social norm within the esports scene.

The following, and last, chapter is the conclusion chapter that covers the central findings and the essence of the discussion, before presenting the limitations and possibilities of themes and specific subjects for future research.

6 The End Game: Final Thoughts

The goal for my study was to explore the players experiences with tilting in the esports world, to create data that didn't already exist and to open the path for future research. In this chapter I will round off my thesis by answering my research questions:

What can esports athletes' experiences tell us about tilting?
And what is the esports athletes view of a coach in this?

After answering these questions, I will state potential implications, limitations, and possibilities for future studies.

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 What can esports athletes' experiences tell us about tilting?

Through my research, tilting is shown to be a more complex phenomenon than it first appeared to be. The findings indicated that some gained motivation from it, and others gained frustration or a combination of the two. It was seen that becoming passive and aggressive were both valid and well-represented answers both in their experiences and through previous research.

The different traits affecting the players were as different as their way of handling their state of tilt. Those who became toxic towards others could be said to negatively impact teammates, being the *people problems* of others, as the emotions of individuals are clearly shown to affect teammates (Kou & Gui, 2020; Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). Toxic behaviour can also be seen as positive or motivational if it comes from friends, but it is based on the social norms in the esports scene and could be hard to distinguish (Türkay et al., 2020).

A key conclusion is that developmental maturity (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2016; Kegan, 1982) has a significant impact on how players assign blame, as it was a clear difference in those who blamed themselves and those who blamed others in their experiences. I will present implications of this later in the chapter.

Through my study and previous research there are signs of tilting being this negative experience that is often pushed aside, seen as a disadvantage, or avoided (Duncan et al., 2014; Taylor & Stanton, 2007). While it seems that emotions are not well understood or are underutilized as a resource within esports it is clearly room for these emotions to be applied in a different way to be beneficial. As tilting is being perceived as a negative state of mind, that affected their gameplay no matter the reason behind it or their reactions during, or after - who should help the esports players with this?

6.1.2 What is the esports players view of a coach in this?

Out of all the 67 respondents, 22 of those added additional thoughts about coach role, other coaches, the managers role and what is the team or individual player's job. All these showed a trend, in both experienced and inexperienced esports players, that there is not enough structure in esports as of for now. This shows that players don't know who is in charge of what, what they should deal with themselves, what teammates could help them with, what a coach should do or what the other staff is in charge of.

As social support is seen to reduce stress and increase motivation (Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014; Taylor & Stanton, 2007), my research indicated that support from coaches and teammates had a great value for individual players. This was shown in the narratives by the use of situation modification and attentional deployment (Kou & Gui, 2020) in both individuals and collective coping strategies.

My study showed a clear trend that the players agreed that a coach should help to a certain degree, with a predominance of the respondents stating that a coach focus should be on both technical and personal support, but leaning further towards personal support. My research indicates that greater role clarity and awareness both on a technical level but also in relation to emotion regulation and coping, will benefit the players.

6.2 Implications for the Field

As one of the fundamental issues in esports, tilting is likely to be seen in a negative light – but what about the positives? It is possible to see tilting as an important process of their development and emotional maturity, growing as individuals in both personal and professional life? A coach or team members could help the individual players and the team, by facilitating a learning process, to help them recognize and acknowledge emotions and relate them to specific performances in the past and help them to find a constructive way of using their emotions or coping with tilting (Duncan et al., 2014; Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014). As it is presented in multiple studies that supressing emotions or coping by avoidance is a bad strategy, and my research shows signs of both passive and aggressive responses to tilting, the esports athletes could learn to use their emotions as a tool to increase their in-game performance. By using positive emotions to affect teammates with increased motivation and positive reassurance, but also by using stress, aggression, and frustration as a source of focus and excitement can be beneficial to both individual and team performances.

As it would be too much to ask a coach to research the adult development stages (Kegan, 1982), it could still be a possibility that coaches should understand that tilting is a way for the players to develop personal growth. The players might need to be made aware of this and supported in their journey, and a coach can help them here. Personal maturity could help increase performance through seeing the practical uses of tilting and the emotions and coping strategies that goes hand in hand with their experiences (Duncan et al., 2014). The importance of a coach having a good coach-athlete relation while promoting optimal performance through supportive coaching that encourages physical and mental skills (O´Broin & Palmer, 2014; Tamminen & Gaudreau, 2014) as well as having the technical skills from previous experiences as a player themselves (Hopton et al., 2014), could be beneficial to the team and individuals.

The players within the second-stage of adult development could be motivated to self-regulate their emotions and tilting by seeing their own gain in doing so. My research showed that they wanted the coach to have a focus on technical skills, so framing mental skills and tilting to be related to their performance towards technical skills could be beneficial, as their motivation is to win. Emotion regulation and coping mechanisms could help reduce their tilting response caused by others or help them re-frame and use the emotions for good. Reducing or re-purposing the stress and negative emotions could improve their performance instead of lowering it. Decreasing their own tilting would also reduce their frustration and aggressive responses, and by that help reduce their toxic

behaviours. By reducing their negative responses, it could reduce the negative strain they might put on teammates, as the supportive individual leads to positive results, and negative individuals can affect the team in a negative way.

Players being close to or within the third stage, the socialized mind, would on the other hand be benefitted from recognizing their own needs and skills, while at the same time using their empathy as a positive resource. They wanted the coach to have a bigger focus on personal support, and by this the coach could facilitate learning by framing it as something that could greatly benefit the team, as their motivation is not just to help the team towards victory, but also the team-dynamics and team spirit itself as a social scene. The social-mind players could also profit by learning ways to provide positive influence on teammates, without having to reduce themselves for others sake. Trusting in their own skills and being self-sufficient could also lead to better performance by the individuals, that would help the team as a whole. These are topics and themes that a coach could implement in team practices by taking courses and implementing them through interventions and team/individual practices.

Looking from the outside and in, being influenced by all the experiences shared, my own experiences and opinions from years of gaming and the knowledge passed on from the experts panel, I will state that the esports community have a duty to make it a supportive environment from within, as it will most likely not come from outside sources.

6.2.1 What are the players' needs?

Through my research it would seem beneficial to be able to talk about and to allow feelings to arise and be used for good rather than ignored or pushed aside. Teammates and coaches could be seen as important support-characters in this development, and their general knowledge of relevant themes such as emotion regulation and coping should be put on the agenda. Being able to help players where they are at, and how to cope within their scope, could result in better performance of both individual players but also team-plays. Thus, the coach should focus on strengthening the general mental health of the esports team through knowledge exchange, interventions, and other preventive work to create a culture for a bigger focus on mental health, increase the awareness of emotion regulation, facilitate personal growth and by that reducing the negative influences of tilting.

To finish this summary, I will re-cite Player 2.2s additional thoughts (Table 4-16):

Its everyones job to help eachother out,
but in the end the biggest job is gonna be working on yourself

6.3 Limitations

There are always limitations to a study, especially a master's thesis as it's often written with limited resources.

My research has a narrow foundation, as the academic research on esports, the mental focus, team performances and tilting, is a newer field where most researchers agree on the findings. Most of the studies are of a smaller scale and they often present data and research based on a single team, a single tournament, a single game, or any other small

cluster of players. It has been the same in this research as it is small in numbers and only reached a portion of the field.

Other limitations would be the limitations of exploratory research and the sensemaking perspective. It could be said to consist of specific episodes, incidents and outcomes that can't be translated into other fields while they are also interpreted by the respondents themselves (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015), but it can be used to look at trends within communities as esports, and be used to explore the field before future studies.

6.4 To be Continued

By exploring the results using relevant research and theories, I can make assumptions towards the possible future of esports. In the light of these results, some things are clearer, and some things are unclear. This can be seen as a good sign for future research, as it can be encouraged that they should go deeper into the things that are uncertain.

It could be seen as beneficial to look at the topics that arose but that were not studied in this research, one of these is the motivation to do better as a reaction to tilting. It could also be beneficial to have longitudinal study and/or a study with a greater number of respondents. It could also be seen to be beneficial to interview players and coaches directly to get examples from within the field while being able to double check answers and ask follow-up questions.

As I wrote this thesis, I saw openings and possible questions that the survey could have included, such as:

- How long they were tilted
  - Did it affect them after the game, after a day, after a week?
- What did their coach focus on, technical skills/personal support?
  - Do they have multiple coaches?
- What was the role of teammates? What did they do if others tilted?

It could also be valuable for future studies to look at coaches and mental coaches/sports psychologist backgrounds within the field, do they have education in any way shape or form? Is there a difference in the coaches focus from team to team?

The future of esports is happening around us as this is written, and it will be interesting to keep an eye on it in the coming decades.

6.5 Final Level: For the Gamers

In many videogames, and esports games, there are often different roles assigned to different characters and players, this is widely known from the world of MMORPG [Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games]. It consists of a tank, a healer and a DPS [damage per second], where the combination of the three roles in is needed to complete most quests and objectives. This is often mentioned as the holy trinity of a team, explained in simpler words for those who is not familiar with the world of gaming in Appendix L.

In the world of esports we can implement this holy trinity as a future goal. The team members could be said to be the DPS, as they get things done, but they need the support of the other two to be efficient and perform to their best abilities. The technical coach could be said to be the tank, taking care of the progress of the team and supporting the team by being a leader. The personal or mental coach could be said to be the healer, by reducing negative emotions and stress, helping players cope with negative status effects as tilting, and giving them positive buffs by motivation and mental training.

Some games have added a *paladin* character, that is a combination of both a healer and a tank, someone that gives positive status effects, removes negative ones, shields teammates, and leads them on their way – maybe this character, the paladin, should be the role model of the combined coaches in esports!

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8 Appendices

Appendix A: 1st Workshop Themes and Topics

Table 8-1: Workshop topics

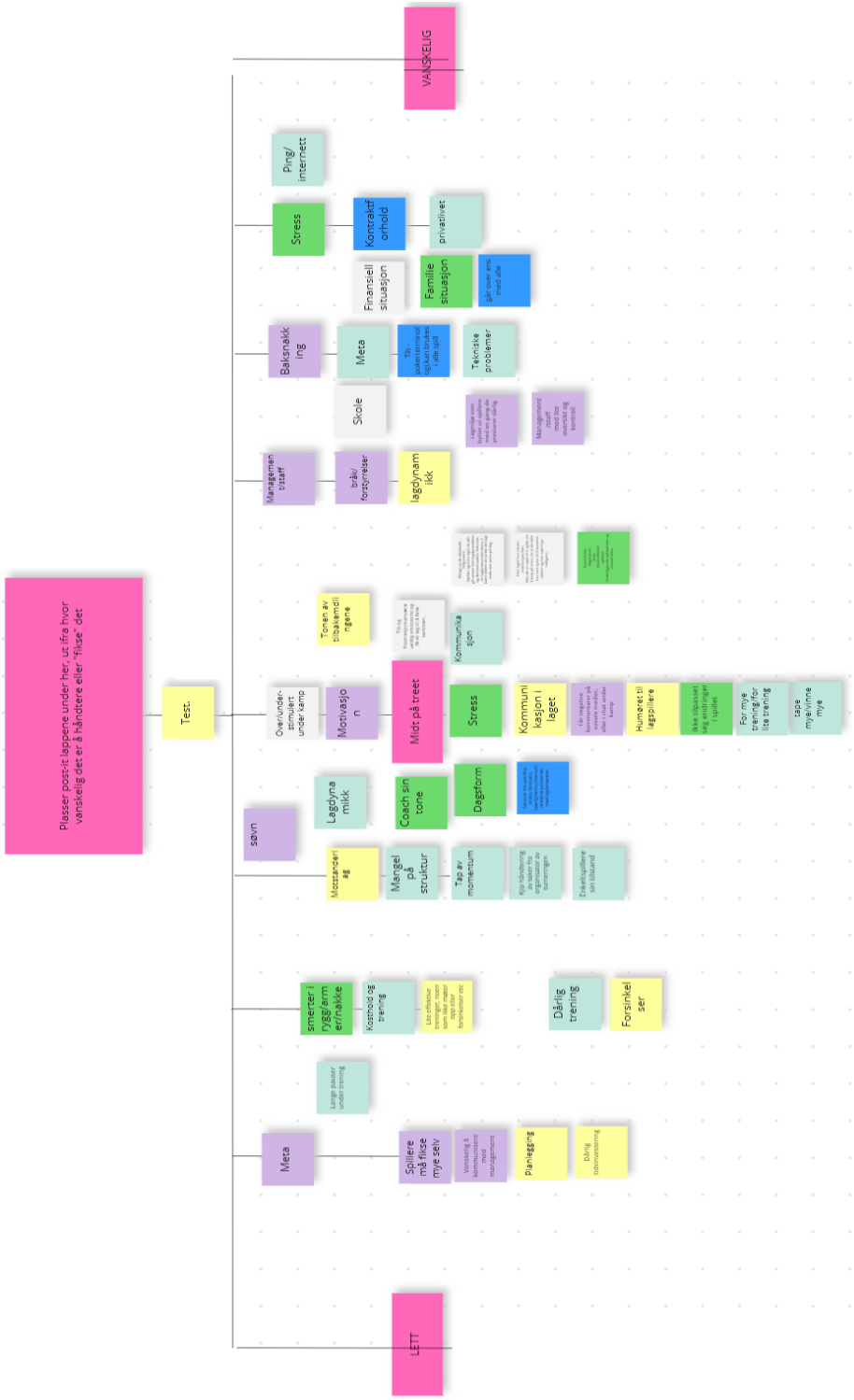
Sosiale aspekter	Mentale aspekter	Fysiske aspekter	Andre ting (out of our control)
Kommunikasjon mellom spillere/coach Lagets "humør" Lagdynamikk Familielivet Kjærlighetsliv Det å "gå overens" med alle på laget Privatlivet Baksnakking Støy (rundt laget, enkeltpersoner) Coach sin tone	Dagsform Motivasjon Over/understimulert Stress Kommentarer på SOME og/eller i chat før/under turneringer Ikke tilpasningsdyktig Reaksjon på tilbakemeldinger (form/tone) Tilt Frustrasjon	Kosthold/diett Trening Muskel/leddplager Smerte rygg/nakke/håndledd Søvn Sykdom Underliggende sykdom/mental helse For lite/mye trening	Finansielle problemer Dårlig trening Forsinkelser Organisators håndtering Motstanderlag Tap av momentum Internett/ping/tekniske problemer Kommentarer på SOME Skole

Table 8-2: Workshop topics difficulty

	Outside of a players influence	Both	Within the players power of influence
Easy	Meta (in-game changes, what's new, what's currently good/bad combinations) Difficulty in communication with management		Planning Time investment Long breaks during practice
Easy/medium	Delays People being late Opponent team Bad handling of situations from management (in tournaments)	Individual players mood Ineffective practices	Pain in arms, neck back Diet and workouts Ineffective practices Lack of structure Loss of momentum Sleep
Medium	Coach' tone of voice Day to day (form) Outside factors (familylife, stress, lovelife, non-game related issues with teammates) Negative comments on social media or in chat during games Mood of teammates	Team dynamics Communication within the team Too much/little practice Lose or win too much Physical health (diet, sleep, workout, sickness, mental health)	Over/under stimulated in games Motivation Stress Not being adaptable to change Tilt and frustration can be contagious to teammates Communication

	Tone of feedback		Individual challenges affecting team dynamics
Medium/hard	Management/staff Noise/disturbances School Teams that change members straight away if they perform badly Management/staff with little to no control and overview Back talk Meta (how the game changes) Technical issues Tilt (poker term), can be used in all games	Team dynamics Tilt (poker term), can be used in all games	Tilt (poker term), can be used in all games
Hard	Ping/internet Stress Private life Contract conditions Family situation	Financial situation	Getting along with everyone

Appendix B: 1st Workshop, Themes Sorted



Appendix C: SenseMaker, Front Page and Questions

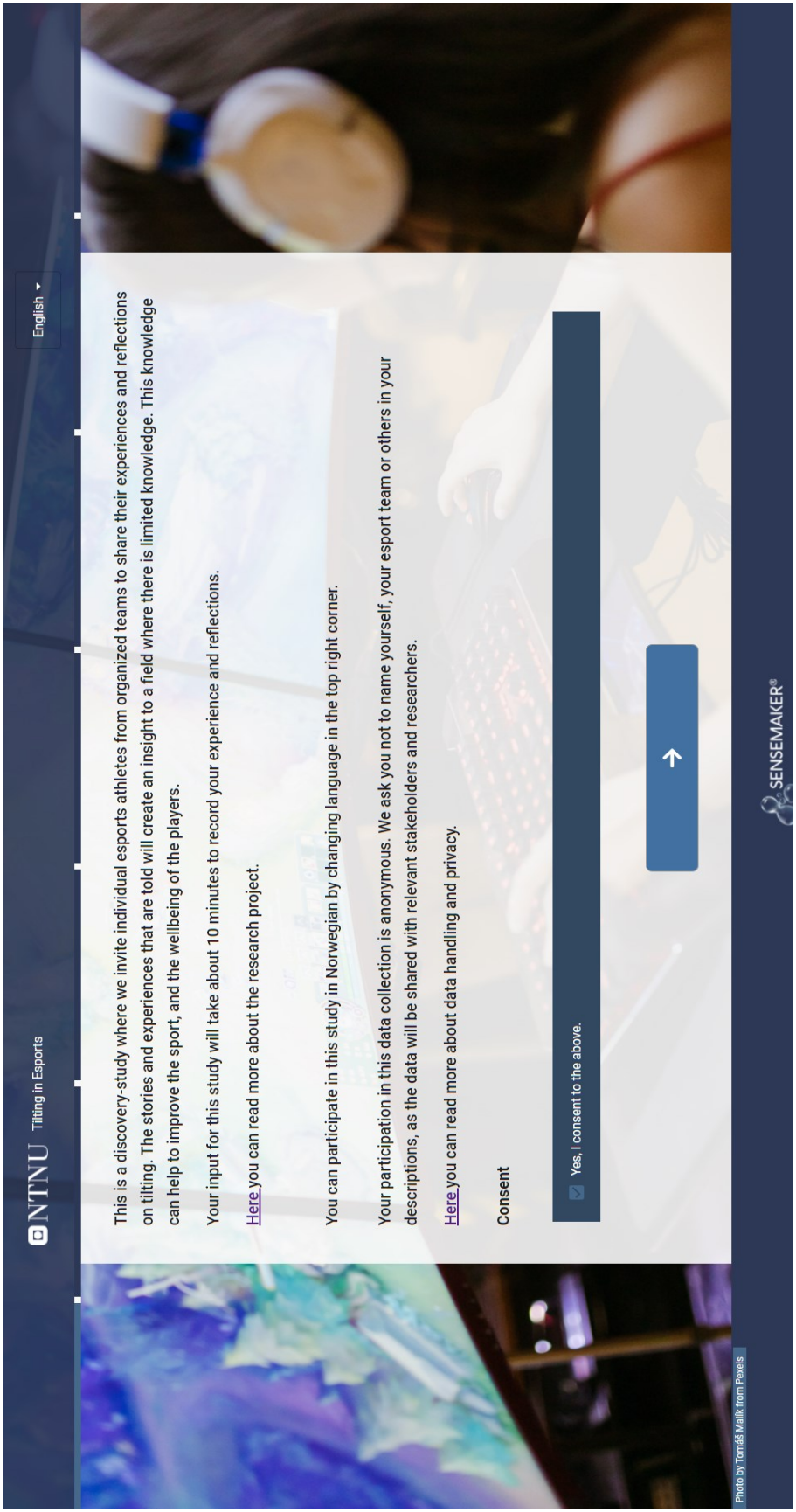


Table 8-3: Data collector content

Topic/intro	Question	Possible answers
Relevant background information	What is your role on your current esports team? (You can check more than one)	Team member/player. Independent player. Coach/trainer. Manager. Analyst. Other (specify other).
	How many years have you been on an organized team?	Less than 1. 1-2. 2-3. 3-4. 4-5. 5-7. 7-10. More than 10.
Tilting is a state of mind that is caused by in- or out of game experiences and/or emotions that negatively affects in-game performance and decision making. Tilting is often caused by teammates or oneself making mistakes or losing games, and it is recognised by players being angry, loud, frustrated, passive aggressive, silent and or toxic, often in a combination. Being in "tilt" and reacting to it will often lead to a vicious cycle of more tilting [unless you somehow get out of the state]. Think of something that happened around tilting during your time as an esports athlete. Something that comes to mind now and that made an impact on you in some way. It can be a big or small event, positive or negative, related to a specific in- or out of game event, other people, or yourself. Make your description as short or long as you want. Focus on describing your experience as it happened, you will be able to reflect on it in later questions. All questions on the following pages might not be relevant to the experience you share. Remember you can use the N/A-button.	Tell us about an experience of "tilting"	
	Give your experience a hashtag	#
	Would you describe your experience as…	Very positive. Positive. Neutral. Negative. Very negative. A bit of both. N/A.
	What level of impact did this experience have on you?	Life changing. Significant. Medium. Minor. No impact at all. N/A.

Please remember not to identify yourself or others.		
Now we want you to reflect on and around your experience and think of how different aspects might be applicable to it. In the dyads below look at the statement and drag the ball to the place on the slider that best reflects your experience. If options are not relevant to the experience you shared, choose N/A.	In my experience I was focused on the …	Dyad: Mental / technical. N/A.
	This experience drove my attention …	Dyad: Into myself / out onto others N/A
	In this experience I became …	Dyad: Passive / aggressive N/A
	In my experience, I wanted to …	Dyad: Stop playing / keep playing N/A
Now we want you to investigate your experience in relation to three options at a time. You will see triangles below, with themes on each corner. Again, place the ball in relation to which signifier or combination of these themes best fits your experience. If the options are not relevant to the experience you shared, choose N/A. See the simple example below to get an idea of how it works. [example not included in appendix]	In my experience I was influenced by …	Triad: People problems / technical problems / making mistakes N/A.
	In my experience I blamed …	Triad: The enemy team / my teammates / my own skills N/A
	My response to this experience was …	Triad: Frustration / motivation to do better / indifferent N/A
	In this experience I got out of it with help from …	Coach trainer / teammates / myself N/A
	To cope with my experience, I …	Changed focus took a step back / took a break / muted others N/A
This page is more about general thoughts on tilting. Reply here as you did in the earlier dyads by dragging the ball to the place on the slider that best fits your opinion. At the end we want you to share any new thoughts or reflections	Who should help players cope with tilting? (Click one or more)	Teammates. Coach/trainer. It's my own job. Other (specify other). N/A.
	To what degree do you think a coach should help	Dyad: Totally / not at all N/A
	The focus of a coach should be in the …	Dyad: Technical skills / personal support N/A

you made on the topic or your experience	Additional thoughts	
Demographic and general information	Gender	Male. Female. Other. Rather not say. N/A.
	Age	Under 15. 15-17. 18-20. 21-24. 25-30. 31-35. Over 35. N/A.
	Where are you from?	Norway. Other Scandinavian. Other (specify other). N/A.
	Where is your team located?	Norway. Other Scandinavian. Other (specify other). N/A.

Rita Spica

Takk for din deltagelse i denne undersøkelsen!

Om du har spørsmål eller generelle tanker om denne undersøkelsen eller oppgaven, kan du sende dette til meg på epost:

ritaasp@stud.ntnu.no

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Institutt for Pedagogikk og livslang læring

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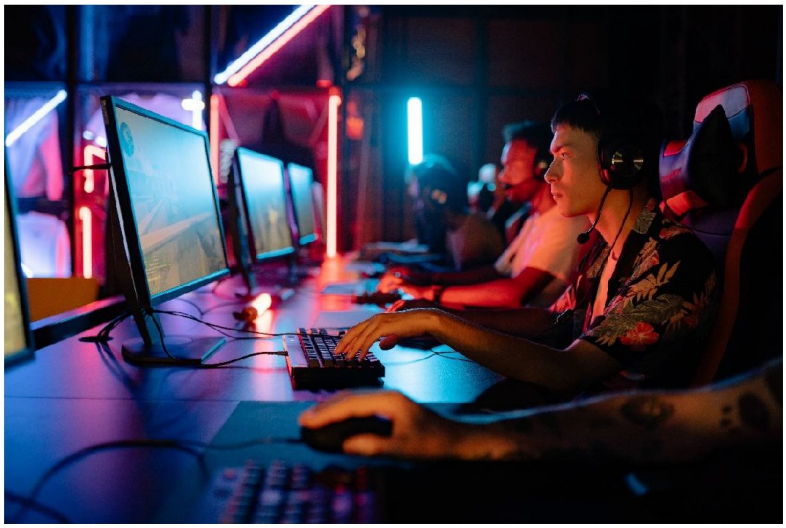
Rita Spica

Thank you for participating in this survey!

If you have any questions or general thoughts or comments about this survey or thesis, you can email me at:

ritaaspi@stud.ntnu.no

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning



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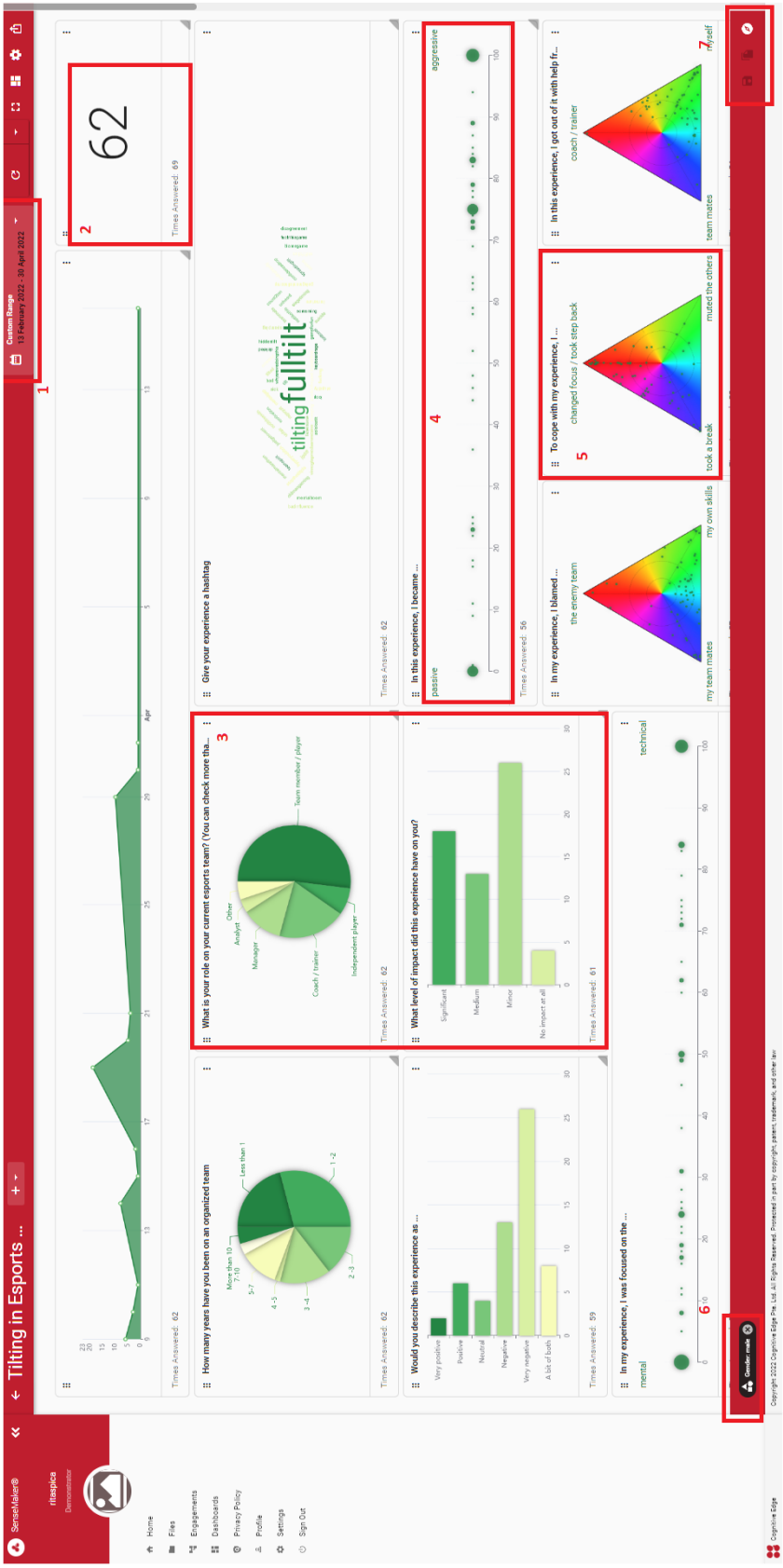
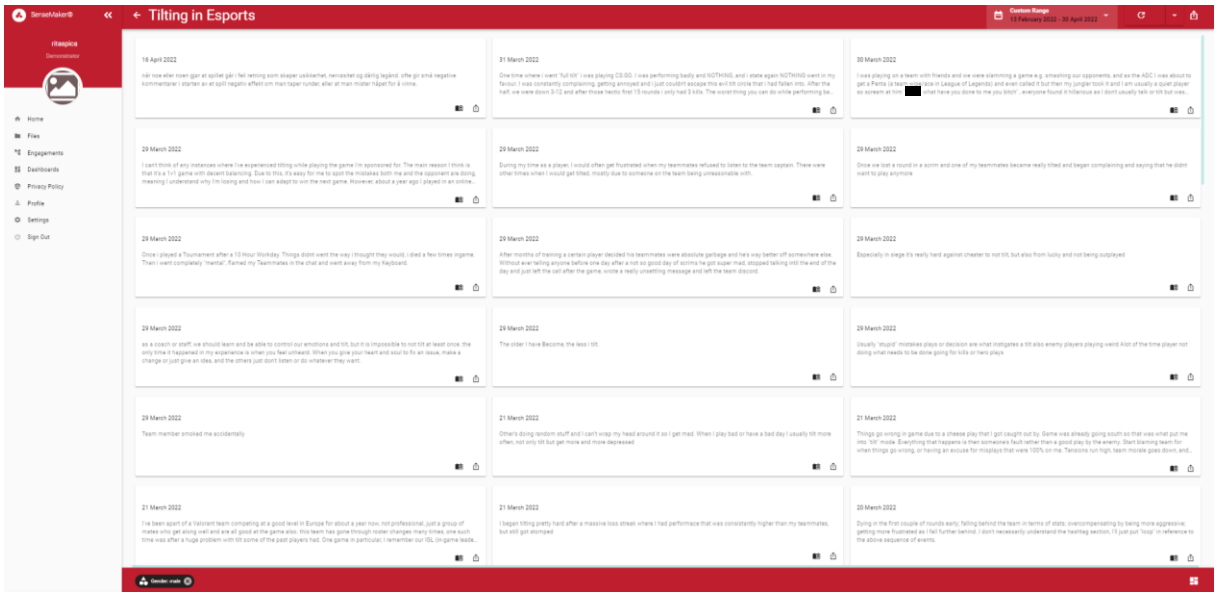
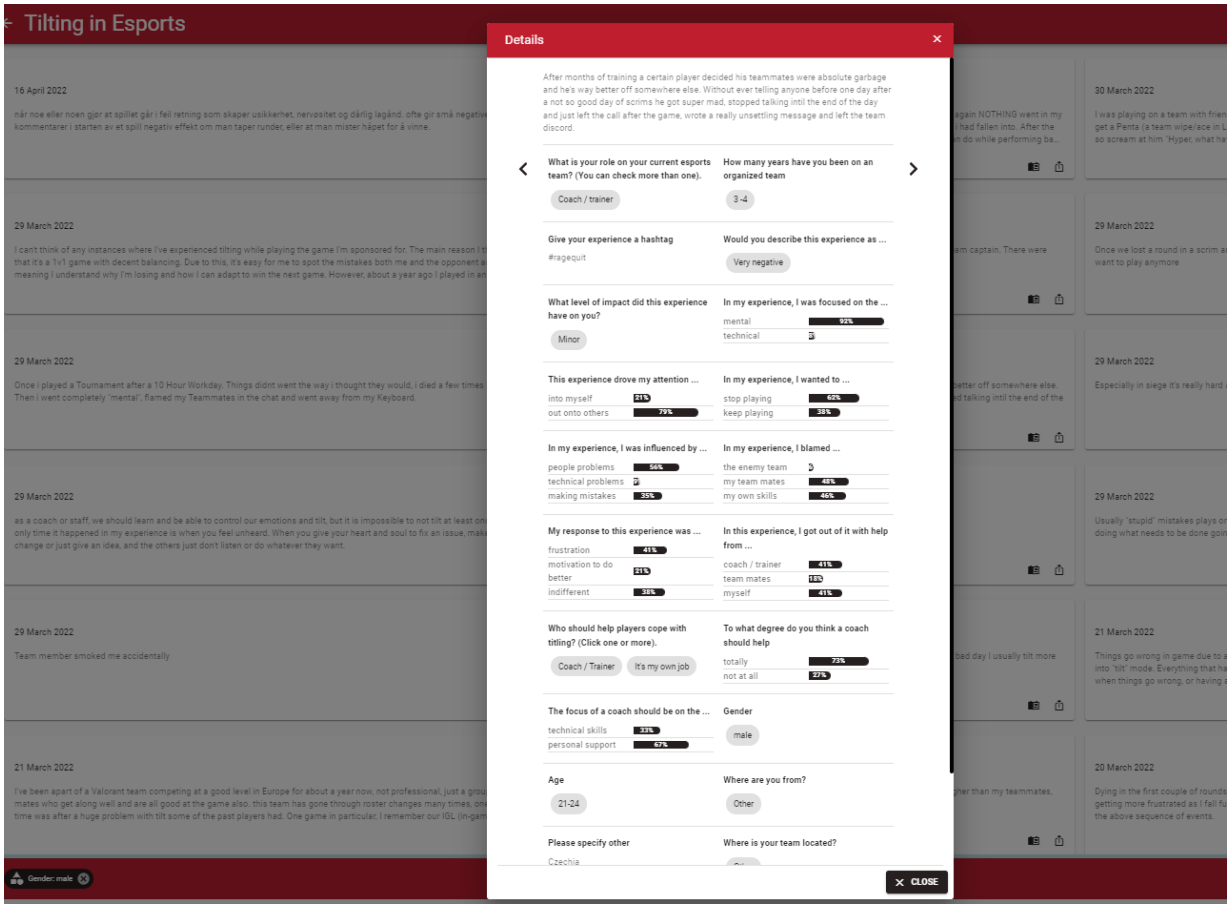
Appendix D: SenseMaker Dashboard



1. Filter responses by date. 2. Number of replies with said filter (and total). 3. Presentation of data in pie charts or bar-charts.
4. Presentation of data in a dyad. 5. Presentation of data in a triad. 6. Chosen filters show up here.
7. Explore button, to see individual narratives and data based on your filters.



Explore. All the narratives within chosen filter (bottom left corner), sorted by date submitted.



Background: all the narratives within the chosen filter is presented. Pressing one of the narratives introduces the individual narrative and other data from dyads, triads and other by itself for more details.

Appendix E: Information about the Research

Informasjonsbrev

Rita Spica

Informasjon om masteroppgave

«Tilting» i e-sport
- Hva er det, og hva gjør vi for å motvirke det?

Vår 2022

NTNU
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet
Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap
Institutt for Pedagogikk og livslang læring

NTNU
Kunnskap for en bedre verden

Informasjonsbrev

NTNU
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet
Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap
Institutt for Pedagogikk og livslang læring

Rita Spica

Informasjon om undersøkelsen

E-sport er fremdeles et relativt nytt felt som vokser seg større for hver dag. Ettersom det er i stadig utvikling øker også behovet for forskning fra feltet. Det er ganske mange studier som viser til egenskaper man trenger i spill som League of Legends og Counter Strike: Global Offensive. Det er flere studier om sinne og frustrasjon i og utenfor spill. Det er også forskning fokusert på de fysiske farene og de fysiske behovene innen sporten.

På den andre siden er det mye å oppdage innen dette feltet, spesielt innen mental helse og mentale ferdigheter. En av disse temaene er fenomenet som kalles *tilting*. Tilting er en sinnstilstand som er forårsaket av negative opplevelser eller følelser som negativt påvirker beslutningstaking og ytelsen i spillet, som fører tilbake til mer tilting. I denne studien prøver jeg å undersøke e-sport atletenes egen erfaring med tilting.

Gjennom å forstå mer om dette fenomenet, kan vi prøve å forstå mer om hva som forårsaker det, hva som kan hjelpe spillere å komme ut av det – og til slutt forbedre ytelsen ved å gi atletene bedre verktøy til å håndtere tilting når det skjer. Studien er rettet mot norske aktører, men atleter fra andre land kan gjerne sende inn sine svar for å utvide undersøkelsen i et snevert felt.

Denne masteroppgaven er skrevet som hovedoppgaven i Rådgivningsvitenskap.

E-post:
ritaasp@stud.ntnu.no

Masterveileder:
Jonathan Reams

NTNU
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Information letter

Rita Spica

Information about master thesis

«Tilting» in esports
- What is it, and what do we do to counter it?

Spring 2022

NTNU
Norwegian University
of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and
Educational Sciences
Department of Education and
Lifelong Learning

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Information letter

NTNU
Norwegian University
of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and
Educational Sciences
Department of Education and
Lifelong Learning

Rita Spica

Information about the study

The field of esports has been up and coming for quite some time, and it's growing bigger by the day. As this field expands, so does the need of research within. There are quite a few studies about skills needed in certain games like League of Legends and Counter Strike: Global Offensive. There are some studies about anger and frustration in- and outside of games. There is also research focused on the physical dangers and needs within the sport that makes you sit still in front of a computer screen over time.

On the other hand, there is much to discover in this field especially within mental health and mental skills, one of these things are the phenomenon called tilting. Tilting is a frame of mind that is caused by negative experience or emotions that negatively affects in-game performance and decision making, that leads back to more tilting. In this study I try to discover and investigate esports players own experience with tilting.

Through understanding more about this phenomenon, we can try to understand more about what causes it, what can help one get out of it – and ultimately improve performance by giving the players better tools to handle tilting as it happens. The study is focused on Norwegian players, but players based in or from other countries are welcome to send in their answers to broaden the study of a narrow field.

This master thesis is written within the field Science of Counselling.

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Appendix F: Data Protection

Personvern og databehandling

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Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap
Institutt for Pedagogikk og livslang læring

Rita Spica

Personvern og databehandling

Gjennom en kombinasjon av kvalitative og kvantitative data søker prosjektet å lære mer om tilting i e-sport ved å bruke respondentenes egne erfaringer og selvinnsikt.

Tilgang og lagring
Dataene som samles inn via SenseMaker®-løsningen i dette prosjektet er lagret kryptert på servere som befinner seg innenfor EU, og er kun tilgjengelig for meg (Rita Spica, masterstudent) og min masterveileder (Jonathan Reams). SenseMaker®s leverandør, Cognitive Edge Inc., har ikke tilgang til å bruke, spre eller se de innsamlede dataene. Unntak gjelder i tilfeller hvor det kreves teknisk støtte fra leverandøren, og i slike tilfeller gis leverandøren tilgang kun for det oppgitte formål.

Private data
Den valgte datainnsamlingsløsningen, SenseMaker® gjør at dataen utelukkende er anonyme data. Dette betyr at det ikke etterspørres noen form for personopplysninger som direkte eller indirekte kan identifisere respondenter i undersøkelsen.

Hva teller som personopplysninger?
Personopplysninger er enhver form for data og informasjon som alene eller i kombinasjon med andre data direkte eller indirekte kan identifisere deg som individ. Eksempler på slike er navn, postadresse, geodata, e-postadresse og nettverks-IP. Løsningen som brukes i dette prosjektet er konfigurert slik at det ikke under noen omstendigheter er noen koblinger mellom respondentenes svar i innsamleren og personopplysninger.

Hva skjer hvis et svar inneholder personopplysninger om deltakeren eller andre?
Materialet vil bli gjennomgått for å sikre anonymitet. Svar i datainnsamleren hvor personopplysninger inngår i fritekstfeltet, bevisst eller tilfeldig, slettes fra datamaterialet.

Dataanalyse
Analysen av datamaterialet vil i hovedsak skje gjennom tolkning ved bruk av akademisk litteratur slik som fagfellevurderte artikler og bøker, samtidig vil det bli brukt en ekspertgruppe bestående av trenere, ledere og spillere innen organisert esport i Norge. Tolkeprosessene vil under ingen omstendighet gjøre rådata tilgjengelig eller gi deltakere disposisjonsrett, men det vil bli gitt eksempler fra undersøkelsen for å analysere eller tolke i felleskap. Prosessen innebærer at dataene fra datainnsamleren må forstås som delvis offentlig tilgjengelige. Dataene som samles inn kan også bli brukt til videre forskningsformål, men det vil ikke bli gitt videre til tredjeparter med kommersielle interesser knyttet til materialet.

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Privacy and data management

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Rita Spica

Privacy and data management

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, the project seeks to learn more about tilting in esports using the respondents' experiences and insights.

Access and storage
The data collected via the SenseMaker® solution in this project is stored completely encrypted on servers located within the EU, and only accessed by me (Rita Spica) and my master supervisor. SenseMaker®'s supplier, Cognitive Edge Inc., does not have access to use, disseminate or view the collected data. Exceptions apply in cases where technical support from the supplier is required, and in such cases the supplier is given access only for the stated purpose.

Anonymous data
The chosen data collection solution, SenseMaker®, is exclusively made out of anonymous data. This means that no form of personal data is requested that can directly or indirectly identify respondents in the data collector.

What counts as personal data?
Personal data is every form of data and information that alone or in combination with other data can directly or indirectly identify you as an individual. Examples of such are name, mailing address, geo-data, email adress and network IP. The solution used in this project is configured so that under no circumstances are any links between respondents' answers in the collector and personal information.

What happens if a contribution includes personal information about the participant or others?
The material will be checked and reviewed to ensure anonymity. Answers in the data collector where personal information is included in the free text field, intentionally or accidentally, will be deleted completely from the data material.

Data analysis
The analysis of the data material from the data collector will mainly take place through interpretation using academic literature such as peer-reviewed articles and books, while also asking an expert group made of coaches, managers and players within organized esports in Norway. The interpretation processes will under no circumstance make raw data available or give participants disposal rights, but participants in the expert group will be given examples from the data to analyse. The processes means that the data from the data collector must be understood as somewhat publicly available. The data collected might also be used for other research purposes and might be passed on with such purposes. The data will not be passed on to third parties with commercial interests related to the material.

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Date
08.12.2021

From: Thomas Helgesen <thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 2:16 PM
To: Jonathan Reams <jonathan.reams@ntnu.no>

Hi Jonathan,
I consider the measures with guidelines and other safeguards are sufficient to ensure anonymity. It is assumed that the measures are followed and that no changes are made that may affect the participants' anonymity.
Br,
Thomas Helgesen
NTNU
Data Protection Officer
Phone 93079038

Data Protection Guidelines for Using SenseMaker in Data Collection

This document outlines considerations to be accounted for when using Cognitive Edge's SenseMaker data collection tool, either in research or as a general feedback tool. These considerations have been identified from a series of conversations and exchanges of documentation between Jonathan Reams, associate professor at NTNU and Thomas Helgesen, NTNU's data protection officer, between January 2021 and December 2021.

There are two main sections of safeguards described here in order to determine that the use of this method of data collection falls outside of the regulations for data privacy.

1. Direct issues. These involve technical issues related to maintaining anonymity such as ensuring that emails and IP addresses are not able to be used in any way to identify participants in data collection.
2. Indirect issues. These involve the measures taken to ensure that participants in data collection are explicitly aware of and consent to the use of their narrative entries as part of a variety of forms of data exploration by diverse stakeholders. They also include considerations for the design of the data collector.

1. Regarding the direct considerations, reference to Cognitive Edge's (now The Cynefin Company) privacy policy (https://thecynefin.co/privacy-policy/), as well as more technical documentation supplied to NTNU, addresses how there is full GDPR compliance from Cognitive Edge and that their

SenseMaker tool does not, nor cannot, collect email addresses nor IP addresses of individual contributors to the data collections. Thus there is anonymity ensured from this direct consideration.

In addition, Cognitive Edge uses a safe deletion method to ensure that all data is removed from their system upon completion of a data collection project.

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2. In addition to the above considerations related to the specific technical assurance of anonymity, there are a number of indirect considerations raised by the narrative nature of entries into the data collector. These arise primarily from the potentially sensitive nature of experiences described and the possibility to triangulate this narrative data with other demographic data to identify an individual. The following is a list of safeguards to be employed when constructing a data collector using SenseMaker.

A. There needs to be an explicit instruction on the first page of any data collector that participants do not name themselves, nor other individuals involved in their narrative entry.
B. An explicit mention of how the data will be used, and or whom it can be shared with, e.g.:
   I. If it will only be viewed by the researcher(s) and associated supervisors
   II. If it will also be viewed by relevant stakeholders in specialized workshops to participate in collective 'sensemaking' processes
   III. If it will be made more widely available as part of an ongoing public process
C. An explicit check box required to indicate acknowledgement of these conditions and consent to participate and have their data used as indicated. This is required to be checked before a participant is able to continue further in the data collector.
D. In the design of the data collector itself, care is taken to avoid any questions pertaining to sensitive issues (unless the research is specifically related to these issues) such as:
   I. Religious views
   II. Sexual orientation
   III. Medical issues
   IV. Political views
E. Further, the choice of granularity in the setup of demographic information questions will be high enough to ensure that groups delineated through this type of question will not be small enough to make triangulation with the narrative possible.

In addition to these safeguards, in line with normal data retention practices, all data collected will be deleted at the end of the project.

It is recognized that this set of indirect safeguards cannot totally guarantee that individuals could not be identified by those with context specific knowledge of the experiences described in the participant narratives. These safeguards do however, combined with the technical anonymity of not collecting any identifying information, constitute a set of best practices that can enable the use of SenseMaker as a tool for data collection.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Reams, Ph.D.

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Appendix G: Filters and Importance in SenseMaker

Table 8-4: SenseMaker filters

What filters	Important? Green = yes, yellow = maybe red = no	Notes
Norwegian from/team		No apparent difference in opinions/experiences in Norwegian or other teams
Male / female		Not enough female respondents
Under age 24 Over age 24		Not clear as I can't combine the ages, so I see them separately
Significant impact		THIS is what I need to look at
Minor impact		Biggest group, but hard to understand. Minor impact because it is normal? Or? Minor impact = no motivation to do better = interesting.
Negative Very Negative		Majority had a negative or very negative experience, tilting = negative
Positive		Interesting to see the positive replies, often not having to do with the negatives of tilting, but positives in others support, or motivation to do better.
Passive		A lot go passive = same as theory
Aggressive		Almost same amount go aggressive, also seen in theories
Stop playing Keep playing		Seems like it is random, they do both, not related to other subjects, very individual
Role on team: Team member		Over half = teammembers, but nothing special, very little that separates the roles
Role on team: Coach		Interesting to see coach' opinion on coach roles, should be looked at further. Coach thinks a coach should help!
Significant impact + the following		
Passive		Blaming one owns skills = becoming passive?
Blaming myself		Might be something here, narratives who people going quiet/passive but frustrated, interesting
Aggressive Blaming others		Blaming others = aggressive? Might be something here also, often focus outwards, but also aggressive and inwards. Narratives present general themes as the others, blame all over and mostly negative w some outliers
Aggressive Blaming others Influence: people problems		There are certain signs of a trend, but also outliers, not sure.
Passive Blaming myself Influence: making mistakes		Same as above ^

Inward focus/outward focus		Differences, but nothing major, see some relation to those who became passive (inwards) and aggressive (outwards)
Aggressive Outwards People problems		Blaming team (and team + my skills) and enemy team, no one blamed only themselves!! Narratives: tilting often, blaming dying, teammates, ego = tilting, interesting.
Becoming: indifferent		Very few, still towards frustration
Coping: having a break		More frustration than motivation, this has some importance, as the general data shows more motivation or a combination
Coping: taking a step back		Most of their opinions and experiences differed, nothing major that would split them apart from the big picture
Coping: a combination, stepping back + break		Into themselves + stop playing, no motivation. Interesting.
Coping: muted others		A few, nothing major, often blamed their own skills, somewhat interesting
Becoming: frustrated		A cluster became frustrated, tilting = frustrating. Also in combination to being motivated
Becoming: motivated to do better		Same as above, big cluster got motivated in their experience, or in combination with frustration. But experiences were often engative. Tilting = can be used for good?
Influence: people problems		A lot of people being influenced by people problems, or in combination with making misitakes
Influence: making mistakes		Same as above, making mistakes seems to be not just their own mistakes; but mistakes made by others, teammates mistakes = people problems + making mistakes? Narratives present both.
Got out of it with help from myself		More motivation than frustration! ALSO wanted coach to help w tilting more than team/myself. Important
Influence technical:		Very few influenced by this, but some, mostly game related: eks: Fortnite, the last circle was impractical, not his fault
Passive Stop playing Aggressive Keep playing		Both of these contains a mix, it seems random in the dataset if they want to keep playing or not in the specific situations
Blaming others team/enemy		Coach role = technical Looks like narratives present tilting as technical? Not clear, but often it is because of others, and they also think a coach should help TOTALLY but more technical focus, again ,is tilting technical issue?
Blaming my own skills		Coach role = personal

		Clearly a difference in this ant he last, also the narratives are rougher on themselves, connecting their worth to skills? Blaming themselves, wanting coach to help, personal support. Tilting social issue? Mental? Important.
Coach should totally help		Everyone thinks a coach should help to certain degrees, a few on totally, but spread out towards middle
Coach should not help		No one thinks a coach should not help at all. Also interesting, can be added to technical/personal focus as ones leaning towards not at all has technical focus? What is a coach job, and what is tilting, personal/technical??
Coach should totally help Technical/personal focus		Showing signs of differences in replies, related to blame??
Coach focus technical / personal 0-33 and 66-100		Pretty equal, people have diverse answers, but they agree to a degree that coach should help. Is tilting technical skills?
Coach focus BOTH technical and personal (33-66)		Important, main replies are here
Gaining motivation		Important for the future, not the main reaction ,but enough to notice
Gaining motivation Aggressive		Data split apart, no apparent relation
Gaining motivation Passive		Same as above
Blame me + years on team Blame others + years on team		Nothing specific, seems unrelated, most respondents been in field less than 4 years, not enough? What if it had been more replies w 4+ years of experience??
Age (different options) Blaming others Age (different options) Blaming my own skills		Nothing specific, blame not related to age, could be bc everyone is young, could less than 20 be different to 30 +?? Most in 20s

General note: their experiences were close in relation, no matter the filters. What kept being presented was tilting because of dying, not nessicarily losing, or teammates doing wrong choises/playing badly, the individual making mistakes themselves, the game being unfair, multiple replies from people who said they do not tilt, some explained tilting instead of an experience (looking away from them most times), teammates seem important, ALSO important, whos blaming who, some rly blame themselves, their personal selves and not just their skills.

Additional comments		IMPORTANT! Most of the comments related to coach, some to tilting, but coach role is complicated, no one agrees. Remember this.

Appendix H: 2nd Workshop, Expert Panel's Themes and Topics

Second workshop, themes and notes from expert panel

- Everything affects everything in games
- Individuals are afraid of challenging insecurities (blames others for their own mistakes)
- Many talks of coping mechanisms
- Blaming being in a "losers que".
- Many stays in LoL (league of legends) because they get good at it, and they're not necessarily good in other places of life
- "Would I tilt less if I had a good-looking girlfriend? Work out?" The individual's social environment.
- Technological changes = stress
- Trash talking is normal and positive at times, but only used in certain situations
- From lonely to a team
- People blaming others often becomes aggressive
- A normal Norwegian 18-20 year olds motivation is to have a good team and a support team
- Tilting stops at a specific technical level, then it's more of an personal support issue, emotional management
- Can relate a lot of issues and how to handle them in traditional sports to fit into the world of esports
- Tilting because of technical or personal/social issues: always your own issue
- No culture for how a coach should attend or facilitate for this
- Coaches are often players who's not good enough (often older), to be top athletes any more
- Some teams have mental coaches, but not the standard in Norway. The field is not big enough, not enough resources.
- Motivation to grow and learn, but issues with others = gains skills, but still has issues with others, it's a loop.
- Mental focus = social issues, technical issues = game related, loss, wrong things
- Personal support = personal issues. Technical issues = technical skills.
- One story of manager helping: probably because few staff, coach doesn't have the tools to handle it, manager has taken the role upon him/herself
- Big staff, small staff – who do I go to with my issues? No structure
- Seeing people dealing with tilting themselves but they want coach to help
- Coaches are players that are not good enough anymore, often related to age

Appendix I: Blaming Others, General Data

Those who shared an experience with a significant impact and who blamed others (enemy team & teammates)

Table 8-5: General data, blaming others

Signifiers		Number of replies	%
Gender	Male	8	88,89
	Female	1	11,11
Total		9	100
Age	Under 15		
	15-17	1	11,11
	18-20	2	22,22
	21-24	3	33,34
	25-30	2	22,22
	31-25		
	Over 35	1	11,11
Total		9	100
Role on esports team	Team member / player	5	45,46
	Coach / trainer	4	36,36
	Manager	1	9,09
	Independent player		
	Analyst		
	Other*	1	9,09
Total		11	100
Years on an organized esports team	Less than 1	1	11,11
	1-2 years	1	11,11
	2-3 years	2	22,23
	3-4 years	1	11,11
	4-5 years	1	11,11
	5-7 years	2	22,22
	7-10 years	1	11,11
	More than 10 years		
Total		9	100

Note:
**Other: Parent*

Appendix J: Blaming Myself, General Data

Those who shared an experience with a significant impact and who blamed their own skills

Table 8-6: General data, blaming myself

Signifiers		Number of replies	%
Gender	Male	9	90
	Female	1	10
Total		10	100
Age	Under 15		
	15-17	2	20
	18-20	2	20
	21-24	4	40
	25-30	1	10
	31-25		
	Over 35	1	10
Total		10	100
Role on esports team	Team member / player	7	58,33
	Coach / trainer	2	16,67
	Manager	2	16,67
	Independent player		
	Analyst		
	Other*	1	8,33
Total		12	100
Years on an organized esports team	Less than 1	1	10
	1-2 years	3	30
	2-3 years	3	30
	3-4 years		
	4-5 years		
	5-7 years	2	20
	7-10 years		
	More than 10 years	1	10
Total		10	100

Note:
**Other: Owner*

Appendix K: Additional Thoughts, Opinions of Coach

Additional thoughts added by the respondents after replying to all the questions relevant to their experiences, 22/25 is related to coach role.

Table 8-7: Additional thoughts

	Additional thoughts
1	As a coach/manager my focus is always the group and individuals as a synergy. Tilting is OK, but it needs to be addressed on a personal and constructive manner.
2	Coaches jobs arenâ€™t to help individuals if in a team basis thatâ€™s the hard work you need to work on, if you canâ€™t then you wonâ€™t make it to the highest skill ceiling
3	Hard to answer but overall i think that everyone should learn how to deal with Tilt and Emotions and how to control them, but coaches, Teammates and so on can have an important role in helping an individual person with it. Also it depends which kind of coach you are e.g a Mentalcoach will focus more on personal support but overall Coaches should be capable of doing both :)
4	Coaches can also point out to player that need to lvl up their mechanical skills and divert them towards solutions
5	the focus of the coach should be depending on the need of a team
6	I put the coach being focused on technical skills mainly as they should, however coach is a branching term and for example a team I now work with has a main coach, assistant coach and a mental health coach. If they have one who is specified it is much easier but without someone set out to focus on it I believe the team manager should be the one to make sure players are doing well and their mental health is being prioritised (as well as their actual health)
7	Every player is different and have different needs. Sometimes it makes sense to let the player get some space for themselves, sometimes it makes more sense to bring them into the room and have a talk. If the player group got a leader type (something along the lines of a captain), that person will often also contribute into defusing/resolving situations. I believe its crucial to confront issues at hand, so if there is conflict between two parties, I like to invest time into resolving the issue. This is easiest done by bringing both parties into a room and "force" them to speak with eachother (with and without mediation from me as their coach). Being frustrated / "tilted" in itself isnt a problem, it mostly comes from the individual caring about what he is doing which is a good thing. The problem is when it starts effecting those around you (whining) / ruining practice quality / team performance in a match. This happens when the player fails to reset mentally. The player fail to let go of the previous situation(s) and bring them into the next situation. A tool I usually like to instill into my players is to find "dead time" (segments in the game where no action input is needed, ideally right before a new segment begins) and take a deep breath.
8	The focus of a coach should be on the ... BOTH, or depends on the personality of coach and the needs of the players/captain.

There's a few different types of coaches in CSGO which either compliments or mirrors the players/captain.

9 A team should have a technical coach and a performance/support coach. This lets the technical coach focus solely on the game's technicalities while the performance/support coach can focus on player mentality and tilting.

10 The biggest Part of a coach's job is to make sure the team is working as a unit. For the technical aspect you have positional coaches/analysts

11 A coach should fill needs of the team and players, and in some cases that means more personal support or more technical skills. It's not entirely either or. During matches where performance is crucial, coaches are in a great position to re-center and reset players/teams if tilt is happening. As a coach, it's therefore important to understand your players and your team's internal dynamics to build mental preparedness for unexpected things / mistakes / issues in matches. This can help prevent tilting.
Keep in mind that there are different types of coaches (main difference between technical and personal coaches)

Tilt is usually caused by an interaction, so this would fall under the responsibility of a personal coach.

12 A coach should focus on technical skills equally as much as personal support. Maybe even a bit more personal support, but nowadays esport organizations have their own mental coaches that focus purely on that aspect of this, but if you have just one it should be split 50/50.

13 Its everyones job to help eachother out, but in the end the biggest job is gonna be working on yourself

14 Coach is a mix of both. For me, it's more for the gameplay and learning, but he can also be there to support.

15 The focus of the coach should be relatively equally split between optimizing the technical skills and personal support because often times if there is good personal support the technical skills will follow.

16 I think it is very hard to deal with your tilt only by yourself. While tilt regarding ingame events usually stays for less time, tilt about team issues can stay much longer and is harder to overcome. An open environment where people can give and take criticism without being offended is very important and perhaps the easiest way to let those things out is by talking to the coach personally first and then also discussing it in the team aswell, where the coach can try to be diplomatic and find a good solution.

17 Because the players on most esorts teams are so young and have not experienced life yet, the coach plays the role of a 2nd parent and in some cases the only positive role model the player has in their life.

18 I can deal with it myself, but help is always better.

19 Focus on the coach should be mechanical / game sense unless Tilting is an issue then Personal Support.

20 Coach schuld provide strats

21 A Coach can and should help players out if he sees they are troubled but I dont think it is the coaches responsibility. Tilting is fine imo but letting it affect your work (gameplay,drafting,coms) is what causes the problems. Understanding that you are tilted is your own responsibility and you should talk it out or seek for help atm from teammates, coaches or even friends.

22 Coach focus should be on the technical aspect of gameplay. Mental support should be the job of someone more knowledgeable with human psychology. Depends on what the coach was hired for and what is required of them.
23 depends on what the tilt is in regards to, but I think much of tilting comes from a place of mind, no matter if its controllable or uncontrollable things that sparks it.
24 Ingen flere
25 Good luck on your paper. I look forward to seeing your end result.

Appendix L: The Holy Trinity in Games

The Holy Trinity

- The DPS' job is to do the objectives, deal damage, get kills and get the job done, they are flexible, have different strengths and are essential to most tasks.
- The tank is presented as the one that withstands great pressure, often equipped with skills that shields their teammates from damage, the tank is essential to lead the way and support the teammates.
- The healer is also crucial, as it removes negative status effects, it regenerates players health and gives buffs [positive status effects] and is a support character made to keep the other teammates going, even in rough times.

The tank and the healer can be said to be crucial for the team dynamics, as the DPS would not be shielded or led without a tank, and not healed or buffed by the healer's support. In a perfect world, a team would consist of all tree components.

Rita Antonsen Spica

The Blame Game: Tilting and Coaching in Esports

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