Segmenting online communities

Hjalti Hjaltason & Marie Vernersson

Foreword by Robert Kozinets

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Hanna Bellner, Jon Bertilsson & Johan Anselmsson

Abstract

Title: Segmenting online communities

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Authors: Hjalti Hjaltason
Marie Vernersson

Supervisors: Hanna Bellner
Jon Bertilsson
Johan Anselmsson

Keywords: Segmentation, online-communities, behaviour, commitment communication.

Thesis purpose: The main purpose of this study is to empirically verify the applicability of Kozinets´ model on an interest, activity or lifestyle based online community, in order to develop an adaptive segmentation approach for segmenting online communities.

Methodology: This research is deductive by nature, cross-sectional by design and undertakes a quantitative approach using self-completion questionnaire as a part of a web survey to collect the empirical data needed.

Theoretical perspective: The main theories guiding our work and supporting the findings of this study include: market segmentation (descriptive and behavioural) and communities (consumer communities and online communities).

Empirical data: A web survey with self-completion questionnaire used to gather empirical data from members of interest, activity or lifestyle based online communities.

Conclusion: This study took the specific characteristics of online communities into more consideration than previous research and literature has done and also recognized that an adaptive segmentation approach is needed, depending on the communities of study. Factors such as motivation, attitude, communication forms and internal community influence, were identified as highly important factors when considering an adaptive approach towards segmentation of online communities.

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Last but definitely not least, we would like to thank our families, for their unconditional support and understanding during the writing of this thesis. Without you this would not have been possible.

Lund, May 2008.

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Hjalti Hjaltason   Marie Vernersson

Foreword

I'm pleased to write a few reflective comments on "Segmenting Online Communities," the Master´s thesis work of Hjalti Hjaltason and Marie Vernersson at Lund University in Sweden. They have undertaken in a very clear and concise manner, a study that seeks to empirically test the model of online community segments that I first proposed in an article in the *European Management Journal* in 1999.

That article, and the model in it, have achieved considerable popularity as a way to understand some of the different segments of online community member. The article has been cited 190 times (according to Google scholar), and the model's quadrants and categories of the mingler, tourist, devotee, and insider are commonly featured in books, including many consumer behavior and e-commerce textbooks around the world.

Yet as Hjalti and Marie write in their introduction to this research, the article's influential assertions and model have rarely been subject to empirical scrutiny. And that's where this team of Swedish and Icelandic scholars comes in.

Using a large sample (they aimed for an N=1000) of online poker players active on the Facebook, they administered a questionnaire that asked them a battery of questions about themselves and their online behaviors. For their theory-testing purposes, chief among these questions were queries that asked about their identification with the consumption practices of poker, and with their affiliation with the online community of poker players.

Their findings were quite interesting, and a bit surprising. In my 1999 article, I had speculated that, following the Pareto rule that seemed to dictate producer-like behavior in the offline world, we might expect only about 20% of online consumers to be assuming the more active, producerly roles of the devotee and the insider. However, Hjaltason and Vernersson instead found that Devotees (at a whopping 36%) and Insiders (at 25%) together account for 61% of their entire sample. Tourists (at 33%) and Minglers (at a paltry 6%) account together for a minority of online consumers, at only 39 percent.

The results themselves are interesting, and most interesting, I believe, because they open up this area to further investigation and questioning. Now, in the same interest of science, I had to ask myself why these results were so different from my own speculations. And I came up with several reasons that might assist further refinement and investigations of these topics.

First, I think that we must be very cautious about choosing field sites that are supposed to be representative of the entire phenomenon of online communities. When I originally wrote my 1999 article, almost all of my research had been based in newsgroups or bulletin boards, which were the main form of

online community for over two decades, pretty much since the inception of the Internet. In those speculations of mine, I was including the many lurkers who pass by bulletin boards without ever posting on them.

In conclusion, it has been enjoyable to read what these students have done with this model. We need more solid studies like this one to get the conversation moving about what is actually going on among all of these interesting, consumption-based online communities. We need more scholarship like this work on "Segmenting Online Communities," by Hjalti Hjaltason and Marie Vernersson to help us to understand and really "crack the code" of online community membership and behavior.

May 20, 2008.

Robert Kozinets

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- CHAPTER ONE -

Introduction

In this chapter we will offer the reader with an insight in our topic of research. Here the background to our research area will be presented followed by the research problem within this area. Finally our research question and the purpose with this study are presented.

1.1 Background

For as long as we can remember, people with similar interests, habits or lifestyles have gathered together in groups, these groups of people are often referred to as communities. Cova and Cova (2002: 598) define community as "a group of people with something in common e.g. the district of residence, the occupational interest". The word *community* is derived from the Latin word *communitas* (meaning "the same") which in turn derives from *communis,* also from Latin, which means "common, public, and shared by all or many" (Routledge.com 2008). The literature has discovered many types of communities, such as geographic communities and communities of culture and many communities are associated with a certain type of consumer behaviour. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) write about communities built specifically around certain brands, or brand communities, which are associated with consumption of a certain type of good or service. They refer to these communities as *consumer communities*. Consumer communities contribute to the thinking behind marketing. Szmigin *et al.* (2005) argue that members in consumer communities are involved in and can obtain meaning from the discussion that takes place in the community. This develops bonds between the members which then can influence the consumer behaviour of the members. Marketers have identified the potentials of different communities as they mean customers with similar needs, an attractive target group for marketing purposes. Moreover and due to globalization, new communities are emerging around the world and as these communities are getting bigger and more globally spread, new opportunities for marketers to find potential customers are rising.

The concept of community as such has a long history, but what is new though, is how members within a community can communicate with each other due to the modern communications technology (Hogg *et al. 2*004). With the technology of the World Wide Web, a major opportunity for communities to develop has occurred. The technology of the Internet has given rise to thousands of communities where people find each other, communicate and collaborate around shared interests or goals. Today you can see that, where there is an interest, there is a community. Online communities have existed since the beginning of the Internet, but they are now growing of importance for marketers since these social online networks have exploded in numbers over the last couple of years (Sebor 2007). Online communications bring great

social changes and group people together without the consideration of geography and time, but instead they are drawn to each other's common interests, activities and lifestyles, forming various types of online social groups and/or communities. The members of the online community almost never physically meet but the diverse and full social interactions of online consumers has revealed that the online environment can, under many circumstances, be used as a medium of meaningful social exchange (Kozinets 1999).

Online communities also allow and encourage conversations to happen and as these communities can exist beyond the boundaries of location and time, they offer far-ranging promise both for consumers to talk to one another, but also for marketers to talk to customers (Szmigin 2005). Online community members can interact, share interests and express themselves with others and as they are involved in conversations that take place within the community, they are influencing each other's behaviour (Kozinets 1999). Hogg *et al.* (2004) argue that there is evidence that participation in online communities can have significant impact on consumer knowledge and behaviour. The motivation for a member to participate in an online community is according to Armstrong and Hagel (1996: 111 in Hsu and Lu 2007: 1644) to satisfy needs such as transaction, interest, fantasy and relationship. Here there is an essential difference between traditional communities and online communities as the membership of online communities is voluntary, while in traditional communities, membership may be imposed by chance of birth, proximity of residence, etc. (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002 in Hogg *et al.* 2004:3). Since the membership in online communities is voluntary, the members are highly involved and more likely to be motivated to communicate with others and to exchange information (Mathwick 2002 in Hogg *et al. 2004:3).

Due to the emergence of online communities there is an increased need among marketers to identify these online communities and segment them, in order to fully understand them and the marketing opportunities that they bring. The increasing importance of the Internet and of consumers who are active in online communities, is leading to new opportunities for companies to create a competitive advantage. Marketers, who take this into consideration, can learn about their behaviour, lifestyles, and attitudes, take part in the conversation and learn how people decide on which products to consume and how they actually are consuming (Kozinets, 1999). For example, the influence of the so called opinion leader on other members of the virtual community can be severe. His actions and consumption can influence the actions and consumption of many others within the community. Relationship marketing theory has mainly been focusing on one-to-one marketing strategy for online consumers. Online consumers are truly a part of their communities and therefore influenced by the virtual community. Marketers target a group rather than individuals, when dealing with online communities. This means that marketers should try their

utmost to share information and encourage involvement of the opinion leaders within online communities (Ibid).

It is very important for marketing managers to consider both virtual communities and community participation. Consumers in virtual communities are more active and discerning, less accessible to one-on-one process and provide a wealth of valuable cultural information. Ways to target virtual communities are interaction based segmentation, fragmentation based segmentation, opting communities, paying for attention and building networks by giving products away (Kozinets 1999).

Online communities bring great potentials for marketing purposes and therefore addressing them is crucial to develop effective ways of segmenting these unique markets.

1.2 Research area

The main purpose of market segmentation is to divide a certain market into homogenous sub markets, or segments. By segmenting markets, marketers can then formulate product strategies that will fit the demands of these homogenous submarkets (Lin 2002:249). Several approaches towards segmentation have been identified in the literature and different researchers argue for different approaches. Theorists such as Hassan *et al.* (2003) write about segmentation based on descriptive aspects. This type of segmentation segments markets based on demographic factors (e.g. age, gender, education, income) and geographic factors (e.g. country, region, city size), focusing on a country-to-country bases for analyzing "macro" segments. But this traditional method, of using only the conventional demographic aspects as a bases for market segmentation, would not be considered as the most applicable when it comes to segmenting online communities as they are considered to share psychographic factors (e.g. interests, opinions, activities,) rather than demographic and geographic factors. Due to the emergence of online communities, marketers need to better understand the advantages of using psychographic segmentation, which bases segmentation on behavioural aspects. This is looked upon as a non-conventional wisdom-approach to segmentation, which rather focuses on behavioural factors as a bases for analysis. This means that geographic location, age, gender, education and/or incomes are not the only important factors anymore, but rather the behavioural factors of the consumers, such as lifestyle and personality (Hassan *et al. 2*003). Still, researchers such as Hassan *et al.* (2003) and Neal and Wurst (2001) argue that looking at the world as one single market is not realistic and therefore a combination of these two approaches has been considered the most effective way of segmenting markets. However, the authors argue that this approach of segmentation still would not be fully applicable on online communities as it does not look at the specific characteristics of an online community. Even though behavioural segmentation looks at

aspects such as interest, lifestyle and motivation that are the main foundations of online communities, there are more important characteristics of an online community that this approach ignores.

Online communities are about communication and influencing other members' behaviour. As Kozinets (2002:61) argues, more and more choices about what brands and products one uses, originate from the "computer-mediated communication taking place within various online communities". The many forms of media-related recreation (e.g. movies, music, and computer games), sports and various consumer goods and services "are discussed in online communities whose importance is being increasingly recognized by contemporary marketers" (e.g. Armstrong and Hagel 1996; Bulik 2000; Hagel and Amstrong 1997; Kozinets 1999; Muniz and O´Guinn 2001; White 1999) in Kozinets 2002:61). Previous research has not fully explored this in order for present segmentation theory to be completely applicable on online communities. Though, one interesting research concerning segmentation of online communities is the one conducted by Robert Kozinets (1999). In his research, Kozinets discovered the segmentation potential of online communities. Through his research, Kozinets developed a model which segments members of online communities based on their level of: (1) self-centrality of consumption activity and (2) social ties to the community (Kozinets 1999: 254, 255).

1.3 Research problem

The literature indicates that segmentation should be based on relevant macro-factors such as age, gender and location as well as appropriate micro-factors such as lifestyle and personality (Neal and Wurst 2001; Hassan *et al.* 2003). With the emergence of online communities, there is a need for an adaptive segmentation approach in order to identify target groups within online communities. The main problem lies in identifying what aspects of segmentation theory to include in this new approach towards segmenting online communities. Many researchers have explored online communities (Kozinets 1999; Neal and Wurst 2001; Hogg *et al. 2*004; Rubel 2007) and there is extensive research on segmentation (Rao and Wang 1995; Botschen *et al. 1*999; Cova and Cova 2002; Vynche 2002; Hassan *et al. 2*003; Szmigin *et al. 2*005) but current segmentation theory is not fully applicable on online communities as it does not fully consider the special characteristics of online communities.

Robert Kozinets (1999) is one researcher that has discovered the potential of online communities. As stated above, Kozinets developed a model which segments members of online communities based on their level of activity and social commitment within the community. However, this model he developed for segmenting online communities has not been empirically tested yet. That means that even though this model is considered to have theoretical relevance, both to segmentation and communities, it has not yet been proved to have theoretical and practical relevance when it comes to segmentation of online

communities. Empirically verifying the applicability of this model on online communities could therefore contribute both to the theoretical literature as well as better understanding what practical aspects of segmentation and communities to include when segmenting online communities. This leads us to the research question of our study.

- What aspects of segmentation and communities are most relevant for an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities?

1.4 Research purpose

Drawn from the research problem presented earlier, the main purpose of this study was to empirically verify the applicability of Kozinets´ model on an interest, activity or lifestyle based online communities, in order to adapt a segmentation approach for segmenting online communities. To help achieve this purpose, three main objectives must be accomplished:

- Segment members of the online communities in this study according to Kozinets´ model.

- Further analyse the four segments of the model according to relevant segmentation aspects (e.g. descriptive and behavioural).

- Identify what aspects of segmentation and communities are considered most relevant for an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities.

- CHAPTER TWO -

Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the relevant theories for this research will be presented as well as Kozinets´ model for segmenting online communities, which applicability is being empirically tested here.

2.1 Market segmentation: A literature review

There has been extensive research done on market segmentation (Rao and Wang 1995; Botschen *et al. 1*999; Cova and Cova 2002; Vyncke 2002; Hassan *et al. 2*003; Szmigin *et al. 2*005). Lin (2002:249) argues that the purpose of market segmentation could be seen as "to identify the taxonomy of consumer patterns by dividing a market into homogenous sub markets". By segmenting markets, marketers can formulate product strategies that will fit the demands of these homogenous sub markets (Ibid). A review on previous market segmentation literature indicates that there are two main prominent approaches towards segmentation. The first approach, which is seen as the traditional way of segmentation, is using *descriptive* aspects, looking at demographic (age, gender, education) and geographic (country, region, climate) aspects. The second approach is the "new" way of segmenting markets and uses *behavioural* aspects, looking on psychographic (lifestyle, personality) aspects and benefits from using the products (see picture 1).

Descriptive segmentation aspects	Behavioural segmentation aspects
Demographic segmentation • Gender • Age • Education • Income • Occupation	**Psychographic segmentation** • Lifestyles • Psychological variables - Personality - Self-image
Geographic segmentation • Country • Region • Population density • Climate	**Benefit segmentation** • Expected benefits from product use

Potential market

Picture 1: Commonly used bases for market segmentation (Source: Author´s own design)

2.1.1 Descriptive aspects

One can find two main kinds of segmentation that uses descriptive aspects as bases for segmentation; demographic segmentation and geographic segmentation. Hassan *et al.* (2003) refer to this as the conventional wisdom approach towards market segmentation which is focusing on country-to-country bases for analyzing "macro" segments. Macro segmentation or the grouping of national markets, generally involves characteristics associated with the market itself rather than the individual consumer. The objective when using macro segmentation is to organize markets around the world into categories from which a firm may select countries that best fit the company's objective and product offering. The main benefits of this approach are that companies can build on earlier success in one or several countries. However, problems could lie in inadequacies in determining the diffusion patterns of new products and overlooking cross-country market similarities. This approach provides little insight into the means which consumers in those markets may respond to marketing activities. Researchers such as Withlock (1987) and Hassan and Katsanis (1991 in Hassan *et al.* 2003) argue that if companies want to succeed with their global operation, they should focus on consumer characteristics rather than country characteristics (Hassan *et al.* 2003).

Hassan *et al.* (2003) argue that the traditional way of segmenting markets is not fully applicable on contemporary markets. Even though age, gender and occupation could be seen as important factors, there are several other factors that also need to be considered. Traditional segmentation does not provide the depth of understanding needed to give a clear picture of a target audience (Schoenwald 2001). Even though individuals in a specific demographic category share common characteristics, they may be different when it comes to their values, motivation and beliefs. As online communities are built around interests and lifestyle and disregard limitations such as geography and time (Kozinets 1999), an approach towards segmentation that focuses on factors such as lifestyle and personality would be considered more suitable for this type of target audience.

2.1.2 Behavioural aspects

There are two main types of segmentation using behavioural aspects as bases for segmentation; psychographic segmentation and benefit segmentation. As online communities are considered to share psychographic factors rather than demographic factors, this type of segmentation would be considered more suitable for segmenting online communities. In response to the accelerating trend of consumer communities, Hassan *et al.* (2003) argue that cross-national consumer segmentation is increasingly used. This is an approach that looks for similarities across world markets, looking at consumer characteristics

rather than country characteristics (Ibid). The psychographic segmentation divides consumers into groups on the bases of lifestyle and personality. Consumers define their lifestyle, for example, by the product they consume and lifestyles can therefore be defined quantitatively and used as a group identity for market segmentation (Lin 2002). Haley (1968) and Wind (1973) (in Botschen *et al. 1*999) argue that psychographic segmentation works very well statistically. Psychographic segmentation is considered to be an effective type of segmentation in order to identify sub-market profiles and targeting consumers (Lin 2002). Benefit segmentation focuses on what benefits a customer is expecting from a product usage. The basic idea of this type of segmentation is the belief that the benefits which people are seeking in consuming a given product are the true reason for a market segment. This type of segmentation has come to be the preferred technique when it comes to product positioning, new product introduction, pricing, advertising and distribution. The methods used for this type of segmentation are normally in-depth interviews and/or focus groups (Botschen *et al. 1*999).

Using behavioural aspects as a bases for market segmentation would be considered more realistic when segmenting online communities as it looks upon factors such as lifestyle, attitude and motivation as well. But still one should not completely ignore demographic and geographic aspects as they also can play an important role when segmenting online communities. Even though factors such as lifestyle would be considered more important, it is still of utmost importance to find out for example where members are located and how old they are. Researchers such as Hassan *et al.* (2003), write about the integrated approach to segmentation, an approach that combines the two formerly mentioned approaches.

2.1.3 Integrated segmentation

Numerous studies have been made, were segmentation is based on either one or the other of the formerly mentioned approaches towards segmentation (Sethi 1971; Sheth 1986; Kotler 1986; Wind 1986; Withlock 1987; Hassan and Katsanis 1991) in Hassan *et al.* 2003). Treating each country as a totally homogeneous market is not realistic and it would also be unrealistic to assume the existence of a single world segment that homogeneously responds to standardized marketing programs, even though researchers have been known to argue for exactly that (e.g. Levitt 1983). Therefore an integrated approach to segmentation is considered to be more realistic. According to Hassan *et al.* (2003), effective global segmentation should be based on relevant macro-factors as well as appropriate micro-factors. This approach is the one most likely to offer companies a competitive advantage, since this approach leads to standardized products and communication, targeting one single global market. The basic ideas of this approach are that it assumes that there is some degree of heterogeneity as well as homogeneity among consumers around the world. Any degree of preference heterogeneity can be addressed by introducing adaptive variations of the

marketing program. As well, any degree of preference homogeneity can be addressed by introducing standardized variations in the marketing program.

Neal and Wurst (2001) write about the multi-dimensional segmentation which is based on a notion similar to Hassan *et al.* (2003). They argue that most researchers have used a single set of bases variables when segmenting markets. Limiting the bases for segmentation to only one type of variable is ill advised, when actually there are many criteria determining consumers' response to different offers in the market. "These criteria are multidimensional, encompassing attitudes, needs, values, benefits, means, occasions, and prior experiences, depending on the product or service category and the buyer". To segment markets based on multiple dimensions of segmentation, is far more useful and flexible for building a successful marketing strategy (Neal and Wurst 2001: 15).

According to Hassan *et al.* (2003), the advantages of using an integrated approach to segmentation are the following:

- It integrates country variables with behaviour patterns

- It is not based on assumed total homogeneity of the country segment

- It acknowledge the existence of a degree of similarity across national boundaries

- It consider the bases of segmentation to be dynamic in nature

- It defines market globalization as a matter of degree.

This approach would, according to Hassan *et al.* (2003), segment markets based on (1) similar micro-level factors (i.e. lifestyle and behavioural) and (2) allowing countries to belong to different clusters

Researchers have realized that using only the traditional approach towards segmentation is not realistic today, as well as understood the importance of looking at behavioural aspects as well. But still, when segmenting online communities there are further aspects to take into consideration which is not done in these mentioned approaches. Heath (1995) argues that psychographic segmentation is the most effective way to get to the core of what drives consumers demand, to discover attitudes, interests, opinions and emotions motivating consumers. Looking at online consumers, one can state that in order for this approach towards segmentations to be more effective, the specific characteristics of online communities need to be taken into more consideration. As communities are about communication, bonding and influencing each other in the community, an approach towards segmenting online communities needs to

look upon this interaction between the members of the online community. Robert Kozinets (1999) has identified the opportunities of online communities and has developed a model for segmenting them.

2.2 Kozinets' online community research

Kozinets (1999) developed a model which segments members of online communities based on their level of: (1) self-centrality of consumption activity and (2) social ties to the community (Kozinets 1999: 254, 255). According to Kozinets (1999: 254), "the formation of lasting identification as a member of a virtual community of consumption depends largely on two non-independent factors". These two factors are, as mentioned above; the level of self-centrality of one's consumption and the level of social ties one has to the community. These two factors often interrelate and "are separated enough that they can guide our understanding of four different member types within the community". These four member types are; (1) *tourist*, (2) *mingler*, (3) *devotee* and (4) *insider*. Below, Kozinets´ segmentation model for an online community is depicted (see picture 2):
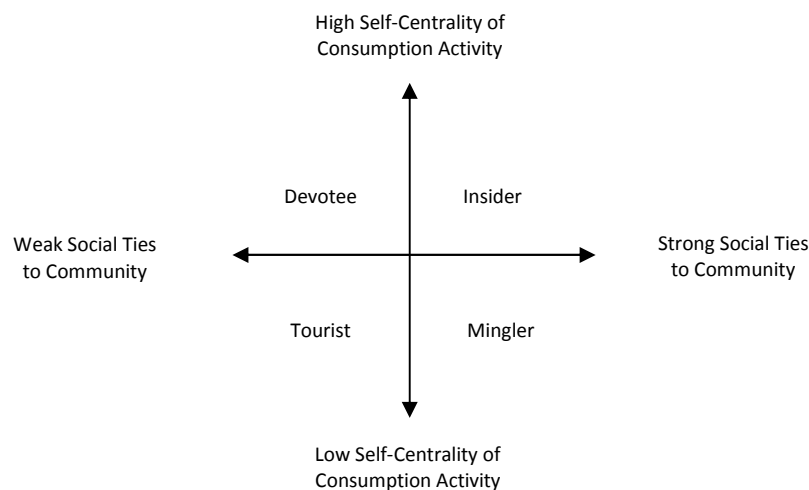
Picture 2: Kozinets´ (1999) model of online community segmentation

Further explanation of Kozinets´ model and categorization of the formerly mentioned online community segments is offered below:

- The vertical axes of the model relate to the level of activity involvement within the community (how central is the consumption activity to one´s psychological self-image?)

- The horizontal axes of the model relate to the level of social involvement within the community (how intense is the social relationship one possesses with other members of the community?)

The online community members are divided into four different segments by Kozinets (1999). These four segments are further defined below:

- Insider: Strong activity and social involvement within the community

- Devotee: Strong activity involvement and weak social involvement within the community

- Mingler: Weak activity involvement and strong social involvement within the community

- Tourist: Weak activity and social involvement within the community

Primarily, this study focuses on the activity level and social commitment level aspects of Kozinets´ model, as the authors considered these two aspects to be the most relevant ones for the purpose of this study. The complete theory supporting Kozinets´ model is far more complex and will not be further scrutinized in this particular study.

With this theoretical foundation, the authors entered the next phase of this project, which was to choose the appropriate method design that would help answer the research question and fulfil the research purpose of this study.

- CHAPTER THREE -

Methodology

In this chapter we will present a discussion for our chosen methodology which will help us to fulfil the purpose and aim of this research.

3.1 Philosophical foundation

Within social science research, there are different views on how a study should be conducted. Two strong views that are discussed in the literature are positivism and social constructionism. These have been elevated into two stereotypes. Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2006:28) argue that "the key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition". One big assumption of this view is that reality is external and objective, it exist independent from us. Contrast to this view, the view of constructionism focuses on the ways people make sense of the world. Here the idea is that reality is determined by people rather than by objective and external factors. The social constructionist view of a research will let the researcher's thoughts, emotions, knowledge and impressions play a big role when interpreting the empirical findings. Even though each one is associated with methodological implications and assumption, there is no researcher who completely holds one or the other views. Usually, a researcher from one side also produces ideas that are more associated with the view of the other side. It is important to understand that one cannot hold consistently to one view or the other (Ibid).

The purpose of this study was to empirically verify the applicability of Kozinets´ model of online community segmentation, in order to develop an adaptive segmentation approach for segmenting online communities. The authors aim was to be objective and to be able to make generalisations, in order for the adaptive segmentation approach to be applicable on more than the online communities in this study. When entering this phase, the authors agreed that they held a more positivistic view of social science research, which guided the authors to the chosen method presented later in this chapter.

3.2 The approach: Inductive vs. deductive

There are two general approaches when it comes to conducting a research. One is the inductive approach and the other is the deductive approach. When a researcher is using the inductive approach, he/she starts with an empirical study of some kind and the results are then compared to theories of relevance in order

to relate the results with a certain area of enquiry and at last, generate a research problem. When the researchers use the deductive approach on the other hand, he/she already has some knowledge regarding the research area and the relevant theories in the field and then uses that knowledge to test theories and in some cases, generate new theories or approaches by conducting their own research (Bryman and Bell 2007: 11, 12). The authors have previously read and studied a great deal of literature on different segmentation approaches and also studied literature regarding different consumer communities. From this, the authors formulated the research purpose, to empirically verify the applicability of the formerly mentioned model by Kozinets on an interest, activity or lifestyle based online community, in order to develop an adaptive segmentation approach for segmenting online communities. Due to these facts, the authors believed that this research has to be considered a deductive one by nature.

3.3 Choosing the relevant method

Even though the purpose of this study was clear to some extent, the authors also had to identify the nature of empirical data and what method of data collection was needed to complete this study. Considering that the purpose of this study was of a somewhat investigative nature, a cross-sectional design, involving a web survey with a quantitative self-completion questionnaire (no open ended questions), was believed to be highly beneficial for gathering the empirical data needed for this study. Furthermore and as pointed out by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002: 135), "the main purpose of a survey is to obtain information from, or about, a defined set of people, or population". Thus using a survey approach could contribute to fulfilling the purpose of the study. Another method design, a case study involving participant observation and unstructured interviews was also considered by the authors as a strong candidate to perform this kind of study in order to fulfil the formerly mentioned purpose of the study. A case study of this nature offers a qualitative method of gathering the data needed for this study. In this specific case, the authors would argue that observing members of certain communities in their natural and actual setting and interviewing them one-to-one, in order to gain deeper insight into their consumer behaviour could also be of great interest to both academics and practitioners.

The formerly mentioned research designs, offer different approaches to the object of study but both may help the researcher to fulfil the purpose and aim of the study. However, after reviewing both designs carefully and considering the purpose and object of study, the authors decided to chose the cross-sectional design, involving a web survey with a quantitative self-completion questionnaire, for this study. The cross-sectional design and furthermore the web survey approach, aligned neatly with the purpose of the study, to empirically verify the applicability of Kozinets´ model on online communities. Moreover, choosing this specific method design fitted well within the time frame intended for this project (12 weeks

in all), it also enabled the authors to gather the relevant empirical data needed at a relatively restricted student budget.

3.4 Cross-sectional design

The cross-sectional design has mainly been considered to be of a quantitative research nature, even though qualitative research frequently involves a structure of cross-sectional design (Bryman and Bell 2007: 59). Also, and according to Bryman and Bell (2007: 55), the cross-sectional design is commonly referred to as a social survey design and therefore strongly related to the use of questionnaires and structured interviews. The authors would argue that the structure of the cross-sectional design, the social survey and the quantitative aspects of it, aligned well with both the object of study as well as the purpose of the study.

3.5 Empirical data collection and community of choice

The empirical data needed for this specific study, was collected by directing participants to a web survey containing a quantitative self-completion questionnaire. After a lot of consideration and research, online poker players were considered to be the most interesting community (revolving around a certain interest, activity or lifestyle) to study for the purpose of this research. Entertainment communities, such as online poker communities, have seldom been addressed in the literature (Lobecke and Powell 2002 in Hsu and Lu 2007). Since digital entertainment has been gaining ground and since the trend is expected to keep on growing (Ibid), this type of online community was considered especially interesting by the authors. In this case, online poker players might be looked upon as a sub-community within the community of poker players, or a target group within a target group. What we mean by this is that their interests, activities and lifestyles might reflect to some extent, the poker player community as a whole.

Played by an estimated 60-80 million Americans and stereotypically over beer, whiskey and cigars, poker has most commonly been "suffused with macho, Wild West sexiness" (The San Francisco Chronicle: Bulwa 2003). Poker players in general have been growing immensely in numbers over the last decade or so, mainly because of the improved coverage of professional poker tournaments on live television. The growing popularity of poker on television is mainly due to the "eye-hole" cameras or the "lipstick" cameras, used first by documentary filmmaker Steve Lipscomb, who launched a televised coverage of the "World Poker Tour" in 2003 on the *Travel Channel*. These cameras show the audience at home which cards each player is dealt and the audience is also provided with graphics explaining the odds of each player winning the game (The San Francisco Chronicle: Bulwa 2003; The San Diego Union-Tribune: Sauer 2004). Another important factor behind the boost in the number of poker players, both amateur and

professional, is the ever growing popularity of online gambling. An estimated 1.7 million players are active online and about 150,000 people play poker online on an average day, according to Poker-Pulse.com. Online poker accounts for the majority of this growth and more and more non-professionals are playing poker online (Bary 2005: 21).

3.6 The target group

The ideal venues for this study were considered by the authors to be within the ever growing number of online poker communities and groups. An example of such an online community is the recently developed social network Facebook (www.facebook.com) and the many different gambling websites (e.g. 888.com, Unibet.com) which contain their specific poker communities and groups. Also, there are various gambling websites mainly devoted to online poker (e.g. www.pokerstars.com, www.partypoker.com). The only prerequisite for the respondents was to play poker online and be at least 18 years old. There were two main reasons for the minimum age requirement; (1) people who have reached 18 years of age are most commonly no longer considered minors and (2) gambling related poker websites require people to be at least 18 years of age to open up an account and start playing poker online (Pokerstars.com 2008; Partypoker.com 2008). After a considerable research on various online poker communities, it was concluded that the primary target group for this research were members of online poker communities located within the social network Facebook. Facebook has over 500 poker related groups and/or communities within their online social network (see picture 3).

Picture 3: Poker related groups on Facebook (Source: Screenshot from the author´s Facebook account).

The social network Facebook was launched in February 2004 and has over 22 million active users, across 47,000 networks. This webpage is the sixth-most trafficked site in the United States and the number one photo-sharing site, according to ComScore statistics. Even more fascinating is the reality that two thirds of its members visit the website daily (Lashinsky 2005).

The Icelandic based *Pokernet* website (www.pokernet.is) was chosen as a secondary venue to reach online poker players. Pokernet is a website dedicated to poker and offers poker related news, chats/forums, articles, lessons, poker rules, videos and reviews about poker books (Pokernet.is 2008).

The chosen venues offer a relatively easy access to a vast number of online poker players and enthusiasts, which have formed various poker related communities. Within Facebook, these communities are most often referred to as *groups*. The specific target groups chosen within Facebook, for the purpose of collecting the empirical data needed for this study, all have more than 1,000 members within each group. The authors contacted the responsible parties within each of the chosen Facebook poker groups, informing them of the intentions and the purpose of this research and they agreed to assist. Their assistance entailed posting a link on the website belonging to each group, which directed the participants to the web survey, as well as their personal promotion of the survey. The authors also contacted the administrators of Pokernet and they promoted the survey by posting an announcement about the study on their front page and encouraged people to take part in the survey.

3.7 The web survey

As mentioned above, a web survey containing a quantitative questionnaire was used to gather the empirical data needed for this research. This specific research method was considered best suited by the authors, considering that online poker players are best reached in this kind of internet-based environment. Also, as pointed out by Yun and Trumbo (2000 in Bryman and Bell 2007: 681), "the electronic-only survey is advisable when resources are limited and the target population suits an electronic survey". For the sake of performing an online web survey today, a variety of web survey software is available (e.g. QuestionPro.com, SpeedSurvey.com). In this specific case, the authors chose to use web survey software from *QuestionPro*. According to QuestionPro, their web survey offers "a full suite of tools for creating surveys, sending email invitations, and analyzing survey data" (QuestionPro.com 2008). As pointed out by Bryman and Bell (2007: 676), web survey software offers the researcher easy how-to lessons, a variety of design layouts (e.g. colours, templates, fonts), filtered questions (where respondents are taken directly to the next appropriate question if their answers mean they have to skip certain questions) and also offer one of the most dynamic forms of data collection and analysis available today. Web surveys have also proved to offer higher response rates than, for example, postal surveys and/or email surveys.

The web survey had an informed consent at the beginning, where participants were informed of the purpose of the research, the fact that participants had to be at least 18 years old and that their participation was anonymous. After reading the informed consent, participants either agreed and accepted to participate in the survey, or disagreed and not accepted to take part in the survey. This option was formulated in such

a way that if one chose to disagree with the informed consent, one could not move on and participate in the survey. Also, the survey was programmed to only allow one completion of the survey from the same computer (IP address) and finally the survey had a completion-quota, which prevented further participation if and when the number of completed surveys reached 1,000.

3.8 Quantitative self-completion questionnaires

According to Bryman and Bell (2007: 240), "the *self-completion questionnaire* is sometimes referred to as a *self-administered questionnaire*. With a self-completion questionnaire, respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire themselves", in contrast to when an interviewer ticks boxes according to the interviewee´s answers in a structured interview. In this study, the questionnaire contained 28 closed questions. The questionnaire was based on the theoretical underpinnings behind Kozinets´ model and also considered to reflect different aspects of both segmentation and online communities as much as possible. Gaining information from these different segmentation aspects would most certainly assist in gaining a deeper understanding of the online poker communities in this study.

3.9 Sampling

The main aim of sampling "is to construct a subset of the population, which is fully representative in the main areas of interest" (Easterby-Smith *et al. 2*002: 135). The sample chosen for this study were members belonging to a few of the many poker related groups and communities within the Facebook social network and those who visit the Icelandic poker related website Pokernet, without any consideration of; nationality, gender, level of current education or any other criteria. This specific type of sampling is referred to as a *probability sample.* A probability sample means that each and every unit in a certain population has a known chance of being selected in a sample (Bryman and Bell 2007: 182). By conducting the study among members of such a global online community as Facebook, the heterogeneity of the participants is secured at least to some extent. Bryman and Bell (2007: 196) argue that "the greater the heterogeneity of a population, the larger the sample will need to be2.

3.10 Validity and reliability

For a study to be taken seriously the method used has to have a certain validity and reliability. As pointed out by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002: 135), validity can refer to measurement validity, internal and external validity and refers to how accurately the instrument chosen, measures the features intended to be measured. Whereas reliability pertains to stability, that is, does a particular research design and method always give the same results, regardless of different occasions? Also, and according to Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002: 135), "ideally, tests for validity and reliability should be made at the pilot stage of an

investigation, before the main phase of data collection". A critical issue concerning this type of study is the fact that the respondent cannot ask questions directly if something is unclear with the questionnaire as they could in a structured interview. In order to test the validity and reliability of this study and to try to secure that the questions would be interpreted the right way by the respondents, the authors performed a pilot study among a group of friends and fellow students who play poker online.

3.10.1   The pilot study

The outcome of this pilot study was very useful and informative. Participants were asked to give feedback and comments about the web survey and the questions involved, for the authors to see if any alterations were needed before the actual execution of the web survey. It resulted in 14 completed surveys and the participants were generally positive towards the form and structure of the survey. Some participants had suggestions regarding what type of questions could be added to the survey, the scaling of options in answers and also in which order the questions should be. The authors took this all into consideration and made some minor modifications to the final version of the web survey.

- CHAPTER FOUR -

Empirical findings and analysis

In this chapter, the empirical results of the research are presented and analysed according to Kozinets´ model of online community segmentation and the theoretical framework presented in chapter two.

4.1 A tool for analysis

A slightly adapted version of Kozinets´ model for segmenting online communities (1999), was used for the segmenting of online poker communities in this study. This adapted version of Kozinets´ model segments online community members based on their level of; (1) activity involvement (high/low) and (2) social involvement (weak/strong) within the community (see picture 4).
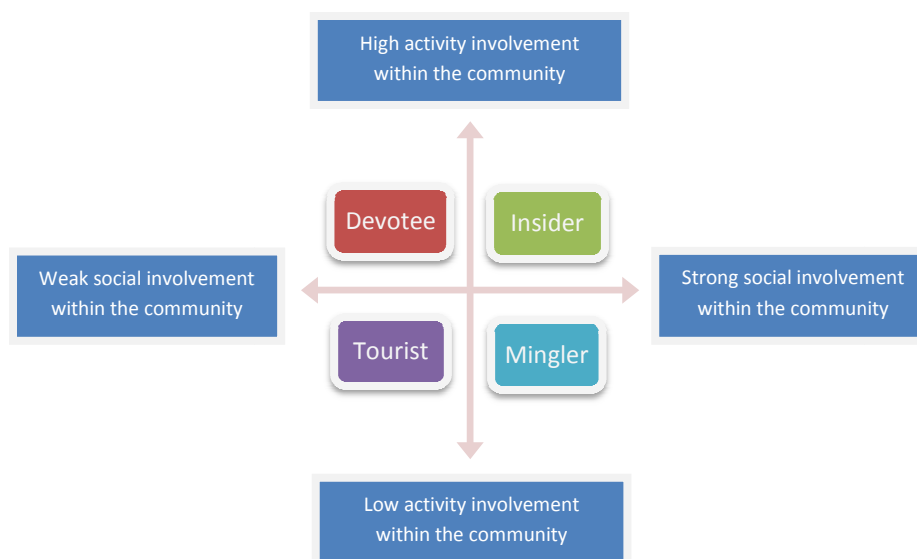
Picture 4: The author´s adaptation of Kozinets´ model

- The vertical axes of the model relate to the level of activity involvement within the community (e.g. how much time community members spend playing and learning poker online)

- The horizontal axes of the model relate to the level of social involvement within the community (the community member´s participation in other communal activities; e.g. chat rooms, forums, discussion boards, etc.)

The online community members are divided into four different segments. These four segments have the same names as used by Kozinets (1999) and are further defined below:

- Insider: High activity and strong social involvement within the community

> ♣ Devotee: High activity involvement and weak social involvement within the community

> ♣ Mingler: Low activity involvement and strong social involvement within the community

> ♣ Tourist: Low activity and weak social involvement within the community

4.2 Statistical summary

The respondents in this study consisted of members of various poker groups within the online social network Facebook and visitors of the Icelandic based Pokernet website. In total, 94 respondents older than 18 years of age participated in the survey but 11 of them did not answer all 28 questions of the questionnaire. Therefore the end result was 83 completed surveys, where all questions were answered. Male respondents were dominant or 82 (98,8%) out of the 83, which means that only one respondent was female (1,2%). The respondents´ age was between 18 and 50 years old, most belonged to the age groups 18-20 years old (30,1%=N25) and 21-25 years old (28,9%=N24). The mean age of participants was from 21-25 years old. Single respondents were the largest group participating in the survey (55,4% =N46). Respondents were of 17 different nationalities, most were from Iceland (51,8%=N43) and The United States of America (14,4%=N12).

When looking at these results one has to consider what type of online communities were being studied. Since the communities of study are poker communities, the high percentage of male respondents could be explained. The fact that completed results from only one female respondent was collected, coincides with the stereotypical image of poker players, masculine, preferably smoking and sipping on a beer or a glass of whiskey (The San Francisco Chronicle: Bulwa 2003). Even though our sample is small the fact cannot be overlooked that almost 99 percent of our respondents were males. However, the actual male-female ratio within the groups of study was far from being this much male-dominant and the authors were therefore surprised that the female respondents were only 1,2 percent as they expected this number to be higher, even with this type of communities. Finally, the fact that only 83 completed surveys were collected in this study limits the reliability and almost excludes any ability to generalise from the empirical results. The following analysis of the empirical results of this study derived from the authors´ own interpretations and should be construed as such.

4.3 Community segments according to Kozinets´ model

The first objective, towards achieving the purpose of empirically verifying the applicability of Kozinets´ model on online communities, was to segment the respondents in this study according to his model. As mentioned earlier, the model consists of four different segments; (1) *Tourists*, (2) *Minglers*, (3) *Devotees* and (4) *Insiders*. Answers from three questions (questions 10-12) related to the activity involvement and

three questions (questions 13-15) related to the social involvement within the online community, resulted in the following segmentation of participants (see picture 5):
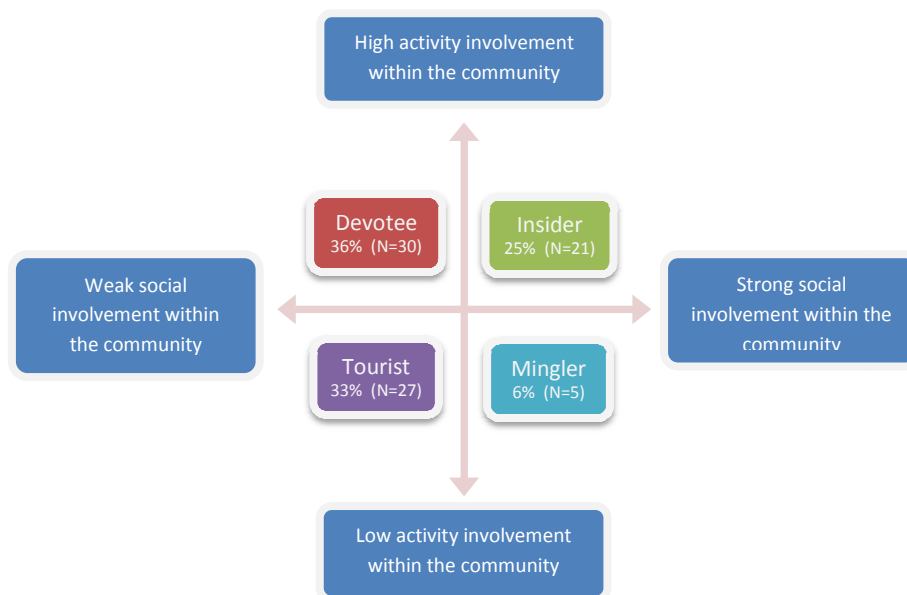
Picture 5: Online community segments of the study according to behavioural aspects

The former two options for questions 10-12 defines respondents as having low activity involvement and the latter two defines respondents as having high activity involvement (see questionnaire in appendix 1).

The same method applies for the former two options for questions 13-15 and defines respondents as having weak social involvement and the latter two defines respondents as having strong social involvement (see questionnaire in appendix 1).

The empirical findings according to this set of questions, suggested that the two most active segments within the online community according to Kozinets (1999), Insiders and Devotees, combined account for 61 percent (N=51) of the whole group. This contradicts Kozinets´ implication regarding the applicability of the Pareto Rule within online communities (Kozinets 1999: 255).

When answers to a single question (question 26), concerning respondents´ own opinion on their personal involvement within the online community were analysed, a considerably different categorisation of community members appeared (see picture 6):
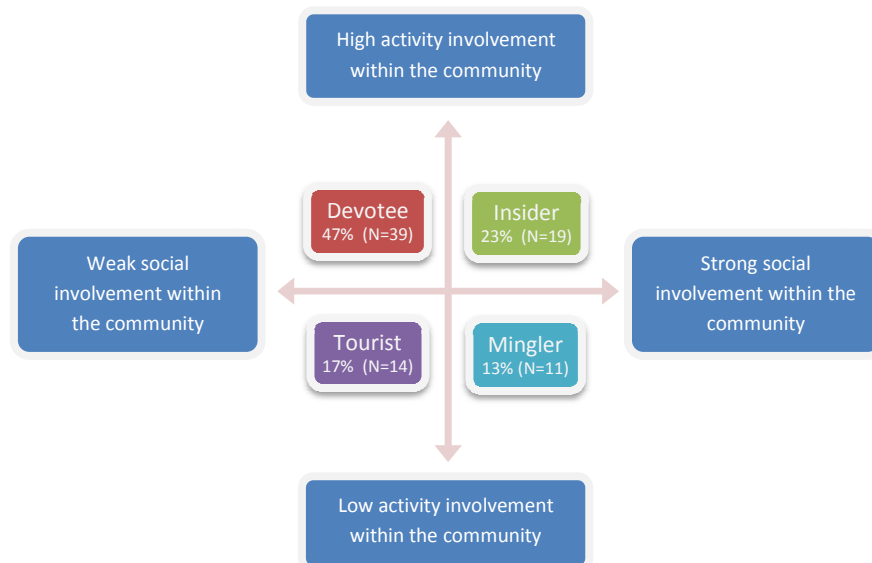
Picture 6: Online community segments of the study according to attitude aspects

These findings are based on attitude related aspects and suggest that the two most active segments within the online community, Devotees and Insiders, account for 70 percent (N=58) of the whole group. This also contradicts Kozinets´ implication that the Pareto rule applies also in virtual markets as within most other markets. Furthermore and even though attitude is sometimes considered to explain behaviour at least to some extent, Wicker (1969: 65 in Smith and Swinyard, 1983) and Smith and Swinyard (1983: 258) point out that the direct connection between attitude and behaviour is not considered compatible due to lack of correlation between these two factors. In this case, what people say and think is totally different from what they actually do.

4.4 Each segment within the model analysed

The second objective of the research purpose was to further analyze the four segments of the model according to descriptive and behavioural segmentation aspects. Any referral to the four segments of Kozinets´ model henceforth, will be according to segmentation of respondents in this study based on behavioural aspects (see picture 5).

4.4.1 Insiders

The "Insiders" are the most active segment within the online community. They are the ones most involved in the activity and also the ones with the strongest social connection with other members of the community (Kozinets 1999).

4.4.1.1 Descriptive segmentation aspects

Since Insiders are the most involved segment within the community, both related to the activity and the social commitment, it was a bit surprising that in this study they were all males. Considering that Insiders are strongly connected socially within the community, the social commitment and communication aspects were expected, by the authors, to attract more female attention within the communities in this study. The fact that Insiders in this study were of relatively young age and single, was rather anticipated. To be as highly involved within the community as Insiders are believed to be, it probably does not coincide well with having a family (a spouse and children) and a serious career. Nonetheless, Insiders were the only segment with a "professional" employment status. That might be because some of them are poker players by profession, either partly or full-time. The level of disposable income among Insiders in this study was rather low (below $500), which could be explained by their young age and also because one-third of them were students. According to this study, Insiders were rather well educated, 43 percent of them had completed a university degree at undergraduate level. Insiders in this study were of 10 different nationalities, most of them from Iceland and reside in Iceland, which is explained by the high percentage of Icelandic respondents in this survey. Below, the major empirical findings of this study belonging to the Insider segment and related to descriptive aspects of segmentation are depicted in table 1.

Insider: Descriptive segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
1. Age?		
21-25	47,62%	10
2. Gender?		
Male	100,00%	21
3. Marital status?		
Living with someone	33,33%	7
Single	52,38%	11
4. Nationality?		
Iceland	42,86%	9
5. Current country of residence?		
Iceland	47,62%	10
6. Highest level of completed education?		
University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)	42,86%	9
7. Current employment status?		
Student	33,33%	7
28. In which category does your monthly disposable income in US dollars ($) best fit?		
Below $500	38,10%	8

Table 1: Insiders: Major descriptive segmentation aspects

4.4.1.2 Behavioural segmentation aspects

It is interesting to see that Insiders in this study were for the most part motivated to start playing poker online due their interest in learning the game of poker and recommendations from friends or family. Their motivation for continuing playing poker online, wanting to improve their poker skills and playing poker online for money, might be interpreted as wanting to improve their ability to profit from playing poker online (see table 2).

Insider: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?		
Recommendation by friend or family member	33,33%	7
Interested in learning the game	38,10%	8
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?		
I wanted to improve my poker playing skills	42,86%	9
I only play poker online for money	23,81%	5

Table 2: Insiders: Activity motivation

The authors expected that Insiders in this study tried to influence how and where other members of the community play poker online, since they are believed to be the opinion leaders within the community. Their overall involvement within the community, explains why Insiders in this study were somewhat torn when it came to deciding whether playing poker online was more, equally or less important than the social interaction within the community. What was slightly unexpected though, was the facts that Insiders in this study themselves were rather influenced by members within the community than professional poker players, when it came to how and where they played poker online. It is not considered common that opinion leaders are influenced by the "general public".

According to this study, Insiders´ choice of products and services was mainly influenced by friends or family. That might be explained to some extent by their young age and the fact that they were primarily single. The fact that Insiders in this study mostly consumed non-alcoholic beverages and only a small portion of them used nicotine and/or consumes alcoholic beverages while playing poker online, contradicts the formerly mentioned stereotypical image of poker players (see table 3).

Insider: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)		
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	26,15%	17
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	7,69%	5
Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)	15,38%	10

Table 3: Insiders: General consumption choices

4.4.2 Devotees

The "Devotees" are highly involved in the activity aspects of the online community but have weak social connection with other members of the community (Kozinets 1999).

4.4.2.1 Descriptive segmentation aspects

The Devotees are considered more involved in the actual activity aspect rather than the social commitment aspect within the community. With that in mind it is not that surprising that in this study they were all males, since poker has long been considered as a male-dominant activity. Devotees in this study were also largely young and/or single. The level of monthly disposable income among Devotees in this study was mainly below $500, which was a bit strange, considering that over half of them were general employees. The level of completed education among Devotees in this study might explain this low income, only 33 percent with a completed university degree at undergraduate level. A contrasting fact was that Devotees were the segment in this study with the biggest share belonging to the highest monthly disposable income category ($4,000+). This fact is most likely explained by the high level of general employees within this segment. Devotees in this study were of 6 different nationalities, most of them from Iceland (57%), which is explained by the high percentage of Icelandic respondents in this survey.

Devotees: Descriptive segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
1. Age?		
21-25	26,67%	8
2. Gender?		
Male	100,00%	30
3. Marital status?		
Single	60,00%	18
4. Nationality?		
Iceland	56,67%	17
5. Current country of residence?		
Iceland	56,67%	17
6. Highest level of completed education?		
High school	33,33%	10
College	30,00%	9
University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)	33,33%	10
7. Current employment status?		
Student	40,00%	12
General employee	53,33%	16
28. In which category does your monthly disposable income in US dollars ($) best fit?		
Below $500	43,33%	13

Table 4: Devotees: Major descriptive segmentation aspects

4.4.2.2 Behavioural segmentation aspects

In this study, the Devotees' motivation for starting playing poker online mainly related to their interest in learning the game of poker. Their motivation for continuing playing poker online might also be seen as a logical next-step, wanting to improve their poker skills and playing poker online for money. To improve the poker skills will only increase the ability to profit from playing poker online (see table 5).

Devotees: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?		
Interested in learning the game	50,00%	15
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?		
I wanted to improve my poker playing skills	50,00%	15

Table 5: Devotees: Activity motivation

The fact that Devotees in this study did not try to influence how and where other community members play poker online was rather expected by the authors, since they are not considered as opinion leaders within the community (Kozinets 1999). When deciding whether playing poker online was more, equally or less important than the social interaction, most Devotees in this study believed that playing poker is more important. Their level of activity involvement is the most logical explanation for this.

When it comes to how and where they play poker online, Devotees in this study could not decide whether they were influenced by professional poker players or not. The same split decision applied regarding if they were being influenced by members within the community. Influence by friends and family, when it came to how and where they played poker online, was rather opposed to among Devotees in this study. From this, Devotees might be considered as independent with regards to their online poker playing habits.

In this study, Devotees´ choice of products and services seemed not to be influenced by anyone but themselves, which was quite odd, considering their young age. Devotees in this study mostly consumed non-alcoholic beverages and only a small portion of them used nicotine and/or consumed alcoholic beverages while playing poker online. This also contradicts the formerly mentioned stereotypical image of poker players (see table 6).

Devotees: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)		
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	31,17%	24
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	11,69%	9
Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)	9,09%	7

Table 6: Devotees: General consumption choices

4.4.3 Minglers

The "Minglers" is the segment who has low activity involvement but strong social involvement within the community (Kozinets 1999).

Looking at the Minglers in this study of online poker communities, one could see that they were a pretty small group of people, only 6 percent (N=5) of respondents. According to Kozinets (1999) most of the respondents would be Minglers and Tourists. Since this study was conducted in a way that the respondents themselves chose to participate or not, one could think that most respondents answering would be Insiders and Minglers, since they were the ones with strongest social involvement, alongside Insiders. However, since only 6 percent turned out to be Minglers, this could indicate that the social involvement was not as high as with the Insiders and that they would be even less socially involved than Tourists and Insiders, but considering how few they are in this study, these are just speculations made by the authors.

4.4.3.1 Descriptive aspects

All five Minglers in this study were men, explained by what type of online communities were being studied and most of them (60%) were between 18 and 20 and either single, living with someone or engaged. Looking at their education, 60 percent of them had a college degree while others had completed high school or had a university degree at undergraduate level. Students accounted for 60 percent and the other 40 percent were general employees. Most of the Minglers came from Iceland (see table 7).

Minglers: Descriptive segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
1. Age?		
18-20	60,00%	3
2. Gender?		
Male	100,00%	5
3. Marital status?		
Engaged	40,00%	2
Single	40,00%	2
4. Nationality?		
Iceland	60,00%	3
6. Highest level of completed education?		
College	60,00%	3
7. Current employment status?		
Student	60,00%	3
General employee	40,00%	2

Table 7: Minglers: Major descriptive segmentation aspects

4.4.3.2 Behavioural aspects

When they started playing poker online, most Minglers were motivated by learning the game and their motivation for keeping playing poker online was mainly to improve their poker skills (see table 8).

Minglers: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?		
Interested in learning the game	60,00%	3
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?		
I wanted to improve my poker playing skills	60,00%	3

Table 8: Minglers: Activity motivation

This could mean that this group of people who had a strong social involvement within the community but low activity involvement, actually wanted to learn more about poker in order for their activity to be stronger which later could make them "Insiders".

Majority of the Minglers in this study tried to influence how other members of the online poker community played poker by giving them advice (60%=N3). This result could be explained by their high social involvement. Something that also could be explained by their high social involvement and the fact that they were interested in learning more about the game was that most of the respondents (80%=N4) saw playing poker as equally important as interacting with other members of the online poker community. This contradicts what Kozinets (1999) argues, that since the Minglers´ activity level was low and social involvement strong, they would think that interacting with other members would be more important than playing poker.

On the questions if they were influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players, other members of the online poker community or friends and families, most of them were unsure on all three questions except the first question, where just as many respondents disagreed, or strongly disagreed as were unsure, which made Minglers a difficult group to analyze on this aspect. However one could see that more respondents answered disagree than agree on all three questions which would indicate that they were not influenced by professional poker players, members within the community or friends and family.

The fact that how Minglers in this study played poker was not influenced by anyone could be explained by their low activity involvement. However, this result was to the authors somewhat surprising since in this study, Minglers also answered that they wanted to improve their poker playing skills. To do this, one would think that they should listen to others opinions and recommendations.

Since Minglers are assumed to have a strong social involvement within the community, one could expect that in this study, they would be more influenced by opinions and recommendations when it comes to the choice of products and services they buy. But as one can tell from the results, this was not clear. Even more Minglers disagreed on these questions than on the previous three which would make them even harder to influence on this point.

Minglers in this study mostly consumed non-alcoholic beverages and only a small portion of them used nicotine and/or consumed alcoholic beverages while playing poker online (see table 9).

Minglers: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)		
Snack (e.g. chips, nuts, cookies)	30,00%	3
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	20,00%	2
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	20,00%	2

Table 9: Minglers: General consumption choices

4.4.4 Tourists

"Tourists" are the group of people with low activity and weak social involvement within the community, which would make them the least active within the online poker community (Kozinets 1999), both when it came to playing poker as well when it came to interacting with other members.

4.4.4.1 Descriptive aspects

When looking at the Tourists within the online poker communities of this study, one could see that they were a pretty general group of people except on the gender aspect, as all respondents but one were males. However, it was as well within this group the only female was found. This otherwise general group could be explained by the fact that they were an indifferent group when it came to playing poker as well as interacting with other members.

Looking at demographics one could see that their age was between 18 and 40 years old, but somewhat more between 18 and 20 (33%=N9) and 31 and 35 (26%=N7). The only female respondent who completed this survey belonged to the Tourist segment in this study. The vast majority of Tourists in this study were single (56%=N15). Looking at their education, 33 percent (=N9) had completed high school, 30 percent (=N7) had completed college and 30 percent (=N7) had a university degree at undergraduate level. Tourists (7%=N2) were the only ones of all the respondents in this study to have a university degree at postgraduate level. Most of them were students (37%=N10) or general employees (41%=N11) and 15 percent (=N4) owned their own business.

The majority of the Tourists came from Iceland (52%=N14) just as the majority of all the respondents and the second country with most Tourists is United States of America (15%=N4).

Tourists: Descriptive segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
1. Age?		
18-20	33,33%	9
31-35	25,93%	7
2. Gender?		
Female	3,70%	1
Male	96,30%	26
3. Marital status?		
Single	55,56%	15
4. Nationality?		
Iceland	51,85%	14
United States of America	14,81%	4
6. Highest level of completed education?		
High school	33,33%	9
College	29,63%	8
University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)	29,63%	8
University (postgraduate degree: Master, PhD or equivalent)	7,41%	2
7. Current employment status?		
Student	37,04%	10
General employee	40,74%	11

Table 10: Tourists: Major descriptive segmentation aspects

4.4.4.2 Behavioural aspects

Looking at what motivated them into starting playing poker, 37 percent answered that they were interested in learning the game. The rest of the Tourists answered pretty equally between recommendation by friend or family, televised coverage of poker tournaments and seeking thrill and excitement. To why they kept on playing poker online, most of them only played poker for fun (see table 11).

Tourists: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?		
Interested in learning the game	37,04%	10
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?		
I simply like playing poker for fun	44,44%	12

Table 11: Tourists: Activity motivation

These answers could be explained by their low activity level of playing poker, though 33 percent (N=9) answered that they wanted to improve their poker playing skills, which could indicate that some of the Tourists actually wanted to increase their level of activity involvement.

On the question if they tried to influence how other members play poker, by giving them advice or recommendations, most of the Tourists in this study answered unsure and disagree or strongly disagree. This as well could be explained by their low activity level and weak social involvement within the community. More of the Tourists in this study agreed than disagreed that playing poker was more important than their social interaction with other members of the community which could indicate that their activity level was not as low as their social involvement was weak.

When asking them if how they play poker was influenced by opinion and recommendations from professional poker players, other members of the community or by friends or families, Tourists in this study answered pretty equally between agree and disagree on all three questions, which would here as well, make them a general group of people within the online poker community.

When it came to their general consumption behaviour, one could tell from the Tourists´ answers in this study, that they were more influenced by friends and family than by professional poker players and other members of the online poker community, explainable since they had low social involvement within the online poker community. Tourists in this study were very general as well, when looking at what they consumed while playing poker. As the results showed they answered pretty equally between all options except the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages, which was somewhat higher (see table 12). This also contradicts the formerly mentioned stereotypical image of poker players.

Tourists: Behavioural segmentation aspects	Percentage	Frequency
27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)		
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	29,51%	18
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	11,48%	7
Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)	11,48%	7

Table 12: Tourists: General consumption choices

- CHAPTER FIVE -

Discussions

In this chapter, the major empirical findings of this research will be discussed and compared to both Kozinets´ model and existing theory on communities and segmentation.

5.1 Discussions

This study departed from a positivistic standpoint and with the intention of objectively measuring the external social world, in this case, online poker communities. During the process of this study, this philosophical foundation evolved into a more constructionist form. As the low number of respondents made it hard for the authors to make any valid generalisations from the empirical results of this study, they interpreted the results to the best of their knowledge, in order to make implications regarding how online communities could behave. This social constructionist view allowed the author´s thoughts, emotions, knowledge and impressions, to play a big role when the empirical findings of this study were interpreted. As pointed out by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2006:28), usually, a researcher from one sides, also produces ideas that are more associated with the view of the other side and it is important to understand that one cannot hold consistently to one view or the other.

5.1.1 Empirical results versus Kozinets´ model

The fact that respondents who completed the survey in this study were relatively few (N=83), mostly rules out the ability to generalise from these results. However, these results allow for some implications and speculations to be made towards the applicability of Kozinets´ model on online communities, which up to this point and as far as the authors were aware of, had not yet been empirically tested.

When the empirical results of this study are compared to Kozinets´ model and the theoretical foundations supporting it, there are some obvious discrepancies visible. First of all, the size of each segment according to the empirical results of this study is totally different from what Kozinets has argued for. Kozinets (1999:255) assumes that the two most active segments within online communities, Insiders and Devotees, combined account for 20 percent of each online community. According to this study, these two segments combined account for 61 percent (N=51) of the online communities. This also means that the two remaining segments, Minglers and Tourists, make up 39 percent (N=32) of the online communities in this study. According to Kozinets (1999:255), these two segments should come together as 80 percent of each

online community. The results from this study also contradict Kozinets´ notion regarding the applicability of the Pareto rule in online communities/markets (Kozinets 1999:255).

When each segment in this study was further analysed, it is quite astonishing that all respondents, but one, were males. The fact that Kozinets did not consider the gender aspect of the online community, when formulating his model, excludes all comparison in this case. The focus of his research was more on the behavioural and communicational aspects of the online community and especially on the communication and the level of social commitment within the community. The behavioural aspects of the segments in this study were quite similar to what they were assumed to be in Kozinets´ model. The opinion leaders within the communities in this study were Insiders. They started to get involved in the activity aspect of the community mainly because they were interested in learning the game and along with Minglers, tried to influence other members of the communities the most. Devotees and Tourists in this study also initially got involved in the activity aspect because they were interested in learning the game but they were not trying to influence other members of the communities. All this was in accordance to what Kozinets (1999) has argued regarding the social involvement of the groups. Insiders in this study found the poker activity equally important as the social involvement within the online communities and were the only segment with that opinion.

After having analysed the segments in this study, compared them to the original segments in Kozinets´ model and considered the theoretical foundations supporting it, the authors have slightly adapted Kozinets´ model by re-naming (original names in brackets) and re-defining each segment (see picture 7).

Picture 7: The author´s adaptive segmentation model for online communities

- The vertical axes of the model relate to the level of activity involvement within the community.

- The horizontal axes of the model relate to the level of social involvement within the community.

As with the original model, the online community members are divided into four different segments. These four segments of the new model are further defined below:

- Pro: Highly interested in the activity and spend considerable amount of time on both practicing and discussing everything that relates to the activity. Possibly professional players, both part-time and full-time.

- Expert: Highly interested in and spend considerable amount of time practicing the activity but don´t really care that much about what others say or think regarding the activity.

- Novice: Have recently discovered the activity, are highly interested in learning and spend considerable amount of time discussing everything that relates to the activity.

- Maverick: An indifferent group who mainly thinks of themselves, their own benefits and are probably online "lurkers" and/or members of various online communities. Their interest in the activity is superficial and they are only loyal to themselves.

5.1.2 Empirical results versus existing theory

"The technology of the Internet has given rise to thousands of communities where people find each other, communicate and collaborate around shared interests or goals. Today you can see that, where there is an interest, there is a community". This was a statement given by the authors in the beginning of this thesis and one of the main arguments for this study. Since the authors are specialized in the field of marketing it was with big anticipation that they studied how online communities are constructed and how their members behave.

Prior literature tells us that members of a community are involved in and can obtain meaning from the discussions that take place in the community. This develops bonds between the members which then can influence the consumer behaviour of the members (Szmigin *et al.* 2005). As mentioned earlier, Kozinets focused his research on online communities and through that research developed a model which segments online community members based on their level of activity (high/low) and social (strong/weak) involvement. He argues that some online community members have stronger social ties to the community than others, hence the horizontal axes of his model (Kozinets 1999). The results of this study strongly support this notion. With the help of Kozinets´ (1999) model, the authors could distinguish between members who are more socially involved than others in the community and members who are more active

in playing poker online than others. Here one can see that the two most socially involved segments in this study, Insiders and Minglers, are the ones who try to influence other members of the communities the most. This coincides with Kozinets' theory (1999).

There is evidence that participation in online communities can have significant impact on consumer knowledge and behaviour (Hogg *et al.* 2004). From this theory one could expect that the members of the online communities in this study would be influenced in their behaviour by participating in the community. Looking at the general consumption of the respondents, the results of this study showed that all the four segments were more influenced by friends or family than by other members of the online community and/or professional poker players, when it comes to what products and services they bought. Most of the respondents argued that they were not at all influenced by other members of the online community or professional poker players. This goes against presented theory. However, looking at if how they played poker was influenced by others one can see that all groups were more influenced by other members of the online community and professional poker players than by friends or family. So on this point, members' participation in an online community has clearly an impact on their behaviour. From this, one could make the conclusion that, at least to some extent, the behaviour of the members in the online communities is influenced by their participation. However, this is not clear for their consumer behaviour, which would for marketing purposes, be desirable.

- CHAPTER SIX -

Conclusions

In this chapter, it is concluded what aspects are considered most relevant for developing an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities and thereby the research question of this study is being answered.

6.1 Conclusions

One of the main arguments for this study was that previous theory of segmentation is not fully applicable on online communities. Even though researchers have identified the opportunities of using both descriptive and behavioural aspects when segmenting, they have not taken the specific characteristics of online communities into special consideration. It was with the intention of identifying what aspects of segmentation and communities are most relevant for developing an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities, that the authors started this journey. This also was the third and final objective of the research purpose, and also the research question of this study. In this concluding chapter the authors will, with help of the theoretical framework presented and together with the empirical results of this study, identify what aspects of segmentation and communities are considered most relevant for an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities.

Before identifying which aspects should be considered as the most relevant ones, when it comes to segmenting online communities, it was also of interest to conclude from this study which segments of Kozinets´ model would be considered the most attractive ones for marketing purposes.

To identify which segments within this study could be the most attractive ones for marketers, the authors studied, among other things, which segments try to influence other members within the communities and which segments are being influenced by other members of the communities. Based on the results of this study, the authors would agree with Kozinets (1999) on the notion that Insiders are opinion leaders, but that as such they might be seen as a highly important target group for marketers, is a different matter altogether. Since the results of this study portray Insiders as being mostly influenced by their friends and family, makes them a tough crowd to reach for marketers. Considering that Insiders in this study were a far bigger segment than Kozinets had assumed, might make the effort of reaching them well worth wile. If Devotees are as big a slice of the online poker community as this study indicates, they might be the most attractive segment within the community to attract and empower for marketing purposes. Minglers are one segment who tries to influence other members of the community which would make them opinion leader potential within the communities together with Insiders. The Minglers are a small group of only 5

people in this study, which makes them difficult to generalize from. However, if these results would indicate how Minglers within an online community behave they would be a very attractive segment for marketing purposes. From the results of this study one can indicate that Tourists would be considered a difficult group to target for marketing purpose due to their not so loyal, indifferent and individualistic nature.

Finally, and with the intention to answer the research question in this study, we look at the adaptive approach towards segmenting of online communities. .

From the theoretical framework presented in this paper, we can see that researchers such as Hassan *et al.* (2003) and Neal and Wurst (2001) have identified the integrated and multidimensional approaches towards segmentation as the most effective ones. Both descriptive and behavioural aspects of segmentation were well considered and included in this study. From the results of this study, the authors would conclude that a multidimensional approach would be the most effective and dynamic approach regarding segmentation of online communities. Descriptive segmentation aspects such as age, gender, nationality and education gave some unexpected result and would therefore be necessary as a part of a new and more dynamic segmentation approach towards online communities. However, as online communication brings people together without the consideration of geography and time, the aspect of geography for example, did not add anything of value to our study. Behavioural segmentation aspects such as motivation, attitude and commitment turned out to be, as expected, of big value for this study. The biggest contribution this study made, towards developing an adaptive approach for segmenting online communities, was that factors such as motivation, attitude, communication form and internal community influence, were given more attention in this study than in prior segmentation approaches. This gave the authors an even deeper insight into how members of online communities behave and would therefore be crucial for an adaptive segmentation approach for online communities. From the results of this study, the authors were able to analyse the online poker communities studied through these aspects in some depth and during that process, really consider what special characteristics these communities hold.

Finally, and as the authors have argued in earlier chapters, previous research and literature has not taken the specific characteristics of online communities into nearly as much consideration as this study has done. This study has paid special attention to the specific characteristics of online communities and also recognized that an adaptive segmentation approach is needed, depending on the communities of study. The authors would argue that this study has contributed with some thoughts, ideas and implications, regarding what factors to include in an adaptive approach towards segmenting online communities

- CHAPTER SEVEN -

Limitations and future research

In this chapter, the limitations of this study are presented and potential ideas for future research presented.

7.1 Limitations

First and foremost, this study sought out to empirically verify the applicability of Kozinets´ model only on online poker communities, since the authors considered them to be the most interesting type of online communities to study for the purpose of this research. In addition, the main research focus was on the activity level and social commitment level aspects of Kozinets´ model. The complete theory supporting Kozinets´ model is too multifaceted to be thoroughly covered in a single research of this sort.

The relatively small number of completed surveys and especially how hardly any female respondents participated in this survey limits the reliability and almost excludes any ability to generalise from the results. Nonetheless, the authors still believe that the results of this study are reliable enough to make certain implications related to an adaptive approach towards segmenting online communities.

While this study used a quantitative questionnaire to gather the empirical data needed, the main aim was to obtain qualitative and behavioural related information from the respondents, concerning their overall communal behaviour. The number of completed surveys eliminated any opportunity of statistical measurements concerning relationships between certain aspects belonging to the online poker communities in this study. The authors would argue that since each segment of the model used in this study did not contain at least 30 people, using statistical tests like t-test, is impossible.

The conclusions drawn from the empirical results of this study derived from the authors´ own analysis and interpretations and should be construed as such. This should rather be looked upon as a way to open a few eyes and hopefully raise some questions regarding the existing knowledge about segmentation and online communities and finally as a possible point of departure for future research in this area.

7.2 Future research

As with numerous academic studies performed by students, this particular study evoked many ideas regarding opportunities for future research in this particular area. Some of these ideas were in the authors minds in the very beginning but were unmanageable due to both time and resource limitations. The

following ideas are considered by the authors to be the most interesting ones related to future research in the field of segmenting online communities:

- To conduct a study among two to four activity based online communities for comparison purposes and with the intention of gaining a deeper insight into their communal behaviour.

- Pay more attention than prior research has done to the gender aspect of online communities.

- Try to identify the supposed linkage between the four segments of Kozinets´ model to different relational modes related to motivational elements: the recreational, the relational, the informational, and the transformational.

- Try to choose online communities that enclose equal gender ratios, members of various nationalities and cultural backgrounds, wide age-range and other aspects that make the communities of choice as heterogeneous as possible.

- To combine quantitative and qualitative methods in future research. This offers a triangulated approach, which can help limit the shortcomings of one method by using another method in order to verify the results.

All these ideas are believed to be of great interest to both academics and practitioners and could also enhance knowledge regarding how to segment online communities in more beneficial ways.

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Appendix 1

The questionnaire

Online poker communities
A survey as a part of a Master thesis at Lund University spring 2008

INFORMED CONSENT

We are inviting you to participate in our research project as a part of our Master thesis at Lund University 2008. Our purpose is to study online poker players as an online community, in order to better understand what their interests, activities and lifestyles involve. It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinions.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you are welcome to contact us through our email addresses below:

hjalti.hjaltason.535@student.lu.se

marie.vernersson.631@student.lu.se

Thank you very much for your time and support.

If you have read and understood the informed consent and you are willing to participate in the survey, please start the survey by choosing the **Continue** button below.

1. Age?

- ⬜ 18-20

- ⬜ 21-25

- ⬜ 26-30

- ⬜ 31-35

- ⬜ 36-40

- ⬜ 41-45

- ⬜ 46-50

- ⬜ 51-55

- ⬜ 56-60

- ⬜ Over 60

2. Gender?

- ⬜ Female

- ⬜ Male

3. Marital status?

- ⬜ Married

- ⬜ Engaged

- ⬜ Living with someone

- ⬜ Single

4. Nationality?

      ▼

5. Current country of residence?

      ▼

6. Highest level of completed education?

- ⬜ Elementary school

- ⬜ High school

- ⬜ College

- ⬜ University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)

☐   University (postgraduate degree: Master, PhD or equivalent)

7. Current employment status?

☐   Student

☐   Unemployed

☐   General employee

☐   Own my own business

☐   Professional (e.g. athlete/actor/artist/musician)

8. Which of the following <u>best</u> describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?

☐   Recommendation by friend or family member

☐   Advertising and promotion

☐   Televised coverage of poker tournaments

☐   Seeking thrill and excitement

☐   Interested in learning the game

9. Which of the following <u>best</u> describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?

☐   I play poker online to meet other poker players and enthusiasts

☐   I simply like playing poker for fun

☐   I wanted to improve my understanding of the game

☐   I wanted to improve my poker playing skills

☐   I only play poker online for money

10. For how long have you been playing poker online?

☐   Less than 1 month

☐   1 to 6 months

☐   7 to 12 months

☐   More than 12 months

11. How many hours on average do you spend playing poker online?

☐   Less than 2 hours per week

☐   2 hours per week

⬜ 2 hours per day

⬜ More than 2 hours per day

12. How many hours on average do you spend learning about poker (e.g. read books on poker, watch poker on television)

⬜ Less than 1 hour per week

⬜ 1 hour per week

⬜ 1 hour per day

⬜ More than 1 hour per day

13. How frequently do you communicate with other members of the online poker community (for example; participating in chat rooms, forums, discussion boards etc.)?

⬜ Never

⬜ Once a week

⬜ Several times a week

⬜ Once a day or more

14. How frequently do you socialize with other members of the online poker community (for example; participate in poker tournaments, attend poker tournaments as audience, meet to play poker for fun)?

⬜ Never

⬜ Once a month

⬜ Several times a month

⬜ Once a week or more

15. I offer advice and/or recommend important features/tactics of the game to other members of the online poker community?

⬜ Never

⬜ Once a month

⬜ Several times a month

⬜ Once a week or more

16. I try to influence how other members of the online poker community play poker online, by giving advice and recommendations (for example; where to play, if to play for free or play for money)?

⬜ I strongly disagree

⬜ I disagree

○ Not sure/I don´t know

○ I agree

○ I strongly agree

17. Playing poker online is more important than the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Not sure/I don´t know

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

18. Playing poker online is equally important as the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Not sure/I don´t know

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

19. Playing poker online is less important than the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Not sure/I don´t know

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

20. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Not sure/I don´t know

◻ Agree

◻ Strongly Agree

21. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from other members within the online poker community (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?

◻ Strongly Disagree

◻ Disagree

◻ Not sure/I don´t know

◻ Agree

◻ Strongly Agree

22. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from friends and family (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?

◻ Strongly Disagree

◻ Disagree

◻ Not sure/I don´t know

◻ Agree

◻ Strongly Agree

23. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players?

◻ Strongly Disagree

◻ Disagree

◻ Not sure/I don´t know

◻ Agree

◻ Strongly Agree

24. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from other members within the online poker community?

◻ Strongly Disagree

◻ Disagree

◻ Not sure/I don´t know

◻ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

25. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from friends and family?

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Not sure/I don´t know

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

26. In your own opinion, which of the following best describes your personal involvement within the online poker community?

☐ I do not spend much time playing poker online and I seldom communicate with other members within the community

☐ I do not spend much time playing poker online but I frequently communicate with other members within the community

☐ I spend much time playing poker online but I seldom communicate with other members within the community

☐ I spend much time playing poker online and I frequently communicate with other members within the community

27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)

☐ Nothing

☐ Food (both regular and fast food)

☐ Snack (e.g. chips, nuts, cookies)

☐ Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)

☐ Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)

☐ Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)

28. In which category does your monthly disposable income in US dollars ($) best fit?

☐ Below $500

☐ $500-$999

☐ $1,000-$1,999

☐ $2,000-$2,999

☐ $3,000-$3,999

☐ $4,000+

Appendix 2

Empirical results according to community segments in this study

Questions	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q1	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
1. Age?				
18-20	33,33%	20,00%	60,00%	33,33%
21-25	47,62%	26,67%		22,22%
26-30	14,29%	23,33%	20,00%	14,81%
31-35		23,33%	20,00%	25,93%
36-40		6,67%		3,70%
41-45				
46-50	4,76%			
51-55				
56-60				
Over 60				
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q2	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
2. Gender?				
Female				3,70%
Male	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	96,30%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q3	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
3. Marital status?				
Married	9,52%	16,67%		25,93%
Engaged	4,76%	6,67%	40,00%	7,41%
Living with someone	33,33%	16,67%	20,00%	11,11%
Single	52,38%	60,00%	40,00%	55,56%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q4	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
4. Nationality?				
Australia		3,33%		
Belgium			20,00%	3,70%

	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Canada	9,52%	13,33%		3,70%
Denmark				3,70%
Egypt	4,76%			
Gibraltar	4,76%			
Iceland	42,86%	56,67%	60,00%	51,85%
India				3,70%
Netherlands				3,70%
Poland	4,76%			
Republic of Korea	4,76%			
South Africa	4,76%			
Sweden				3,70%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	9,52%	6,67%		7,41%
United Republic of Tanzania	4,76%	3,33%		
United States of America	9,52%	16,67%	20,00%	14,81%
Yugoslavia				3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q5	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
5. Current country of residence?				
Australia		3,33%		
Belgium			20,00%	3,70%
Canada	9,52%	13,33%		3,70%
Denmark				11,11%
Egypt	4,76%			
Gibraltar	4,76%			
Iceland	47,62%	56,67%	60,00%	44,44%
South Africa	4,76%			
Sweden				7,41%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	9,52%	6,67%		7,41%
United Republic of Tanzania	4,76%	3,33%		
United States of America	14,29%	16,67%	20,00%	22,22%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q6	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
6. Highest level of completed education?				
Elementary school	4,76%	3,33%		
High school	19,05%	33,33%	20,00%	33,33%
College	33,33%	30,00%	60,00%	29,63%
University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)	42,86%	33,33%	20,00%	29,63%

	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
University (postgraduate degree: Master, PhD or equivalent)				7,41%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q7	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
7. Current employment status?				
Student	33,33%	40,00%	60,00%	37,04%
Unemployed	9,52%	3,33%		7,41%
General employee	33,33%	53,33%	40,00%	40,74%
Own my own business	9,52%	3,33%		14,81%
Professional (e.g. athlete/actor/artist/musician)	14,29%			
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q8	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?				
Recommendation by friend or family member	33,33%	23,33%		22,22%
Advertising and promotion		3,33%		3,70%
Televised coverage of poker tournaments	14,29%	3,33%	20,00%	14,81%
Seeking thrill and excitement	14,29%	20,00%	20,00%	22,22%
Interested in learning the game	38,10%	50,00%	60,00%	37,04%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q9	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?				
I play poker online to meet other poker players and enthusiasts				
I simply like playing poker for fun	19,05%	10,00%	20,00%	44,44%
I wanted to improve my understanding of the game	14,29%	10,00%	20,00%	7,41%
I wanted to improve my poker playing skills	42,86%	50,00%	60,00%	33,33%
I only play poker online for money	23,81%	30,00%		14,81%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q16	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
16. I try to influence how other members of the online poker community play poker online, by giving advice				
and recommendations (for example; where to play, if to play for free or play for money)?				
I strongly disagree	4,76%	30,00%	20,00%	29,63%
I disagree		20,00%		14,81%
Not sure/I don´t know	23,81%	20,00%	20,00%	40,74%

	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
I agree	42,86%	30,00%	60,00%	14,81%
I strongly agree	28,57%			
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q17	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
17. Playing poker online is more important than the social interaction with other members within				
the online poker community?				
Strongly Disagree	9,52%	10,00%		
Disagree	14,29%	16,67%	40,00%	29,63%
Not sure/I don´t know	47,62%	30,00%	40,00%	25,93%
Agree	14,29%	20,00%	20,00%	22,22%
Strongly Agree	14,29%	23,33%		22,22%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q18	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
18. Playing poker online is equally important as the social interaction with other members within				
the online poker community?				
Strongly Disagree	23,81%	13,33%		14,81%
Disagree	14,29%	36,67%	20,00%	33,33%
Not sure/I don´t know	23,81%	36,67%		33,33%
Agree	38,10%	10,00%	80,00%	18,52%
Strongly Agree		3,33%		
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q19	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
19. Playing poker online is less important than the social interaction with other members within				
the online poker community?				
Strongly Disagree	19,05%	20,00%		25,93%
Disagree	19,05%	13,33%	20,00%	29,63%
Not sure/I don´t know	38,10%	36,67%	80,00%	33,33%
Agree	19,05%	26,67%		11,11%
Strongly Agree	4,76%	3,33%		
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q20	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
20. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players				

(for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?				
Strongly Disagree	4,76%	20,00%	20,00%	7,41%
Disagree	47,62%	26,67%	20,00%	44,44%
Not sure/I don´t know	14,29%	6,67%	40,00%	3,70%
Agree	33,33%	43,33%	20,00%	44,44%
Strongly Agree		3,33%		
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q21	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
21. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from other members within				
the online poker community (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?				
Strongly Disagree	4,76%	10,00%		18,52%
Disagree	23,81%	30,00%	40,00%	29,63%
Not sure/I don´t know	19,05%	20,00%	60,00%	11,11%
Agree	47,62%	36,67%		37,04%
Strongly Agree	4,76%	3,33%		3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q22	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
22. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from friends and family				
(for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?				
Strongly Disagree	28,57%	13,33%	20,00%	14,81%
Disagree	33,33%	53,33%	20,00%	37,04%
Not sure/I don´t know	19,05%	3,33%	60,00%	7,41%
Agree	19,05%	26,67%		37,04%
Strongly Agree		3,33%		3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q23	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
23. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations				
from professional poker players?				
Strongly Disagree	19,05%	16,67%	20,00%	11,11%
Disagree	38,10%	30,00%	40,00%	62,96%
Not sure/I don´t know	19,05%	20,00%	40,00%	14,81%
Agree	23,81%	33,33%		11,11%
Strongly Agree				
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**

	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q24	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
24. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations				
from other members within the online poker community?				
Strongly Disagree	19,05%	20,00%	20,00%	18,52%
Disagree	33,33%	53,33%	20,00%	51,85%
Not sure/I don´t know	23,81%	10,00%	40,00%	18,52%
Agree	23,81%	16,67%	20,00%	11,11%
Strongly Agree				
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q25	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
25. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from				
friends and family?				
Strongly Disagree	9,52%	13,33%	20,00%	22,22%
Disagree	14,29%	36,67%	60,00%	25,93%
Not sure/I don´t know	28,57%	13,33%	20,00%	11,11%
Agree	47,62%	36,67%		37,04%
Strongly Agree				3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q26	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
26. In your own opinion, which of the following best describes your personal involvement within				
the online poker community?				
I do not spend much time playing poker online and I seldom communicate with other members within the community = T		3,33%	40,00%	40,74%
I do not spend much time playing poker online but I frequently communicate with other members within the community = M	14,29%	6,67%	40,00%	14,81%
I spend much time playing poker online but I seldom communicate with other members within the community = D	14,29%	83,33%		40,74%
I spend much time playing poker online and I frequently communicate with other members within the community = I	71,43%	6,67%	20,00%	3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Q27	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)				
Nothing	6,15%	9,09%	10,00%	14,75%
Food (both regular and fast food)	21,54%	20,78%	10,00%	14,75%
Snack (e.g. chips, nuts, cookies)	23,08%	18,18%	30,00%	18,03%

	Insider	Devotee	Mingler	Tourist
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	26,15%	31,17%	20,00%	29,51%
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	7,69%	11,69%	20,00%	11,48%
Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)	15,38%	9,09%	10,00%	11,48%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**
	Insider	**Devotee**	**Mingler**	**Tourist**
Q28	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**	**Percentage**
28. In which category does your monthly disposable income in US dollars ($) best fit?				
Below $500	38,10%	43,33%	60,00%	62,96%
$500-$999	23,81%	23,33%		11,11%
$1,000-$1,999	14,29%	13,33%	20,00%	11,11%
$2,000-$2,999	14,29%	6,67%	20,00%	11,11%
$3,000-$3,999	4,76%			
$4,000+	4,76%	13,33%		3,70%
Total	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**	**100,00%**

Appendix 3

Overall empirical results of the study

1. Age?		
18-20	**25**	**30,12%**
21-25	24	28,92%
26-30	15	18,07%
31-35	15	18,07%
36-40	3	3,61%
41-45	0	0,00%
46-50	1	1,20%
51-55	0	0,00%
56-60	0	0,00%
Over 60	0	0,00%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,41	
Standard Dev.	1,30	
Variance	1,68	
2. Gender?		
Female	1	1,20%
Male	**82**	**98,80%**
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	1,99	
Standard Dev.	0,11	
Variance	0,01	
3. Marital status?		
Married	14	16,87%
Engaged	7	8,43%
Living with someone	16	19,28%
Single	**46**	**55,42%**
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,13	
Standard Dev.	1,15	
Variance	1,31	
4. Nationality?		
Australia	1	1,20%
Belgium	2	2,41%
Canada	7	8,43%
Denmark	1	1,20%
Egypt	1	1,20%

Gibraltar	1	1,20%
Iceland	**43**	**51,81%**
India	1	1,20%
Netherlands	1	1,20%
Poland	1	1,20%
Republic of Korea	1	1,20%
South Africa	1	1,20%
Sweden	1	1,20%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	6	7,23%
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2,41%
United States of America	12	14,46%
Yugoslavia	1	1,20%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	98,57	
Standard Dev.	51,75	
Variance	2678,13	

5. Current country of residence?		
Australia	1	1,20%
Belgium	2	2,41%
Canada	7	8,43%
Denmark	3	3,61%
Egypt	1	1,20%
Gibraltar	1	1,20%
Iceland	**41**	**49,40%**
South Africa	1	1,20%
Spain	1	1,20%
Sweden	2	2,41%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	6	7,23%
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2,41%
United States of America	15	18,07%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	100,30	
Standard Dev.	53,96	
Variance	2911,24	

6. Highest level of completed education?		
Elementary school	2	2,41%
High school	24	28,92%
College	27	32,53%
University (undergraduate degree: Bachelor or equivalent)	**28**	**33,73%**
University (postgraduate degree: Master, PhD or equivalent)	2	2,41%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,05	
Standard Dev.	0,91	

Variance	0,83	
7. Current employment status?		
Student	32	38,55%
Unemployed	5	6,02%
General employee	**36**	**43,37%**
Own my own business	7	8,43%
Professional (e.g. athlete/actor/artist/musician)	3	3,61%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,33	
Standard Dev.	1,18	
Variance	1,39	
8. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for why you started playing poker online?		
Recommendation by friend or family member	20	24,10%
Advertising and promotion	2	2,41%
Televised coverage of poker tournaments	9	10,84%
Seeking thrill and excitement	16	19,28%
Interested in learning the game	**36**	**43,37%**
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,55	
Standard Dev.	1,62	
Variance	2,64	
9. Which of the following best describes your personal motivation for continuing playing poker online?		
I play poker online to meet other poker players and enthusiasts	0	0,00%
I simply like playing poker for fun	20	24,10%
I wanted to improve my understanding of the game	9	10,84%
I wanted to improve my poker playing skills	**36**	**43,37%**
I only play poker online for money	18	21,69%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,63	
Standard Dev.	1,08	
Variance	1,16	
10. For how long have you been playing poker online?		
Less than 1 month	1	1,20%
1 to 6 months	12	14,46%
7 to 12 months	13	15,66%
More than 12 months	**57**	**68,67%**
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,52	
Standard Dev.	0,79	
Variance	0,62	

11. How many hours on average do you spend playing poker online?		
Less than 2 hours per week	9	10,84%
2 hours per week	26	31,33%
2 hours per day	**30**	**36,14%**
More than 2 hours per day	18	21,69%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,69	
Standard Dev.	0,94	
Variance	0,88	

12. How many hours on average do you spend learning about poker (e.g. read books on poker, watch poker on television)		
Less than 1 hour per week	21	25,30%
1 hour per week	**30**	**36,14%**
1 hour per day	17	20,48%
More than 1 hour per day	15	18,07%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,31	
Standard Dev.	1,05	
Variance	1,10	

13. How frequently do you communicate with other members of the online poker community (for example; participating in chat rooms, forums, discussion boards etc.)?		
Never	**35**	**42,17%**
Once a week	17	20,48%
Several times a week	20	24,10%
Once a day or more	11	13,25%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,08	
Standard Dev.	1,10	
Variance	1,20	

14. How frequently do you socialize with other members of the online poker community (for example; participate in poker tournaments, attend poker tournaments as audience, meet to play poker for fun)?		
Never	**30**	**36,14%**
Once a month	23	27,71%
Several times a month	14	16,87%
Once a week or more	16	19,28%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,19	
Standard Dev.	1,13	
Variance	1,28	

15. I offer advice and/or recommend important features/tactics of the game to other members of the online poker community?		
Never	**44**	**53,01%**
Once a month	16	19,28%

Several times a month	12	14,46%
Once a week or more	11	13,25%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	1,88	
Standard Dev.	1,10	
Variance	1,20	

16. I try to influence how other members of the online poker community play poker online, by giving advice and recommendations (for example; where to play, if to play for free or play for money)?		
I strongly disagree	19	22,89%
I disagree	10	12,05%
Not sure/I don´t know	23	27,71%
I agree	**25**	**30,12%**
I strongly agree	6	7,23%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,87	
Standard Dev.	1,28	
Variance	1,63	

17. Playing poker online is more important than the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?		
Strongly Disagree	5	6,02%
Disagree	18	21,69%
Not sure/I don´t know	**28**	**33,73%**
Agree	16	19,28%
Strongly Agree	16	19,28%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	3,24	
Standard Dev.	1,17	
Variance	1,38	

18. Playing poker online is equally important as the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?		
Strongly Disagree	13	15,66%
Disagree	24	28,92%
Not sure/I don´t know	**29**	**34,94%**
Agree	16	19,28%
Strongly Agree	1	1,20%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,61	
Standard Dev.	1,01	
Variance	1,02	

19. Playing poker online is less important than the social interaction with other members within the online poker community?		
Strongly Disagree	17	20,48%
Disagree	17	20,48%
Not sure/I don´t know	**32**	**38,55%**

Agree	15	18,07%
Strongly Agree	2	2,41%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,61	
Standard Dev.	1,08	
Variance	1,17	

20. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?		
Strongly Disagree	9	10,84%
Disagree	31	37,35%
Not sure/I don´t know	8	9,64%
Agree	**33**	**39,76%**
Strongly Agree	2	2,41%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,86	
Standard Dev.	1,14	
Variance	1,30	

21. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from other members within the online poker community (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?		
Strongly Disagree	9	10,84%
Disagree	24	28,92%
Not sure/I don´t know	16	19,28%
Agree	**31**	**37,35%**
Strongly Agree	3	3,61%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,94	
Standard Dev.	1,12	
Variance	1,25	

22. How I play poker online is influenced by opinions and recommendations from friends and family (for example; where I play, if I play for free or play for money)?		
Strongly Disagree	15	18,07%
Disagree	**34**	**40,96%**
Not sure/I don´t know	10	12,05%
Agree	22	26,51%
Strongly Agree	2	2,41%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,54	
Standard Dev.	1,14	
Variance	1,30	

23. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from professional poker players?		
Strongly Disagree	13	15,66%
Disagree	**36**	**43,37%**

Segmenting online communities

Not sure/I don´t know	16	19,28%
Agree	18	21,69%
Strongly Agree	0	0,00%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,47	
Standard Dev.	1,00	
Variance	1,01	

24. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from other members within the online poker community?

Strongly Disagree	16	19,28%
Disagree	**38**	**45,78%**
Not sure/I don´t know	15	18,07%
Agree	14	16,87%
Strongly Agree	0	0,00%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,33	
Standard Dev.	0,98	
Variance	0,95	

25. The choice of products and services I buy is influenced by opinions and recommendations from friends and family?

Strongly Disagree	13	15,66%
Disagree	24	28,92%
Not sure/I don´t know	14	16,87%
Agree	**31**	**37,35%**
Strongly Agree	1	1,20%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,80	
Standard Dev.	1,15	
Variance	1,31	

26. In your own opinion, which of the following best describes your personal involvement within the online poker community?

I do not spend much time playing poker online and I seldom communicate with other members within the community	14	16,87%
I do not spend much time playing poker online but I frequently communicate with other members within the community	11	13,25%
I spend much time playing poker online but I seldom communicate with other members within the community	**39**	**46,99%**
I spend much time playing poker online and I frequently communicate with other members within the community	19	22,89%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,76	
Standard Dev.	0,99	
Variance	0,99	

27. While playing poker online, what do you usually consume? (Tick all options that apply!)

Nothing	21	9,86%

Food (both regular and fast food)	40	18,78%
Snack (e.g. chips, nuts, cookies)	43	20,19%
Non-alcoholic beverages (e.g. water, coffee, soft drink, energy drink)	**61**	**28,64%**
Alcoholic beverages (e.g. beer, wine, spirit)	23	10,80%
Nicotine (cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, oral tobacco, pharmaceutical)	25	11,74%
Total	**213**	**100%**
Mean	3,47	
Standard Dev.	1,47	
Variance	2,15	
28. In which category does your monthly disposable income in US dollars ($) best fit?		
Below $500	**41**	**49,40%**
$500-$999	15	18,07%
$1,000-$1,999	11	13,25%
$2,000-$2,999	9	10,84%
$3,000-$3,999	1	1,20%
$4,000+	6	7,23%
Total	**83**	**100%**
Mean	2,18	
Standard Dev.	1,52	
Variance	2,32	