Social Responsibility in a wicked world

An exploratory discussion on how the video game industry can exponentially impact society for the better

by

Anatole M. Questel
Danielle Olivio Catarucci

June 2022

Master's Programme in Management

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the video game industry, taking video game studios as the main subjects. The aim was to understand the perceived importance of implementing CSR initiatives within businesses and to ascertain the current state of the industry in regard to the subject. A review of the literature was conducted in order to comprehend the various definitions and frameworks developed in relation to CSR, as well as to find a practical approach to their implementation. Likewise, an overview of the industry itself was put forth in order to understand its reach and various dimensions. In order to be able to collect relevant quantitative and qualitative data, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were developed using a multi-mixed-method approach. Additionally, the secondary data collection contributed to the study by compiling a sample of collaborations and CSR reports from key players within the industry. In total, 46 video game studio employees answered the questionnaire, and three individuals in managerial positions were interviewed. From this, the research found that most of the participants understand the importance of CSR, the potential the industry has, and the value it could generate if implemented correctly. Additionally, some of the respondents have some ideas on how these initiatives could be implemented and help towards the betterment of society, although mainly focused on environmental and social aspects. Despite this, it was found that although there exists a rising awareness and momentum towards sustainability, the industry is still relatively new to the implementation of CSR, and the main challenges associated with it come mainly from economic factors, as well as the difficulty to monitor the results and understand their impact in practice.

Key words: corporate social responsibility, video game industry, sustainability, value-creation, wicked world.

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

3C-SR	Commitments, Connections, Consistency of Social Resources
AR	Augmented Reality
CON	Concentric Circles
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
F2P	Free to Play
GaaS	Game as a Service
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
P2P	Pay to Play
PC	Personal Computer
RQ	Research Question
SaaS	Software as a Service
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VR	Virtual Reality

List of Terminologies

Gamers/Users	End-customer of the video game industry
Players	Companies within the industry
Researchers	The authors of the thesis (Anatole Questel and Danielle Olivio Catarucci)
Wicked Problem	Problems with many interdependent factors that makes them seem impossible to solve.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

It is widely accepted that the Industrial Revolution was one of the most important turning points for human civilization, as the creation of steam engines "allowed us to overcome the limitations of muscle power, human and animal, and generate massive amounts of useful energy at will" (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014, p.10). These accomplishments led to the development of numerous industries and the start of mass production and transportation, the first proper inflection point of the globalized and today's today's modern society. Shortly thereafter, starting towards the end of the 19th century until the 1930s, the implementation of general-purpose technologies such as electricity, the telephone, refrigeration, cars and airplanes, further accelerated the societal and economic growth of our modern society. However, it would not be until the latter part of the 20th century, with the creation of the first computers and digital artifacts, that society would become truly global, a new turning point where people started relying on machines not only for mechanical automation but also for mental power (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

In this context, the rise of social media and information technology created a trend of global awareness within the masses, generating momentum towards sustainability, with "issues such as climate change, income inequality, health care disparities, unfair labor practices, and gender inequity" (Stobierski, 2021). Additionally, new legislation aiming to comply with societal needs for a better social, economic and environmental world put unprecedented pressure on businesses all around the world to not only implement but also embrace sustainable practices for all the stakeholders involved (Carroll et al., 1991). The term coined for these types of practices and initiatives within the business world was Corporate Social Responsibility, also known as CSR.

The concept of CSR has become increasingly popular in the last 50 years (Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir & Davídsdóttir, 2019), becoming a buzzword of sorts with no overarching definition, and is still a widely discussed subject. One of the reasons for this extensive debate regarding the topic is due to the fact that it encompasses a few key aspects of business that are largely subjective to public perception, such as the responsibility to take action or not, besides the amount of money invested by organizations worldwide as a response from new mandatory legislations (Sheehy, 2015). Moreover, in the context of a globalized and complex society, some problems that corporations, governments and the population have to face have become wicked, i.e., interdependent and without a clear solution or ending point, requiring collaborative efforts in order to be tackled (Camillus, 2008). Hence, this research stands by the point of view that Corporate Social Responsibility is a needed aspect of any business and that companies can indeed have a positive impact on the world by attempting to solve wicked issues.

More specifically, this research aims to focus the study of CSR on an industry that, although recent in nature, has successfully been able to become part of the life of 2.7 billion people, overtaking the movie and music industries' revenue (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021). As one of the by-products of the technological jump, the video game industry - previously characterized by board, card and dice games - transcended the virtual world, making them the candidate for the most influential and "fastest-growing media platform in the world"

(Patterson & Barratt, 2019, p.28). Furthermore, this industry also has considerable influence in the creation of new technologies that can influence and potentially transform the way we will live and work in the future, especially when considering the influence it has among younger generations (Newzoo, 2021). Taking these points into consideration, the video game industry was chosen as the main focus of the study because of (1) its novelty where modern solutions are sought after, (2) its reach and growth, positioning them as one of today's biggest industries, and (3) its influence on the development of new technologies that impact modern society.

Furthermore, despite its potential and obvious impact on society, few academic and non-academic articles discuss how the industry can contribute to today's wicked problems and how CSR can be used in their context. With the amount of influence the industry has coupled with the extremely innovative environment it finds itself lodged in, and the raising awareness for a sustainable future amongst its end users (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021), the researchers believe that the industry, specifically video game studios, could become role models in and outside of their market. Additionally, as a relatively young industry its potential to incorporate CSR in its strategy can be proven more effective when compared to other industries that have been established for much longer. With these ideas in mind, the authors perceive that an exploration of the status of CSR within the video game industry, alongside an insight into the potential challenges these companies might find along the way, could be of interest.

1.2   Problem Statement

The topic of CSR has gained the spotlight in recent years, with a company's responsibilities shifting from being solely focused on profits to also taking part in initiatives previously considered to be the governments' duty (Friedman, 1970). This can be related to the rise of many interconnected issues faced by society nowadays and the ever-growing awareness and momentum towards sustainability initiatives. For this reason, businesses have had to become more innovative in how they can become part of the solution to today's wicked problems (Van Berkel & Manickam, 2020), a task that has, depending on the context and impact of the company, become part of a change management process that needs to be addressed urgently (Kotter et al., 1995).

From this perspective, being part of the technology and entertainment realms, the video game industry falls prey to many controversies. On one hand, its technological aspect positions the industry as one of the most influential ones regarding innovations that could potentially transform the way people live in the future. However, this also puts video games on the spot regarding the many problems the technology faces, such as its massive energy consumption, high carbon emissions (Farmbrough, 2021), and its male dominance (Prescott & Bogg, 2011). On the other hand, its entertainment nature makes it harder to determine a limit where addiction and other detrimental behaviors are not encouraged by the games without repercussions in the business growth and financials.

For this reason, the researchers see CSR as a highly important topic for the context and strategy of video games organizations, and this thesis takes the perspective that the video game industry, specifically video game studios, have the potential to become a driving force for sustainability and socially responsible initiatives, while also driving a sustainable growth in the industry by abiding to the increasing demand of socially responsible actions from its users (Kelly, Schuler

& Johnson, 2021). Furthermore, little to no research has been done about CSR within the context of video games. Most of the studies focus relies on the controversies or negative sides of the industry, and almost none has been argued about the potential video games have to influence positively new generations to come, notwithstanding the staggering influence and reach (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021) of the sector, especially amongst the youngers (Newzoo, 2021).

1.3   Purpose and Research Questions

Taking the concepts elaborated in the background and the problem statement, the purpose of this thesis is to:

- explore CSR frameworks within the context of the video game industry;
- give an overview of what the industry understands by CSR;
- explore what video game studios are doing, or can do, concerning CSR.

With this in mind, the study focuses on video game studios and aims to answer the following two research questions:

RQ1: How do video game studio employees perceive the importance of CSR initiatives?

RQ2: What type of socially responsible initiatives can video game studios implement?

Furthermore, since CSR is a concept with many applications depending on the context in question (Geva, 2008), an overview of the industry and its dynamics was deemed necessary for the reader to grasp the video games setting within modern society.

1.4   Delimitations

First, the thesis is delimited to explore the topic of CSR within the premises of *video game studios* specifically, instead of generalizing the topic for the whole industry, which can include hardware manufacturers and publishers, amongst others. Second, although the thesis gives a brief overview of the video game industry, it was not the intention of the authors to dive into the technicalities of the games, nor to discuss all the nuances of the business. Rather, a brief overview is given to contextualize the topic of CSR within the industry. Third, the thesis does not intend to prove any particular CSR theory or model, but rather takes an explorative approach to the concept. Lastly, it is out of the scope of this research paper to conduct in-depth discussions on the controversies related to video games, such as the effect some genres might have on misbehaviors or addiction subjects, which are recurring topics in other studies regarding the industry.

1.5   Outline of the Thesis

The second chapter is dedicated to presenting the methodology used and clarifying the data collection and analysis methods pursued in this research. Thereafter, the concept of

Corporate Social Responsibility is introduced, as well as the most known frameworks which are used in literature to describe it. Furthermore, the fourth chapter presents a comprehensive explanation of the video game industry itself, presenting how it works and the most common dimensions within it. Moving to the fifth chapter, the collected data is presented and analyzed from a broad perspective, preparing it for the discussion introduced in the sixth chapter, where conclusions are inferred from the findings of how CSR can be related to video games. Lastly, the seventh chapter is devoted to reflections on the whole research, where the main findings and opportunities for further investigation are presented.

2   Methodology

Taking into consideration the Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) and other literature regarding research methods, this chapter aims to provide information on how this study was designed and conducted in accordance to the purpose and research questions of the thesis.

2.1   Research Approach and Design

Considering the numerous definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility found in the literature, this research starts with the selection of a set of theoretical CSR frameworks to base the data collection and analysis. Hence, the thesis starts by mainly applying a *deductive* approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009), where the data is used, to some extent, to explore the validity of these frameworks within the video game industry. However, considering the many applications CSR has depending on the context of the company (Geva, 2008), this research did not disregard the *inductive* approach where applicable, which entails observing specific phenomena (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) that could help to further understand the topic.

Furthermore, given the novelty of CSR within the chosen industry and the reasons just mentioned above, the research aims to contribute and build on existing knowledge by exploring and describing CSR and its applicability in the video game industry. As Sekaran and Bougie (2016) describes, both approaches are particularly relevant when "not much is known about a particular phenomenon" (p. 43) and when it is needed to "[t]hink systematically about aspects in [a] given situation" (p. 44), respectively.

Bearing this in mind, the deductive approach at the start of this research suggests the collection of quantitative data, although the inductive approach - combined with the exploratory and descriptive nature of the thesis - indicates the necessity of gathering qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). According to Steckler et al. (1992), this combination of data types elevates the results and discussion of the research, since qualitative information can add more depth to the discussion, with details and abstract ideas behind the numbers, while the quantitative approach offers more reliable and straightforward conclusions. Understanding this, and in order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, a combination of both survey and semi-structured interviews was found to be adequate for the study of the topic at hand.

To do so, the strategy chosen by the authors was to integrate different sources of information,by combining the survey and interviews with data from secondary sources (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009), enriching the empirical data that could be collected within the time horizon of the thesis. From this, the research follows a *multi-method* approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Furthermore, considering that qualitative and quantitative data are part of the research, a *mixed-method* approach was also found to be more adequate for the thesis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, it can be said the research follows a *multi-mixed* method.

Lastly, another factor to take into account was that the research was conducted under the time constraints of the master's program, meaning the authors had approximately two months to

complete it. Hence, considering the differences between a longitudinal and cross-sectional study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009), this thesis adheres to a cross-sectional approach, where data is collected in a specific period of time - three weeks.

2.2   Data Collection

The three different sources used to collect the data in the research are described below, as well as the sampling method.

2.2.1   Primary Data

As the purpose of this research relies on an exploratory and descriptive approach, Sekaran and Bougie (2016) defends that questionnaires (or surveys) are perceived as a good instrument to collect data across different demographic contexts, which can be compared at a later date. Hence, a **questionnaire** (conducted through an online survey) was elaborated as one of the methods for primary data collection, with the aim to explore video game studio employees' opinions regarding how their companies, and the video game industry overall, can actively contribute to solving today's complex problems. The questions, listed in Appendix A, were designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data by taking into consideration the various dimensions of CSR, such as the responsibilities described in Carroll's CSR Pyramid and the concentric-circles model, or the dimensions of environment, society and economy described by Shayan et al. (2022) model.

Besides the questionnaires, in order to gain further insights and in-depth information that could prove valuable to answer the research questions, **semi-structured interviews** were conducted online, via the Zoom platform, focused on individuals with managerial roles within the video game industry. The questions, listed in Appendix B, complement the ones in the questionnaire, while also aiming to discuss the business challenges associated with CSR initiatives and how these are perceived inside the company they work, giving additional depth to details that tend to be lost with questionnaire approaches. The interview questions developed were based on the same CSR theoretical frameworks used for the questionnaire. Additionally, considering the variety of backgrounds of the interviewees and the companies they worked for, the need to have a conversation flow and flexible interview design was needed, which characterizes the idea behind the authors' choice to conduct these in a semi-structured manner (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

2.2.2   Secondary Data

Despite the traditional motive of offering a knowledge overview of the theories on which the research is based on (Snyder, 2019), the topic (CSR) and context (video games) chosen for this thesis required further contextualization of the video game industry in order to be relevant for the study. Therefore, in order to reach a holistic understanding of it, a literature review was conducted to introduce the main aspects of the video game industry (section 4), with a focus on positioning the video game studios in it and its main concerns. Furthermore, in order to complement the comprehension of the sector and to better understand the collaborative and consistency dimensions of CSR (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006) (discussed in chapter

3), secondary data (Heaton, 2008) was gathered regarding a sample of CSR initiatives and CSR reports from major video game studios in the industry.

2.2.3   Sampling Method

In order to tend to the requirements of this research, all the while considering the time limitations associated with it, the candidates for the questionnaire and interviews were defined based on *quota* and *self-selection* methods, which fall within the non-random sampling category (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Hence, a candidate base was constructed considering video game studios with operations (or offices) in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Canada. The sample can be further categorized into two main groups: (1) individuals working in managerial positions - mainly selected for interviews; and (2) people working at other levels of the selected companies. Moreover, in accordance with the research purpose, roles related to CSR, operations, finance and game development (e.g. developers, programmers, artists) were prioritized in the selection.

In practice, 156 managers and 140 non-managerial employees were reached out to through the LinkedIn platform, besides the participation of the researchers in a video game development event in Malmö, on April 28th, that involved over 200 people. As a result of the sampling, three managers were interviewed and 46 answers were received in the questionnaire.

2.3   Data Analysis

The data collected for the research can be classified as qualitative, mainly from the combination of both the results of the interviews and secondary data, and as quantitative from the questionnaire applied. This approach implies a need for different methodologies in order to analyze the information collected and present the results, and these are briefly described below.

Qualitative Data

As defended by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the data analysis process for qualitative data is concerned with how the information can be used to draw inferences and conclusions, which can be guaranteed by following three steps: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. In the context of this research, qualitative data means "data in the form of words" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 332). Hence, the first step is to reduce, rearrange and categorize the data collected, taking into consideration the theories and frameworks behind the study, in order to simplify the amount of data to be analyzed. Furthermore, in regards to the second step which tackles how the data should be best presented, the main points should be highlighted in a way to give the basis for the last step, which consists of interpreting, discussing and drawing conclusions.

Quantitative Data

Similarly, the analysis of quantitative data also follows a three-step approach: preparing the data, understanding it, and drawing conclusions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Although quite similar to the process of qualitative analysis, the quantitative steps involve different concerns regarding the validity and quality of the information collected. Therefore, the preparation

step consists of coding, editing and transforming the data so that the information collected can be used and error propagation avoided. The second step consists of presenting the data in different ways, besides investigating relationships, dispersion patterns and biases. As is the case with qualitative analysis, this second step is a way to give the basis for the last step, which consists of interpreting and discussing the data.

2.3.1   Applying the Methods

In the context of the questionnaire, most of the information collected can be understood as quantitative. More specifically, according to the design of the questions, most of the answers are described in a nominal or ordinal scale, which allowed the categorization and display of the results to be done in a rather simplistic way, using the structure based on the theoretical frameworks and by taking advantage of bar charts and tables. By contrast, the data collected from the interviews is entirely qualitative, which means following the procedure of summarizing the key points, categorizing them according to the theoretical frameworks and displaying them in a tabular format. The same goes for the secondary data displayed, with the difference that a more descriptive display, combined with tables, was chosen.

All things considered, the steps described so far, equivalent to the first and second steps of the quantitative and qualitative analysis, are presented in chapter 5 and were conducted in a separate manner depending on the source and type of data. However, the last step, presented in chapter 6, is where the data collected is interdependently utilized to discuss and answer the research questions of this thesis.

2.4   Data quality

When discussing data quality within research, many academics and researchers discuss which principles should and should not be included in the methodology. Many authors have reformulated, operationalized and adapted the quantitative research criteria for qualitative research in the following way: objectivity, reliability, validity and utilization (Steinke, 2004). These criteria are meant to help determine whether the researcher's efforts in the data collection were successful or lacking.

Objectivity: criterion that ensures that the research findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the researcher's bias and preferences (Shenton, 2004).

The data that was collected, analyzed and interpreted throughout the research is presented with integrity by the researchers. The information collected throughout the interviews and questionnaire is presented clearly in order to understand the process the researchers went through in the discussion.

Validity and Reliability: ensuring that the research is measuring or looking at what is intended, as well as the implementation of control measures throughout the study (Shenton, 2004).

Thanks to the constant communication between both the authors, other researchers and the research supervisor, the validity and reliability of the research could be evaluated multiple times in order to guarantee a standardized approach to it, despite the complexity and dynamics of the

chosen topic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Additionally, a schedule was elaborated by the researchers in order to keep track of progress and keep the research within the scope of the time horizon and data collection norms.

Utilization: also referred to as transferability, is concerned with how the study can be utilized in other contexts (Shenton, 2004).

By giving the reader and potential researcher the background information (presented in chapter 1) and the theoretical framework in chapter 3, the researchers have given room for any future research to be undertaken by just replacing the current 'industry overview' with any other they might seem of interest.

Due to the explorative nature of this present paper, however, an additional set of criteria was also discussed: triangulation, validation of the interview-situation, and authenticity.

Triangulation: use of complementary theories and methods to avoid a one-sided perspective and bias on the subject at hand (Steinke, 2004).

The researchers were able to take into account various theories and perspectives throughout both the qualitative and quantitative data collection. The holistic overview of both the theoretical framework and industry decreases the possibility of potential biases within the research.

Validation of the interview-situation: interviews and sequencing are analyzed with regard to whether the interviewees are talking 'truthfully' (Steinke, 2004).

This criterion can be met by assessing the roles of both the interviewees and the researchers, in order to find out if these have any professional or personal relationship. From this perspective, the data sampling process described before asserted that none of the participants had any type of relationship with the researchers prior to the research.

Authenticity: to ensure that the data gathered is genuine and has not been tampered with (Zhang, Chen & Sandhu, 2005).

By following the processes of both data collection and analysis, the authors were able to appropriately determine the authenticity of both the primary and secondary data utilized throughout the research.

2.5   Limitations

Considering that the research, first and foremost, is within the realm of management, many of the collected and analyzed data are subjective to "feelings, emotions, attitudes, and perceptions" (p. 27) which makes it impossible for the research to be 100% scientific (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, the choices associated with the research design present a high probability of introducing biases in the data collected that could be carried out to the discussion and conclusions of the research.

In regards to the sampling process, which followed mainly the *quota* and *self-selection* methods, the concerns are related mainly to geography and company biases. First, the country selection considered only developed countries, with high socio-economic standards, that are relatively mature in regard to sustainability practices. Second, the interviews and questionnaire were

directed to video game studios, which constitute only part of the entire ecosystem of the video game industry. Moreover, within the specified countries, a minority of the companies available could be determined as major players in the video game market. Most of them constitute small and medium companies.

Furthermore, taking into account the choice of conducting a questionnaire (online survey), the sampling biases described above could be reinforced by the profiles that, in practice, answered the questions. As Sekaran and Bougie (2016) discusses, some individuals might present a bigger likelihood of answering an online questionnaire than others. The same issues, to some extent, are also valid for the semi-structured interviews. On one hand, there might be bias related to those who chose to do the interviews, and on the other hand, semi-structured interviews are an intrusive process that might touch on topics that can be more sensible for some interviewees than others (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In any case, the biggest concern of this study regarding the interviews relies on the sample size considered to generalize the findings.

Lastly, biases associated with the researchers should be considered, given the subjectivity of the study and its exploratory nature, such as group thinking and confirmation bias. In order to avoid both of these situations, the authors conducted an extensive literature review regarding the industry and the topic of CSR, besides always trying to take advantage of their different backgrounds and life journey when interpreting the results and discussing the findings.

2.6   Chapter Summary

This chapter serves the purpose of outlining the research methodology that is utilized throughout this research. A multi-mixed method with both deductive and inductive approaches was used to combine the primary data from the semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and secondary data from the literature review. Additionally, the research follows a cross-sectional approach due to the time limitations of the thesis itself. Moreover, the data collection and data analysis methods are discussed, as well as the quality and limitations that came with them.

3   Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to present the theoretical base for this thesis. It first explores the history and the definitions of CSR, then it presents frameworks developed over time and how they relate to this study.

3.1   Defining Corporate Social Responsibility

The idea that businesses need to hold a responsibility towards society dates back to the nineteenth-century (Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir & Davídsdóttir, 2019), but only started to gain momentum in the 1950s, when the concept of social responsibility started to be discussed on a recurrent basis by theorists and academics alike. One of the biggest contributors to this phenomenon was Howard Bowen, who published the book "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" in 1953. In his manuscript, he defines social responsibility as:

> *The obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society. (Bowen, 1953, p. 6)*

However, as the definition made by Bowen and by many others that came after his work, social responsibility - later known as corporate social responsibility (CSR) - remains still on an abstract level, without a clear understanding of to which extent companies should be accountable for society problems (Carroll, 2008).

As defended by many researchers, the premise behind the concept of social responsibility relates to the already complicated and subjective topic of business ethics, which evaluates what is right or wrong in the decision-making process of a company (Ferrell et al., 2019). As mentioned by Werhane and Freeman (1999), "[a]t the level of popular culture, capitalism and business are often identified with a 'no holds barred' or 'anything goes' kind of action" (p. 2), which implies that businesses tend to look at ethics with mistrust, and society to see businesses as amoral. Additionally, Werhane and Freeman (1999) also mentions that "the process of integrating and applying ethical standards to management practices appears to be difficult because economic goals and exigencies often seem to override other considerations" (p. 2). Determining what is morally correct, from a business perspective, is as complex as the nature of ethics itself and, in practice, unethical decisions tend to occur from any organizational level (Lewis, 1985).

Taking this into account, corporate social responsibility can be visualized as a process of decision-making in which managers are expected to "fully examine the potential social impact of their decisions before the fact" (Jones, 1980, p.65). Although this definition clarifies the concept of CSR, follow up questions regarding a couple of factors surface: how can one predict the impact of the decision, and whom will it affect? Taking into consideration the complex nature of today's society, this task is considered to be nearly impossible. Although most actions at the individual level will never reverberate evidently elsewhere, modern society and businesses are increasingly facing wicked issues, with no clear

boundaries or end goals to solve (Rittel & Webber, 1973), making scenario and outcome prediction virtually impossible. Furthermore, in regards to the second factor, should a company only look for the consequences to its business or should it also consider how the decisions will impact outside?

According to the primary definition of a business, a company as an institution is meant to produce goods and services in return for a profit (Carroll et al., 1991). One way of visualizing business responsibilities is to defend that businesses have a moral obligation to maximize their profits, in order to increase the company value for the shareholders (Friedman, 1970). This perspective creates one of the biggest controversies within the CSR theory, where Friedman (1970) criticizes the extent to which it is appropriate for an executive to spend the company resources (i.e. the stockholders' money) on activities of social interest with no clear return on investment for the company. According to Friedman (1970), these initiatives would imply having to spend money on causes which are ultimately the government's responsibility.

Opposing Friedman's perspectives, Freeman (2013) first and foremost reinforces that, although businesses are not people, they are made by people, for people. For this reason, Robert Edward Freeman - a philosopher known for his work on business ethics and famous for developing the stakeholder theory - argues that companies should be conscious of the impact their business has on their stakeholders because only then would they be able to do something to change society (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007). In other words, before approaching social responsibility, organizations should clearly define who their stakeholders are and how their value chain influences them (Parmar et al., 2010).

Contributing to Freeman's arguments, Lantos (2001) defends that social responsibility should be understood as an "implicit social contract between business and society" (p. 6), where the said contract has the potential to become part of the company strategy, creating a 'win-win' relationship with society. As an example, Salesforce's (a giant within the software development and CRM industry) developed its 1-1-1 Philanthropic Model, which involves giving one percent of product, one percent of equity, and one percent of employees' time to communities and the nonprofit sector. This has resulted in "more than 5 million volunteer hours, in addition to the company awarding upwards of $406 million in grants and donations to more than 40,000 nonprofit organizations and educational institutions" (Gavin, 2019). As a matter of fact, this way of perceiving CSR is not only aligned with the ideas presented by Freeman in his stakeholder's theory but also introduces Porter and Kramer (2006) concept of shared-value, which defends the point that once CSR is aligned and part of the organization's strategy in a consistent way, it can become "the firm's long-term competitiveness". In essence, Porter and Kramer (2006) explain that, in order for a successful business to thrive and expand, a society with strong and healthy programs is necessary, and vice-versa. This mutual dependence between these two entities follows the principle of what is considered to be shared-value, where choices must benefit both sides (Porter & Kramer, 2006). In other words, "organizations that make the right choices and build focused, proactive, and integrated social initiatives in concert with their core strategies" (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p.13) can differentiate themselves from their competitors, building distinctive competitive advantages for the business.

In short, one of the most important contributors to social responsibility, Archie B. Carroll (2015) summarizes that CSR is nothing more than a concept where all the interrelated and overlapping concepts discussed previously - business ethics, stakeholder theory, shared-value and others - comes together as the "centerpiece of the socially conscious business movement"

(p. 87). Although definitions of CSR may have varied through time and context since Bowen's description, its importance today is undeniable, not only from the perspective of the many wicked problems that society faces, environmentally and socially but also from the increasing amount of investments made by companies and governments around the world expecting a change.

3.2   Corporate Social Responsibility Models

As mentioned above, CSR has many definitions and perspectives that have changed over the years, becoming more complex and opening space for some controversial ideas, such as the critiques proposed by Friedman (1970). However, although this idea opposes the majority of CSR definitions, it is impossible to deny the importance of financial gains within institutions. It is so important, in fact, that it has become the base of one of the most important CSR models to date, Carroll's CSR Pyramid. In his original article, Carroll et al. (1991) mentions that business responsibilities need to be correlated with the economic responsibility of the firms since a company without capital cannot achieve anything.

Taking this into consideration, Carroll et al. (1991) developed a pyramidical model as the schematic for the four responsibilities of business, based on the ideas and concepts about CSR that he had published in 1979. The four components that he mentions companies should consider when discussing social responsibility are: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, with economic responsibilities lying as the base and the others conglomerated on top of it (see figure 1). In other words, Carroll et al. (1991) suggested the idea that companies should make a profit, obey the law, be ethical and act as good corporate citizens (Geva, 2008).

Figure 1: Carroll's CSR Pyramid (Carroll et al., 1991).
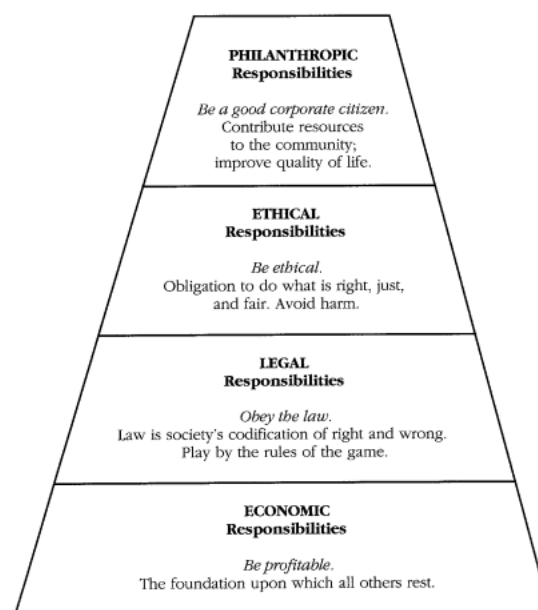
Before taking this discussion further, however, it is important to understand what Carroll meant by these responsibilities. In another article published by himself 25 years later, Carroll (2016) reviews and further discusses his original concepts. The first one of these, the economic responsibility, might seem slightly unusual, he mentions, but is there because it is expected

from organizations to have the resources and financial stability to continue operating, with the encouragement of their shareholders (Carroll, 2016). He further elaborates that businesses "create profits when they add value, and in doing this they benefit all the stakeholders of the business" (Carroll, 2016, p.3).

By legal responsibilities, (Carroll et al., 1991) indicates the need for businesses to comply with not only the 'ground-rules' established by regulatory and law enforcement institutions but also the 'fair business practices' established by society itself. However, these laws and regulations are sometimes not enough, and businesses need to push further and comply with what Carroll (2016) calls ethical responsibilities. As he defines them, these ethical responsibilities imply that unwritten norms, although not described in the law where the company operates, are expected by society (Carroll, 2016). Hence, although ethical responsibilities are closely related to their legal counterpart, due to their subjective and unstructured nature, they tend to be tricky in their implementation.

Lastly, philanthropic responsibilities are the most subjective of them all. Considering that philanthropy is a form of altruism, Carroll (2016) mentions that business-giving (as it is called in this context) "may not be a responsibility in a literal sense, but it is normally expected by businesses today and is a part of the everyday expectations of the public" (Carroll, 2016, p.4). Examples of how businesses can achieve this include: volunteering, covering employee donations, offering pro-bono services and partnering up with charitable organizations, for example.

Although this model does a good job at delineating that business corporate social responsibility comprises a few distinct components that, taken together, constitute a whole (Carroll, 2016) and portrays them hierarchically in order of importance, the model presents some setbacks. Geva (2008), in his theoretical review article, extensively analyzes the model and criticizes it by saying that "the notion of responsibility is reduced to normative restraints of responsiveness" (p. 7), implying the need of behaving sustainably rather than promoting scattered CSR initiatives. Therefore, the definition of the organizational responsibilities established by the model seemed to be restricted and narrow, and due to them being separated from each other, little to no evidence is shown on how these can be interwoven (Geva, 2008).

Accordingly, due to the arguments presented and other limiting factors of the model, further research was conducted, and a new model was developed: the concentric-circle (CON) model of CSR. Although similar in nature to Carroll's CSR Pyramid, in the sense that it considers the economic role of businesses to be the most important aspect of CSR, the CON model, apart from having different definitions for the responsibilities, also takes into account the interdependence of the various dimensions of CSR (Geva, 2008). The way these are laid out (see figure 2) exhibits an inclusive system in which every part of the inner circles are also part of the outer ones, further suggesting an outside-in and inside-out perspective that is further aligned with the strategic nature that CSR should take (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

With this in mind, the CON model redefines the dimensions of social responsibility in the following way. The economic responsibility gains the meaning of being 'constructively profitable', i.e., it should be directed towards the greater good for all stakeholders (Geva, 2008). Therefore, it not only encompasses the need for businesses to foster wealth for themselves but for society as well through the implementation of various practices. As for the legal responsibility, the CON model implies that companies should obey their legal

Figure 2: Concentric circles Model (Geva, 2008).
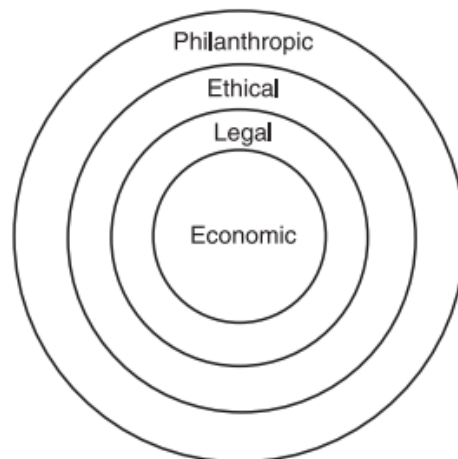
obligations, not because of the risks associated with them, but because they are "internalized as guiding standards of behavior" (Geva, 2008, p.26). Moving on to the ethical responsibility, the CON model defines this dimension of social responsibility in "terms of self-governance based on [the] internal commitment to the good of society" (Geva, 2008, p.27) and would rate it as the proactivity of a company to contribute to social issues without exploiting stakeholders or situations where the norms are not clear enough (Frederick, 2006). Finally, philanthropy within the CON model goes beyond Carroll (2016) suggestion of contributing to other institutions for specific causes, by defending that the organization should use its resources and capabilities to solve social problems (Geva, 2008). This is in stark contrast with Carroll's CSR Pyramid, which states that the philanthropic responsibility lies separate from both regular business activities and the other responsibilities mentioned above.

This helps to demonstrate that, although not completely different from Carroll's CSR Pyramid, the CON model introduces another level of relationship and complexity amongst the responsibilities. This better illustrates the role of CSR in the creation of shared-value, defended by (Porter & Kramer, 2006), and gives a better direction for managers to focus their efforts on "the improvement of social welfare" (Geva, 2008, p.33), guiding them to a more consistent attitude towards every decision made inside their companies.

Furthermore, other frameworks have been elaborated, offering different ways of illustrating CSR, besides taking the four responsibilities defined by Carroll et al. (1991). One of these frameworks is the 3C-SR model, which tries to decrease the gap between the theory and practice of CSR, and it is based on the idea of three 'social resources': "ethical and social commitments, connections with partners in the value network, and consistency of behavior over time to build trust" (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006, p.392) (see figure 3).

In essence, the first one of these elements, ethical and social commitments, refers to the "ethical standards and social objectives the organization subscribes to and are manifested in its mission, strategic objectives/programmes, organizational policies and corporate culture" (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006, p.392). Meehan, Meehan and Richards (2006) further elaborates that these commitments should be broadly based on the dimensions of Carroll's CSR Pyramid and that if not taken seriously, the corporate legitimacy of the company will most likely deteriorate (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006). The second of these 'social

Figure 3: 3C-SR Model (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006).
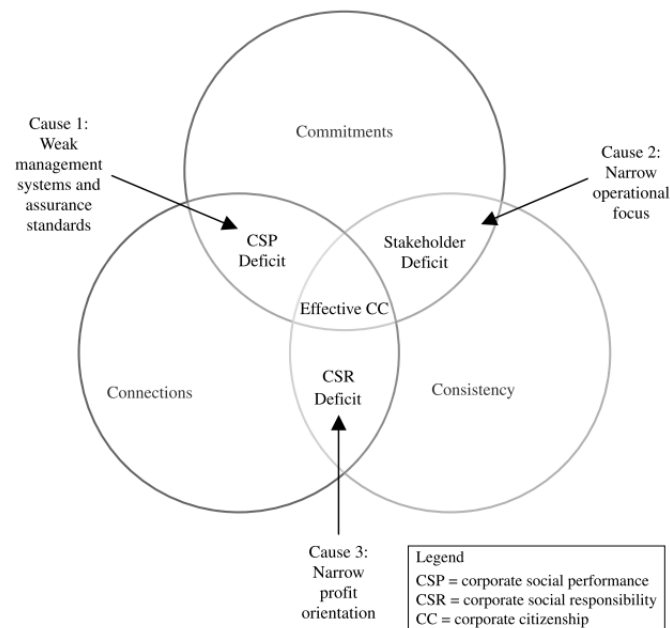
resources' explored by the 3C-SR model, connections with partners in the value network, refers to the significance of establishing value-enhancing relationships with other stakeholders. When initiating these, how "any individual organization chooses to contract or associate with, and the nature of those relationships, is key to its perceived credibility" (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006, p.394). The last of the social resources that make up the 3C-SR model, consistency of behavior, refers to, as its name implies, the business's adherence to the stated values, partnerships and operations throughout time. This resource is probably the most difficult of the three, and the source of most criticism to companies claiming to be socially responsible (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006, p.392).

It is important for this research paper, however, to take a step back from all the theoretical concepts presented so far and find a way to portray them in a feasible way for companies. To do so, the researchers have decided to integrate a framework elaborated by Shayan et al. (2022), which utilizes the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), 17 interlinked goals aiming to "stimulate action … in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet" (UN, 2015), as the basis for the implementation of CSR initiatives within companies in order to create shared value (see figure 4).

Considering the role of the UN SDGs to press corporations to take initiative towards global problems and the close relationship between the concepts of CSR and the aim of the SDGs, (Shayan et al., 2022) goes on to say that "SDGs can serve as a reliable agenda in a continuously changing and unpredictable world" (Shayan et al., 2022, p.10). In other words, Shayan et al. (2022) defends that these SDGs offer a practical framework where goals are defined and accepted by the whole world, therefore also benefiting the corporation itself. Furthermore, besides encompassing all the previously mentioned models, it also gives businesses trying to implement CSR initiatives the guidelines for reaching them, which, in turn, would generate a positive cycle of value creation for both the business and its related stakeholders. Additionally, it would also contribute to sustainable resource management,

where the stakeholders involved and the environment surrounding the company could thrive together with the business over time (Shayan et al., 2022).

Figure 4: Shayan et al. (2022) model for CSR.
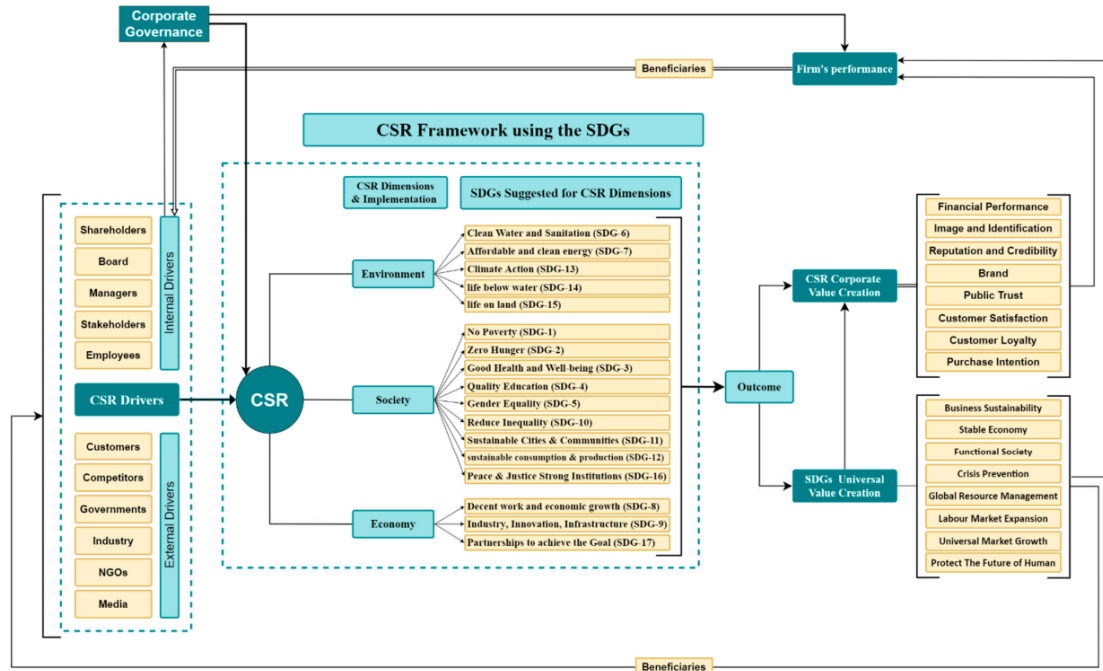
3.2.1   Outcome of the Frameworks

Taking the researchers' understanding on the frameworks presented above, the responsibilities described by Carroll's CSR Pyramid, the CON model, and the UN SDGs practical approach to CSR, all intersect and exemplify the *commitments* dimension of CSR. Furthermore, aligned with Porter and Kramer (2006) ideas, in order to create shared-value and include CSR in the strategy of the company, an organization needs to seek the best way to create results in a *consistent* manner, which can be done by taking actions by itself or by exploring *collaborations* with other institutions. Taking this into consideration, the four frameworks presented in the previous section are used complementarily in the thesis as a starting point to conduct the data collection, analysis and discussion of CSR within the video game industry, especially when exploring the three different dimensions proposed by Meehan, Meehan and Richards (2006).

3.3   Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the main frameworks constructed around CSR, with both theoretical and practical connotations. Due to the subjective nature of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, a historical and philosophical definition of the concept is portrayed, in order to give the reader a broader understanding of the concept and its change through time. Furthermore, Carroll's CSR Pyramid and the four dimensions it encompasses are outlined and described in order to understand the fundamental pillars of the other models explored later: the CON and 3C-SR models. These two models are highlighted as 'optimized' models

of Carroll's CSR Pyramid in order to identify the original model's limitations and discrepancies. Lastly, the recently found practical relationship between the CSR models and the UN SDGs is put forth as a model for businesses to follow in their implementations of sustainable initiatives. This model, in particular, combined with the four responsibilities described by Carroll et al. (1991), served as the main point of reference for the research design, data collection and analysis.

4   An Overview of the Video Game Industry

Considering the focus of this research paper, the understanding of what video games are, its history, reach and business dimensions were deemed necessary to broaden the perspective of the industry.

4.1   Industry Overview

Simply put, video games are a type of digital entertainment where the users (usually referred to as 'gamers') are required to interact with a digital interface and withstand a number of challenges designed by the game developers (Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). This type of digital entertainment is considered to be relatively new, with its start somewhere in the late 70s and early 80s and heavily tied with coding and the emergence of the software industry (Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). Despite its somewhat recent start, it has managed to grow significantly over the course of the years, and is now the most popular entertainment industry in the world, with an estimated 2.7 billion gamers worldwide and being a $300Bi business, surpassing (in terms of revenue) the movies and music industries, combined (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021). This incredible growth has created a shift where "the economic value of video games changed from being a niche industry to a blockbuster business" (Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013), and gives a hint at the socio-economic impact the industry has today.

Furthermore, although video games have been quite popular since their establishment, it was not until the early 2010s, with the introduction of smartphones and online gameplay that these would start obtaining the reach that they have today (Wallach, 2020). Additionally, in more recent times, the COVID-19 pandemic, due to restrictions and lockdown measures, contributed to the vast increase in both gaming time and sales, rising by double digits and nearly doubling, respectively (Clement, 2021).

Diving into the business side of the industry, the value chain of video games is traditionally represented throughout five sequential major processes (González-Piñero, 2017), including: the hardware manufacturing, the development, publishing, distribution, and retailing, where the games reach their users. Although there is no definitive answer to how the dynamics of the video game industry should be represented, due to the evolution of technology in recent years, the way gamers play and acquire video games has changed significantly, indicating a need to adapt and integrate new processes into the video game value chain. As an example, González-Piñero (2017) suggests a new modified value chain (see figure 5), where a higher focus on the clients is highlighted and a tentative representation of digital distribution, besides the distribution of hard copies, is made.

Besides this, these new relationships within the industry also created a need for evolution in how the games could be monetized. From the traditional P2P model (Pay to Play), new models such as F2P (Free to Play) have emerged, where the game was given out for free to the public, but advertisements and in-game purchases are encouraged (Davidovici, 2013). Another model that emerged is the GaaS (Game as a Service) model, where a subscription is required from the gamer to play and is used to provide steady revenue for the company (Vaudour & Heinze, 2020). In practice, these new models have offered a completely different price range to the users, contributing to their ever-increasing popularity among different social classes, as some

Figure 5: Video game industry value-chain. Adapted from González-Piñero (2017).
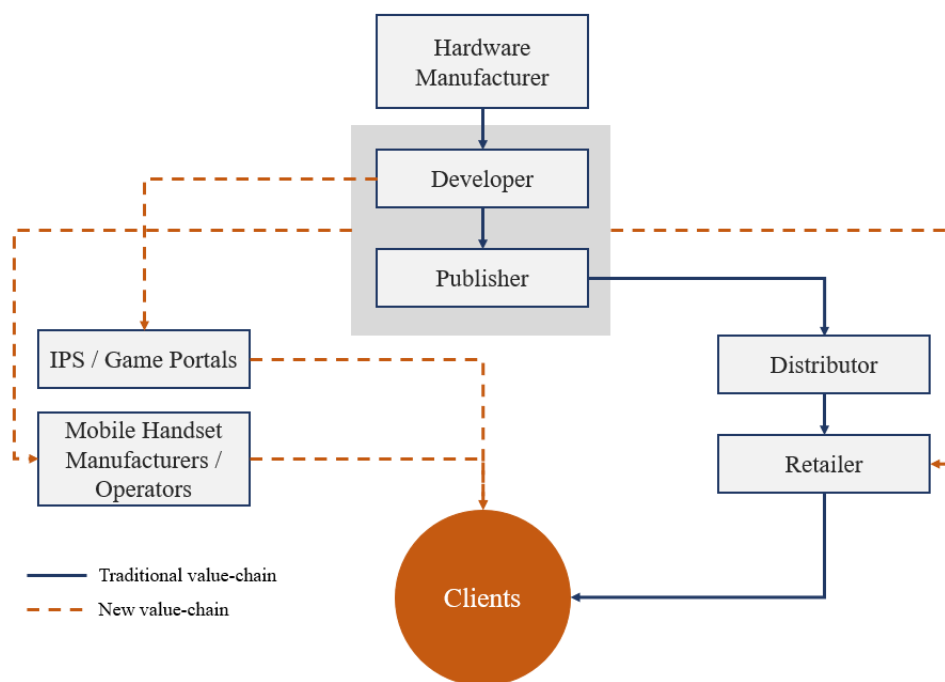
games became more accessible and appealing to gamers around the world (Davidovici-Nora, 2014).

In addition to the games themselves, the social aspect of video games has tremendously evolved in recent years, giving way to many new business opportunities, such as eSports and Live Streaming. Firstly, similar to regular sports, the competitive aspect of some games brought forth what is currently known as eSports (Electronic Sports), which is defined as the competitive, at either professional or amateur level, video gaming that is often coordinated by different leagues, ladders and tournaments, and where players customarily belong to teams or other 'sporting' organizations which are sponsored by various business organizations (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). In recent years, eSports have become one of the most rapidly growing forms of new media driven by the growing provenance of (online) games and online broadcasting technologies. These events are sometimes attended by fans in person but are mostly reliant on live streaming platforms, such as Twitch.tv and YouTube Live.

Secondly, when speaking of live streaming, most commonly referred to as just streaming, it is referred to as the practice in which individuals transmit or receive live video and audio coverage of an event over the internet. The platforms mentioned above, Twitch.tv and YouTube Live are the most popular: a few years ago, in 2016, Twitch had, for instance, 2.2 million unique streamers who broadcasted their activities on the platform, for a total of 292 billion total minutes watched, a number that increased to over 350 billion minutes in 2017 (Johnson & Woodcock, 2019). Linking these broadcasting platforms in regards to the popularity of eSports, the League of Legends World Championship Finals in 2021 featured 73.9 million viewers across the multiple streaming platforms it was being played on (Gough, 2022), a number comparable to many of the major sporting events around the world.

4.2   Game Platforms and Genres

Considering this thesis to be focused on video game studios, it is important to present what factors should be considered by a studio for the development of the games. There are three: the setting, the sensory stimuli and the rules (Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). The setting, in essence, consists of the game's genre and plot. The second factor, sensory stimuli, refers to the type of experience the gamers receive when interacting with the games, which can be from visual, auditory and tactile stimulation. The third factor, rules, refers to the basic mechanisms and coding behind the game, which predict or direct the users' behavior through each interaction made in the game. These three factors are intrinsically correlated with each other and with the definition of the game genre and choice of the game platform. Whilst the genre defines the storyline and gameplay behind the game, platforms refer to the hardware where the game is played and when combined, both play an important part in the end user's experience. Furthermore, the genres and platforms can also be considered a way of classifying the different types of games in the market.

First, in terms of platforms, the three main ones to consider are personal computers (PC), consoles and mobiles. Although companies that develop the hardware and software behind these platforms are not the focus of this study, they have a symbiotic relationship with video game studios because the platforms are not only responsible for the "compatibility and compliance guidelines" of the game development (Laakso, Nyman et al., 2014, p.16), but also directly influences the user sensory stimulation and the coding rules behind the game content. Furthermore, these are important factors to consider in terms of energy efficiency and the performance of the game (Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013).

Historically, PC and consoles have been the popular ways of playing games, but this has changed over the years with the introduction of mobile devices, which account for at least half of the direct revenues of the video game industry (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021) today. Additionally, with the development of a fourth platform, known as virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), many new possibilities for users' engagement with the games have been introduced (Yildirim et al., 2018). Moreover, the evolution in processing power and the decrease in the smartphones' prices over the years have not only boosted video game accessibility but also offered technological advances that could be used for the console industry (Laakso, Nyman et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be said that much of the reach the video game industry has today can be attributed to the popularity of smartphones (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021).

Now, in terms of the genres, there are many controversies surrounding how these should be used to categorize video games. The genre can be determined by the objectives and goals of the game, but also by how the gamers visualize the game, i.e. in relation to the aesthetics, or by how gamers interact with it (Apperley, 2006). However, none of the genre systems that exist so far have been able to capture all types of video games available (Clarke, Lee & Clark, 2017) and many stakeholders defend a need for recategorization (Doherty et al., 2018) While some systems offer a simple list of genres that can be used, such as the four genres described by Apperley (2006) of simulation, strategy, action and role-playing; others suggest longer and more complex lists, such as the 12 different genres compiled by Clarke, Lee and Clark (2017).

In spite of the disagreements regarding genres and the many different platforms where games can be played, one can argue that different types of games have the potential to contribute

more or less to today's wicked problems. While platforms play an important factor when considering environmental issues, such as the carbon footprint of the industry, the combination of these with the different genres can allow the game's potential to be elevated in different directions, whether by receiving new features that can help raise awareness regarding a determined problem, or to be used for a different purpose. For instance, while sandbox games such as Minecraft can have their platform used as a simulator program to build new community designs, online multiplayer games can be utilized as a collaboration platform for different projects (Patterson & Barratt, 2019).

4.3   Challenges of the Industry

Several studies have been conducted in recent years regarding not only the business challenges of the industry but also the many controversies video games have in the eyes of different segments of the population. Although there exists an ever-increasing worry about the environmental impact the industry has, many other factors are creating concerns in regards to the business sustainability and the behavioral incentives behind the games. Furthermore, these challenges not only pose threats to the industry itself but also reinforce the need of incorporating CSR initiatives into the video game companies' strategies.

From an environmental perspective, the concern of the industry relies on three different factors: the increasing amount of data needed (i.e., more data centers and telecommunications infrastructure), the energy spending, and e-waste (Patterson & Barratt, 2019). Although the last one is not directly a concern for the video game studios, it has a large relevance to all players in the video game industry given the size and increasing rates of smartphones, computers and other electronic devices being discarded in the world (Islam et al., 2020). Now, in regards to the first two factors, the rapid increase in the carbon footprint of the industry can have huge implications in regard to the goals of decreasing climate change issues worldwide (Patterson & Barratt, 2019).

Additionally, in talking about the business, many stakeholders have become increasingly concerned about how to keep sustainable growth in the industry with the rise of competition, possible stagnation in the user base growth, and the increase in labor and technology development costs (John Harrison, 2019). Moreover, the monetization trends based on F2P (Free to Play) and GaaS (Game as a Service), for instance, offer more options for the users to switch between different games (Davidovici-Nora, 2014). This, combined with the limit on the number of users available in the world as potential clients, introduces more requirements for video game companies to focus on the quality, performance and level of entertainment of the games, posing new dynamics of offer and demand in the market (Vaudour & Heinze, 2020).

Furthermore, in terms of behavioural incentives, since they are depicted as an entertainment platform, video game companies struggle to promote more engaging experiences for their users without adhering to biases, discrimination, or reinforcing misbehaviours, such as addiction and violence, amongst others. The concerns remain not only on how the gameplay and aesthetics of the games are designed and developed but also on how the game is promoted and monetized for the market (Davidovici, 2013). This topic is where most research and debate has been done in regard to the industry and is concerned with how

video games can shape behaviors and beliefs of the society, especially given the influence they have on younger generations (Patterson & Barratt, 2019).

4.4   Chapter Summary

This chapter delineates what is meant by the video game industry and video games for this research, by giving a brief overview of its components, history and business dimensions, in order to gain a better and holistic understanding of the industry. Following, a more detailed explanation of video games themselves, as well as an exploration of the diverse ways video games can be utilized serves the purpose of showing how versatile these can be used and portrayed around the world. To finish, the chapter explores the most common challenges associated with the industry, in order to evidence the need of integrating Corporate Social Responsibility within it.

5   Results and Analysis

In this chapter, the primary and secondary data collected are presented and analyzed. It starts with the primary data, going through the results of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, followed by secondary information concerning the industry initiatives and CSR reports.

5.1   Questionnaire

The questionnaire was answered by 46 different respondents from studios in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Canada, with a majority from Sweden (52%), focused primarily on the development of PC and console games. Additionally, 58% of respondents had five or less years of experience in the video game industry, and were concentrated in the design and development related areas and roles. Further information on the demographics of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was divided into five sections addressing the respondents' opinions about (1) the industry and (2) their companies' involvement in CSR initiatives, (3) company responsibilities, (4) potential contribution to the UN SDGs and (5) CSR value creation. The results are summarized in Appendix D, however the main points are presented below for each section. Moreover, no relevant statistical correlation between the demographics and the sections was found that could affect the discussion and findings of the thesis.

(1) Industry Involvement

The majority of respondents believe that the video game industry should be involved in CSR initiatives: 17 out 46 (37%) graded this as a very strong belief, while 23 out 46 (50%) graded this question as a strong belief (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Distribution of answers for the questionnaire question: "To which extent do you believe the video game industry should be involved in CSR initiatives?".
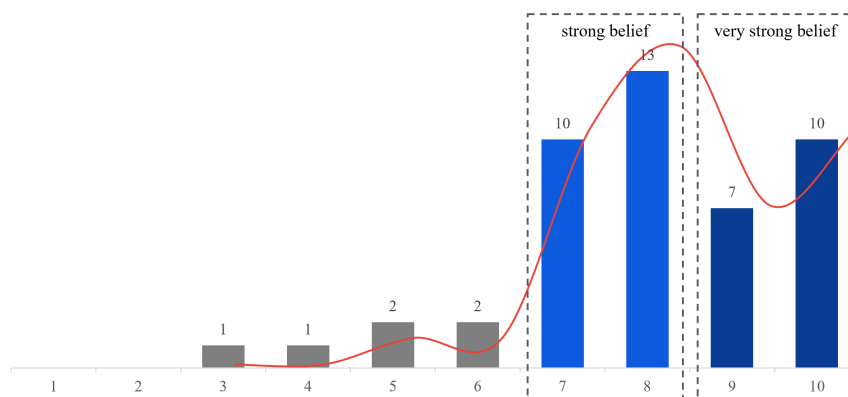
(2) Companies Involvement

From the total number of respondents, 65% of them declared that their companies are actively involved in CSR initiatives today, 20% are not sure if their company is doing something, and 13% declared with certainty that the company is not doing anything towards CSR.

(3) Companies Responsibilities

When asked to evaluate, on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 represented a low engagement or only the basics being done and 5 represented actions that went beyond the basic requirements), the distribution of answers shows that video game studios have a different perspective for each of the four responsibilities presented (based on the Carroll et al. (1991) ideas). Nonetheless, the answers tend to lean towards 4s and 5s for most responsibilities, with weighted averages of 3.7, 3.3, 3.9 and 3.2 for economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, respectively. These numbers convey the premise that most respondents perceive their companies to be acting above the basic expectations.

Figure 7: Distribution of answers for the four CSR responsibilities.
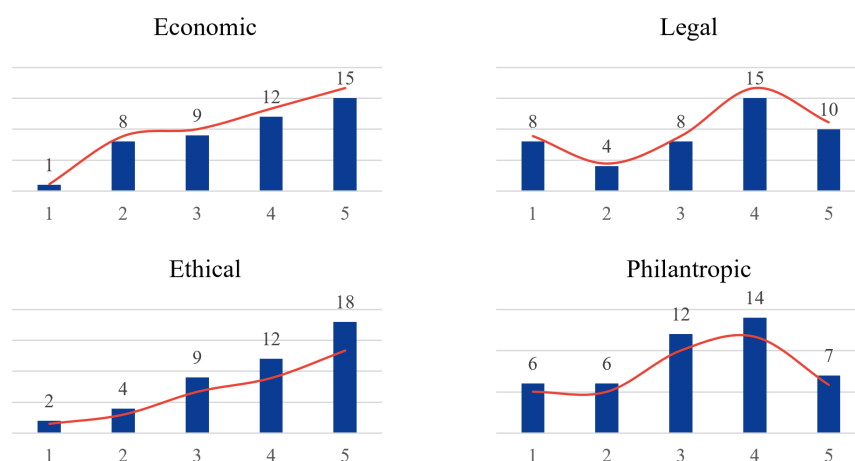
(4) Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

In this section of the questionnaire, the respondents were tasked to identify (between is, could, should and not feasible, or a combination of these) and reflect on which UN SDGs their studios would be able to contribute. Table 1 portrays the average percentage of answers in each of the CSR dimensions (based on Shayan et al. (2022) model).

From it, it can be seen that almost 40% of the respondents believe that their companies are currently undertaking initiatives within the societal and economic dimensions of the UN SDGs, in contrast with only 19% in the environment one. On the other hand, one-third of the respondents believe that environment-related initiatives are not feasible, in opposition to the 10% that share the same opinion about the economic dimension. In between these two extremes, around half of the respondents understand their companies could or should be doing actions toward the three different dimensions of the UN SDGs.

Table 1: Average distribution and standard deviation (σ) of answers for each CSR dimension.

	Is		Could		Should		Not feasible	
Dimensions	Average	σ	Average	σ	Average	σ	Average	σ
Society	38%	18%	23%	7%	25%	7%	24%	16%
Economy	39%	8%	21%	5%	33%	3%	10%	5%
Environment	19%	12%	25%	5%	29%	4%	32%	6%

(5) CSR Value Creation

Four different points were evaluated regarding the strategic and value-creation perspectives associated with CSR: (a) how the company can create a positive impact, (b) what is preventing the companies to achieve it, (c) if CSR initiatives can contribute to the future of the company and (d) how the gamers perceive the initiatives. From this, the researchers found that:

(a) On average, almost 60% of the respondents believe their companies can engage in volunteering and donations, besides adding features in the existent games and developing responsible games as a way to act more responsible;

(b) Financial (60%) and company strategy (51%) appear as the most important factors impeding the implementation and advance of these initiatives;

(c) 71% of the respondents believe that CSR initiatives can contribute to the future of the company, 24% answered that they can probably contribute but they do not know-how and 4% do not see how;

(d) The majority of respondents (51%) believe CSR initiatives can become a differential from the users' perspective, while 22% of them declared to have numbers to prove that their clients care about how responsible the studio is. The remaining 27% did not believe their users would care about it.

5.2   Semi-structure Interviews

Besides the survey, the researchers conducted a total of three semi-structured interviews with managers of video game companies. These managers varied in a range of ways, from experience, studio size and professional focus, as portrayed in table 2.

The interview questions and key aspects of their answers are displayed in Appendix E and are divided into the four following different topics: (1) CSR definition, (2) industry responsibility, (3) studios initiatives and challenges, (4) strategic perspective on CSR and (5) legal considerations. A brief summary of their answers, divided by their respective topics is presented in table 3.

This brief summary of the interviewee's answers throughout the semi-structured interviews highlights a raising awareness and proactive behavior towards CSR initiatives, and similar actions being undertaken across the three studios being studied.

Table 2: Interviewees profiles.

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
Background	Computer Science, Project Management	International Relations	Medialogy, Project Management
Experience	15 years	3 years	+1 years
Role	COO	Brand Manager	Office Manager
Company Size	250 HC	140 HC	25 HC
Company Focus	PC and Console (AAA Studio)	Mobile	PC and Console

Table 3: Summary of the semi-structured interviews answers.

(1) CSR Definition	Although one of the interviewees was quite vague in his answer, the other two define CSR as a company responsibility to use its resources to improve different aspects of society.
(2) Industry Responsibility	All interviewees agree that the industry should be involved in CSR, especially in terms of inclusion, diversity and environmental impact reduction. They also mention that both partnering up with NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and implementing features within the games in order to create awareness are viable methods for the industry.
(3) Company CSR	All three of the managers mentioned that their companies were proactive in some kind of CSR initiatives, mostly centered on environmental issues and social issues such as diversity and inclusion. They also mention that the challenges associated with the implementation of these are mostly grounded within the lack of funds, but also in the discourse surrounding their implementation.
(4) Strategy & Value Creation	Although it is difficult to measure the impact the initiatives have within the company, the managers of the studios that had active environmental initiatives did so through outsourcing. However, they all agreed that they could greatly contribute to the company's goals in the long term, as well as improve the studio's image in the eyes of potential future talent.
(5) Legal Considerations	Due to the small size of the studios (between 20 and 250 employees), the interviewees all denied having to comply with any type of legal responsibility.

5.3   Secondary Data

Upon researching CSR initiatives currently being undertaken by video game companies and studios, the researchers found a total of five relevant alliances worth mentioning, due to both their reach and value-creation, besides four main players reporting their achievements towards socially responsible initiatives. These are presented below.

5.3.1   Industry Collaborations

Taking into consideration the importance of partnerships and collaborations to solve wicked issues (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006), the researchers explored the extent to which the video game industry can leverage its resources, together with other entities such as the United Nations, in order to promote socially responsible actions that can have a global impact. From this, five relevant alliances were found and are described in the following section.

Games for Cities

Games for Cities is an initiative that compiles a database of video games that can be used by a wide array of individuals to improve the way urban development and designing happens. It is a subsidiary of Play the City, a Dutch company that aims to build board games for public and private parties in order to develop their spatial and decision making in regard to urban design. Their goals are as follows:

- create a guidebook for policymakers and regulators to use games in their daily work;
- activate and grow the City Gaming community through public events and online network;
- create an extensive and comprehensive database of video games with this purpose.

As of May 2022, the Games for Cities database has a total of 76 video games and they have made a total of ten events in the Netherlands with the aim to involve the community in discussions regarding urban design (Games for Cities, n.d.).

Block By Block

Block By Block is a non-profit organization created in 2013 as a result of the collaboration between the following actors: UN-Habitat, Mojang (the studio responsible for the creation of Minecraft) and Microsoft. This non-profit organization utilizes Minecraft as its main platform and tool for urban development projects. They do so by engaging the residents of the communities in a 'Minecraft training', to shape and re-design their neighborhoods in order to improve public safety, economic opportunities, and improve access to clean water, sustainability and livability.

Block By Block has successfully undertaken dozens of projects in more than 35 countries (Block By Block, 2022), such as building:

- spaces for all ages in east Java, Indonesia;
- safer streets for teenage girls in Hanoi, Vietnam;
- recreational spaces in Khulna, Bangladesh;
- youth engagement in Manila, Philippines;
- green spaces for a future megacity in Wuhan, China.

Playing for the Planet

Playing For the Planet is an alliance between UNEP (the United Nations Environment Program) and video game studios which aims to support the video game industry to achieve specific objectives in order to create more visible, inspiring, catalytic change than any other organization could achieve on its own (Playing for the Planet, 2022b). The objectives are as follows:

- to rally the industry to reduce its carbon footprint and to ensure it has the tools to measure, reduce, and set targets to decarbonise;

- to inspire environmental action through green activations in games;

- to share the learnings of the initiative so that others within the industry can follow suit;

- to explore new strategies for the future around new games and approaches to storytelling.

There are 41 video game studios currently in this alliance, and their influence has a huge impact on the number of studios that are starting to be proactive in this regard. Additionally to the alliance, Playing for the Planet is also in charge of organizing the Green Game Jam, a yearly event where member studios gather and innovate on games to create features or raise awareness about forest and ocean biodiversity loss and climate change (Playing for the Planet, 2022a). This event alone was able to generate engagement in forest and ocean themes for 130 million users, besides collecting close to $800K in donations for charities.

Gamers Outreach

Slightly different from the previous initiatives, Games Outreach is a donation-based organization part of ESL (Esports League) Gaming, an eSports organizer and production company that aims to empower hospitalized children through video games. Due to the distressing nature of hospitals, this charity aims to restore a sense of joy and normalcy to children confined within these spaces by facilitating their access to video games via the following four programs:

- 'GO Karts', which are portable video game kiosks built specifically for hospitals;
- 'Player 2', a volunteer initiative pairing gamers with opportunities to give back to hospitals;
- 'Save Point' are high-tech vending machines that distribute items such as toys and game codes to empower children with a sense of accomplishment after progressing through treatment;
- 'Portal' is a software solution where Gamers Outreach enables hundreds of hospital patient rooms to be connected simultaneously without kids needing to wait a turn to play.

According to their yearly report (Gamers Outreach Foundation, 2022), Gamers Outreach was able to raise a staggering $3.2M in 2021, which allowed them to optimize and further develop their programs and reach.

Games for Change

Lastly, Games for Change, created in 2004, is a community that aims to push the boundaries and explore how the world can use games and immersive media for social good. To do this, they offer programs and events for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore, learn, and create engaging games that promote awareness about contemporary social issues. Their goal is not only to advance equity and justice within their community but to also improve it on a global scale (Games for Change, 2022).

Considering their vast reach and impressive portfolio of over 150 games developed by the community (Games for Change, 2022), it is to no surprise that Games for Change plays an active role in a variety of events, initiatives and educational programs, all related to video games and socially responsible behavior.

5.3.2   Sustainability Reports

Besides looking at these initiatives and collaborations between video game studios and entities such as the UN, the researchers looked into some of the biggest and most influential video game studios, in terms of revenue and gamer base, in order to ascertain if these were engaged in the creation of sustainability reports of some kind. After excluding companies that made most of their profit from either hardware manufacturing or distribution (such as Sony), the researchers decided to incorporate the following studios: Nintendo, Riot Games, Activision Blizzard, and EA (Electronic Art) Games.

Although all four of these video game studios are conscious and proactive about the need to implement some type of socially responsible initiatives, the authors found out that all of these are relatively new to the concept of reporting these (three of the four companies were only on the first or second report by 2021). Moreover, over half of them mainly described the initiatives their company was undertaking, without any type of data or numbers being used to measure them.

Moreover, amongst the chosen video game studios, some of the focus areas for initiatives do overlap and are mainly focused on either their employees (principally via diversity and inclusion), community/consumers (by promoting support and engagement) and the environment (in terms of reducing their carbon footprint). Additionally, some of them also focus on privacy and security measures, education and the production chain.

Besides initiatives made through collaborations within the video game industry and other entities, such as the UN, many of the biggest video game studios around the world in terms of revenue and gamers base still do not have a dedicated report to present their social impact initiatives. Moreover, studios that do have a dedicated place to talk about their impact are still in the early stages (most of the reports are from 2020 and forward), many times without specific goals or measurements defined. Appendix F outlines the key points from these five market leader companies.

5.4   Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the primary data from both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were organized, analyzed and presented. Additionally, this chapter also presents an overview of a sample of initiatives and collaborations (secondary data) currently being undertaken between video game studios and important entities, such as the UN and other NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The results exhibited in this chapter will serve as the basis for the following chapter, in which the researchers discuss and answer the research questions.

6   Discussion

After presenting the data collected and its analysis in the last chapter, this section of the thesis aims to discuss the main findings of the study by answering the two proposed research questions.

6.1   Answer to the First Research Question

How do video game studio employees perceive the importance of CSR initiatives?

Taking into consideration the data collected, several findings can be used to understand how people within the video industry perceive the topic and importance of CSR, further exploring the role video games can have in acting in a more responsible way. Hence, three topics from the results and analysis are discussed to answer this question: (1) how is CSR perceived, (2) the extent to which the industry should contribute, and (3) the value CSR can create for different stakeholders.

(1) CSR Perception

As explored in the chapter 3 of this research, CSR has, throughout time, been defined in a number of ways, and several models have been developed, further elaborating on the first frameworks constructed, such as the Carroll's CSR Pyramid (Carroll et al., 1991). However, most definitions explored in the literature review can be summarized and explained as the need for businesses to undertake ethically-oriented actions for the betterment of society, a perspective aligned with the general definition given by the interviewees when prompted to define the concept.

When reducing the data obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews alike, a peculiar occurrence can be observed when analyzing the perceived company responsibility within the four dimensions of Carroll's CSR Pyramid. On one hand, the respondents understand the economic and ethical responsibilities (in weighted average) to be the two responsibilities which their studios undertake proactively. What these results imply is that most respondents believe that their company cares about how their profits are generated and consider the public expectation of morally correct behavior. These perceptions from the video game studio employees go hand in hand with the CON model, which states that instead of generating wealth just for themselves, these studios are generating wealth for society as well through the implementation of various practices (Geva, 2008). On the other hand, the interviewees all stated that an economic grounding was necessary in order to implement any type of initiative, which goes in line with (Friedman, 1970) argument that companies should focus primarily on the generation of profits. Moreover, this perception of the economic responsibility strays away from the CON model's perspective but instead relies more on Carroll's CSR Pyramid's definition.

In regards to the ethical dimension, the interviewees' answers also differ from the respondents in the sense that they struggle to promote ethical behavior in combination with the entertainment connotation video games have. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that although the survey respondents consider (on average) the philanthropic dimension to be

the least impactful for the business, two of the three managers interviewed mention that concrete actions are taking place in their studios (in the form of volunteering and donations), and the third had plans of initiating some as soon as they secure a solid economic grounding.

The findings from the data collected show that there exists a discrepancy between the perceived meaning of CSR within the premises of video game studios, and which dimensions are more important, depending on the context of the company and the roles of the respondents.

(2) Industry Contribution

Despite the different interpretations of CSR within the video game industry discussed above, the results obtained show that there is a strong belief amongst those who work in the industry that it should be involved in CSR initiatives (87%), although the comments received from both questionnaire respondents and interviews indicate an understanding that video game companies should not have more responsibility than any other sector. The respondents also understand that, although their own company is not undertaking any CSR initiative, they should be doing something about it.

Furthermore, when asked about the extent of the responsibility or the potential the industry has to generate a positive impact, the interviewees highlight that although video games are not the answer, they can be part of the solution to solve today's problems, especially in relation with environment and inclusion. They also understand that there is plenty of promise regarding initiatives since the industry is still in its early stages regarding CSR, as highlighted by the novelty of CSR reports and collaborations presented in 5.3.

(3) Value creation to Stakeholders

As explored in chapter 3, when looking into the value creation aspect and shared-value concepts of incorporating CSR initiatives within their video game studios, it is found that both the interviewed managers and questionnaire respondents perceive a positive benefit, albeit with a slightly different focus. On one hand, the majority of respondents (96%) perceive that CSR initiatives could benefit the company, although some fail to understand how it could. Additionally, 73% of them said that they either believe or can prove that the video game users appreciate their studio undertaking sustainable initiatives. This belief that users would be on board with socially responsible games aligns with the data presented in (Kelly, Schuler & Johnson, 2021), which states that 66% of people would agree or completely agree to play a game if said game was socially responsible.

On the other hand, the interviewed managers do not seem convinced that the users themselves cared about the implementation of initiatives within their games or studios, but are certain that undertaking these would boost the image of their studios, which would not only contribute to the company goals in the long term but also attract potential new talent to join them. Although not directly mentioned, the managers that were interviewed hint that, taking into consideration the increasing awareness towards sustainability that society seems to be heading towards, being proactive and aligning the company goals towards the betterment of society at the early stages of the company can only be a good thing.

6.2   Answer to the Second Research Question

What type of socially responsible initiatives can video game studios implement?

Broadly speaking, the literature review highlights the importance of incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility dimensions into businesses, what these represent, and what the potential outcomes of these could be. Despite the young age of the industry (Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012), video game studio employees are aware of the influence and reach they have over their user base and have therefore already started taking a proactive approach towards what they seem feasible in terms of responsibility.

With this in mind, in order to answer the second research question, the results and analysis presented in the previous chapter will be discussed from two perspectives: (1) what concrete actions can video game studios take to implement CSR initiatives, and (2) how feasible is it for video game studios to implement initiatives that can tackle the UN SDGs.

(1) Concrete Actions

Theoretically speaking, CSR can be described in a multitude of ways. However, when going into practice, implementing and following up on the initiatives is another story. When asked about how video game studios can contribute to today's problems, the interviewed managers emphasize the possibility of including more features in the games, such as increasing inclusiveness for people with disabilities or promoting awareness about different types of issues in clever ways. However, when questioned about what their company is doing today, they describe their actions to be more environmental-related, such as reducing carbon emissions (which can be related to the ever-increasing awareness about the carbon footprint of the industry in relation to others (Patterson & Barratt, 2019)), or more employee-related, by promoting better workplace practices or investing in donations and volunteering that they choose. Both answers are aligned with what the questionnaire respondents perceive as feasible for their companies to do, from donations (64%), volunteering (58%) and adding features to the games (56%).

However, in order to put these initiatives into practice, some challenges need to be addressed by the video game studios. One of the major obstacles identified by both the questionnaire answers and the interviews is related to the financial stability of the company. In this case, it is evident that for smaller studios still in the growth phase, money can become an issue and they need to be creative on what type of initiatives they can implement and maintain. Another example of a financial challenge comes from a process of merger and acquisition, which resulted in the CSR initiatives not being prioritized because they appeared in the expense lines of the company's financial statements. This fact, while reinforcing the primary economic responsibility (Carroll et al., 1991), also indicates that once a company becomes financially stable, the first stakeholders these businesses consider are their own stockholders and then their employees, not society as a whole.

Furthermore, another perspective that can be taken into account is how the industry can create collaborations with other institutions to deliver CSR results and implement sustainable initiatives. From the interviews, it is observed that sometimes video game studios can not act by themselves on something specific, but they can indeed make donations for institutions that have the resources to put initiatives into practice. This is directly related to

the philanthropic responsibility (Carroll et al., 1991) and can be seen as one of the many commitments video game studios can make (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006). However, by looking at the reach and impact of video games worldwide, the collaboration and consistency dimensions of CSR (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006) become highly important in the context of the industry in question. Although the industry is undertaking some initiatives through alliances in a somewhat consistent manner (as exemplified in the last chapter), the interviewed companies do not highlight any collaborations in their own actions.

Additionally, it is also important to mention not only how initiatives can be put into practice, but how these can be measured and monitored over time as well. From this perspective, when questioned about how their companies measure the impact of their initiatives, most managers declare it to be hard to keep track or to develop processes and allocate resources to them. Therefore, the implementation of measurement indicators and procedures can be seen as another major challenge for the industry to understand the real impact they can create. This conclusion is reinforced by the reports from major players of the video game industry where, as shown previously, only one of the four studios that have some kind of CSR report actually defines clear metrics for their initiatives, not to mention the many other studios that do not even present a report regarding the topic. Further, the scarcity and novelty of these reports can also be interpreted as an indicator of a lack of consistency in CSR initiatives (Meehan, Meehan & Richards, 2006) within the industry overall.

(2) UN SDGs

To further investigate how video game studios employees perceive as feasible to be implemented, the CSR concept was also presented under the lens of the UN SDGs, all the while considering the three dimensions these could be categorized in environment, society and economy (Shayan et al., 2022). Considering the reports from the four video game companies presented in chapter 5, most of them indicate a concern regarding the communities, employees and environment within their CSR initiatives. The same goes for the interviewed managers, who highlight efforts regarding their employees and environment, as well as the industry collaborations, which focus on environment-related issues and how to positively impact communities around the world. Therefore, it can be said that, in practice, video game studios have been more concerned with the environment and society dimensions. However, when starting the same discussion in the questionnaire, where all the UN SDGs were open for evaluation, a different perception regarding the three dimensions is found, where environment became the least active dimension and the biggest 'not feasible' one. This points out that the industry still struggles to find a way in which they can contribute, and how the initiatives could, both theoretically and in practice, be perceived in a different manner by those working with video games.

6.3   Chapter Summary

According to the analysis and discussion conducted, and based on the data collected and selected CSR models, the most important findings that answer both research questions of this thesis are summarized below.

RQ1: How do video game studio employees perceive the importance of CSR initiatives?

- There exists a discrepancy in the perception of what CSR entails, which could be due to various factors, such as employee roles and company context.

- Perception that the industry should be involved, but there's a general agreement that it should not be more invested than any other industry.

- Although the focus of the shared value varies depending on whom answered, almost everyone involved in the study agrees that undertaking initiatives do create value for all stakeholders involved.

RQ2: What type of socially responsible initiatives can video game studios implement?

- Studios perceive the implementation of donations, volunteering programs, and the addition of features to the games as the most feasible actions.

- The most important dimensions where initiatives have been taken regarding the environment (e.g. carbon footprint) and society (e.g. workplace conditions and practices, communities development).

- The important challenges to consider are related to financial stability and the implementation of metrics to measure the CSR impact, which directly impacts the consistency of the actions.

7   Conclusion

7.1   Summary of Main Findings

First and foremost, the purpose of this thesis was to explore the intertwined connection between the concept and practicalities of Corporate Social Responsibility within the video game industry, in order to understand its current state and the perceived potential it could have on societies' wicked problems. The motivation behind this was to identify the concrete actions *video game studios* can undertake toward the betterment of society, besides contributing to research regarding the industry from a new perspective.

The reasoning behind the selection of this concept and industry can be briefly summarized by the following points. Firstly, CSR can be used as a tool for businesses to create shared value, which in turn, generates a sustainable development of the business. By becoming sustainable through time, companies can then take a step ahead of others and prompt a competitive advantage for both customers and talent acquisition. Secondly, the video game industry has been found to have a relatively big reach and impact on society, despite its young age. This combination of factors allows novelty concepts, such as CSR, to be easily incorporated when compared to other industries.

In order to serve this purpose, over 300 individuals working within the industry, in video game studios, were reached out to, and a total of 3 interviewees and 46 questionnaire responses were collected. This low response rate could be due to the fact that the industry is fragmented (several small and medium players with different markets and contexts), and therefore hard to reach out and connect with, especially regarding discussions about CSR. Furthermore, secondary data was compiled in order to find information regarding concrete initiatives being undertaken by the industry. The findings are summarized below, and are connected with the two research questions.

The first research question, regarding how people within the video game industry perceive the importance of CSR, is answered by, first, exploring the understanding of how they perceive the concept. From this, the researchers found that there exists a discrepancy between the different roles and company contexts on how they interpret CSR. Secondly, although all the answers point towards a general perception that the video game industry should be involved in CSR initiatives and the high potential it has to contribute, the general agreement is that their responsibility is no different from any other industry. Lastly, the research shows a belief that CSR could generate value for the video game studios, their customers, employees and society in general, although not always clear how to do so.

Furthermore, in regards to **the second research question**, which explores what video game studios can do toward social responsibility, the study shows that donations, volunteering and adding features to the games are perceived as the most feasible actions, especially in regard to environmental and societal causes, such as reducing carbon footprint or improving workplace conditions. Additionally, it is highlighted that financial stability of the business and the complexity of creating CSR metrics to measure the actual impact of the initiatives are the biggest challenges and threats to the consistency of CSR actions.

7.2   Research Contributions

In alignment with the proposal of the master's program which this thesis is part of, the research contributes by initiating a discussion on the challenges managers and other stakeholders in the video game industry might face when trying to implement CSR initiatives. Specifically, it introduces a broad perspective on what can be done and what obstacles studios have faced that can be transferable to other contexts within the industry. Furthermore, considering the limited amount of research about CSR in the video game industry, which focuses more on the controversies rather than what the industry can do, the thesis contributes by opening the discussion on how video games can become a driving force to solve wicked problems today and in the future. Its reach, growth and impact only asserts the potential of the industry.

7.3   Suggestions for Further Research

This research opens up a constellation of new ideas that could be pursued in future studies. First, further understanding of the correlation between different types of video games (genres, platforms, and so on) and how CSR initiatives are perceived and implemented can prove to be highly valuable for those working within the industry. Second, further exploring the managerial implications when implementing CSR initiatives and how this can impact the development of the games and the decision-making process of the companies could prove beneficial for different stakeholders in the industry, especially managers. Third, more initiatives could be explored that only the video game industry can implement, in contrast with initiatives that any other industry can already do, to further explore the potential video games have to contribute to today's problems. Lastly, more can be found on how collaborations can be established between different players of the video game industry in order to create shared-value. From this, the topics explored here could be further elaborated using a bigger sample of the video game industry, involving other players besides the studios.

References

Activision Blizzard (2020). Activision Blizzard 2020 Environmental, Social, and Governance Report. Available online: `https://ourcommitments.activisionblizzard.com/content/dam/atvi/activisionblizzard/ab-touchui/our-commitments/FC_Activision_ESG_Report_2020_V27.pdf` [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Apperley, T. H. (2006). Genre and game studies: Toward a critical approach to video game genres, *Simulation & gaming* vol. 37. no. 1, pp. 6–23.

Block By Block (2022). Building stronger communities, block by block. Available online: `https://www.blockbyblock.org/` [Accessed 25 Apr. 2020].

Bowen, H. R. (1953). Social responsibilities of the businessman. University of Iowa Press.

Brynjolfsson, E. & McAfee, A. (2014). The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies. WW Norton & Company.

Camillus, J. C. (2008). Strategy as a wicked problem, *Harvard business review* vol. 86. no. 5, pp. 98–101.

Carroll, A. B. et al. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders, *Business horizons* vol. 34. no. 4, pp. 39–48.

Carroll, A. B. (2008). A history of corporate social responsibility: Concepts and practices, *The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility* vol. 1.

Carroll, A. B. (2015). Corporate social responsibility: The centerpiece of competing and complementary frameworks., *Organizational dynamics*.

Carroll, A. B. (2016). Carroll's pyramid of CSR: taking another look, *International journal of corporate social responsibility* vol. 1. no. 1, pp. 1–8.

Clarke, R. I., Lee, J. H. & Clark, N. (2017). Why video game genres fail: A classificatory analysis, *Games and Culture* vol. 12. no. 5, pp. 445–465.

Clement, J. (2021). COVID-19 Impact on The Gaming Industry Worldwide. Available online: `https://www.statista.com/topics/8016/covid-19-impact-on-the-gaming-industry-worldwide/#dossierKeyfigures` [Accessed 11 May 2022].

Davidovici, M. (Dec. 2013). Innovation in business models in the Video Game Industry: Free-to-Play or the gaming experience as a service, *The Computer Games Journal* vol. 2, pp. 22–51. DOI: `10.1007/BF03392349`.

Davidovici-Nora, M. (2014). Paid and free digital business models innovations in the video game industry, *Digiworld Economic Journal* no. 94, p. 83.

Doherty, S. M. et al. (2018). 'Recategorization of video game genres'. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*. Vol. 62. 1. SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, pp. 2099–2103.

Electronic Arts (2021). Impact Report 2021. Available online: `https://media.contentapi.ea.com/content/dam/eacom/common/ea-csr-21.pdf` [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Farmbrough, H. (2021). Could Do Better: Tech Sustainability Strategies Are Missing, Says Capgemini Report. Available online: `https://www.forbes.com/sites/heatherfarmbrough/2021/05/26/could-do-better-tech-companies-lack-sustainability-strategies-says-capgemini-report/?sh=5eb091104dc2` [Accessed 11 May 2022].

Ferrell, O. et al. (2019). Business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and brand attitudes: An exploratory study, *Journal of Business Research* vol. 95, pp. 491–501.

Frederick, W. C. (2006). Corporation, be good!: the story of corporate social responsibility. Dog Ear Publishing.

Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S. & Wicks, A. C. (2007). *Managing for stakeholders: Reputation, survival and success*.

Freeman, R. E. (2013). What is the stakeholder theory ? Available online: `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epxmG3YRgok` [Accessed 15 Apr. 2022].

Friedman, M. (Sept. 1970). *The Social Responsibility Of Business Is to Increase Its Profits*. en. Section: Archives. Available online: `https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/13/archives/a-friedman-doctrine-the-social-responsibility-of-business-is-to.html` [Accessed 18 Apr. 2022].

Gamers Outreach Foundation (2022). Helping Others Level Up. Available online: `https://gamersoutreach.org/` [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Games for Change (2022). Empowering Game Creators & Social Innovators. Available online: `https://www.gamesforchange.org/` [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Games for Cities (n.d.). Explore how games improve city making. Available online: `http://gamesforcities.com/` [Accessed 28 Apr. 2020].

Gavin, M. (2019). 5 Examples of Corporate Social Responsibility That Were Successful. Available online: `https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/corporate-social-responsibility-examples` [Accessed 17 Apr. 2022].

Geva, A. (2008). Three models of corporate social responsibility: Interrelationships between theory, research, and practice, *Business and society review* vol. 113. no. 1, pp. 1–41.

González-Piñero, M. (2017). Redefining the value chain of the video games industry, *memory* vol. 36. no. 4, pp. 75–90.

Gough, C. (2022). League of Legends championships viewers 2021. Available online: `https://www.statista.com/statistics/518126/league-of-legends-championship-viewers/` [Accessed 19 Apr. 2022].

Hamari, J. & Sjöblom, M. (2017). What is eSports and why do people watch it?, *Internet research*.

Heaton, J. (2008). Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data: An Overview, *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* vol. 33. no. 3 (125), pp. 33–45. ISSN: 01726404.

Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20762299 [Accessed 26 Apr. 2022].

Islam, A. et al. (2020). Advances in sustainable approaches to recover metals from e-waste-A review, *Journal of Cleaner Production* vol. 244, p. 118815. ISSN: 0959-6526. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.118815. Available online: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S09596526193368 56.

John Harrison, J. B. (2019). How do you turn disruption into transformation? Available online: https://www.ey.com/en_se/tmt/are-technology-company-deal-teams-leveraging-the-best-insights [Accessed 11 May 2022].

Johnson, M. R. & Woodcock, J. (2019). The impacts of live streaming and Twitch. tv on the video game industry, *Media, Culture & Society* vol. 41. no. 5, pp. 670–688.

Jones, T. M. (1980). Corporate social responsibility revisited, redefined, *California management review* vol. 22. no. 3, pp. 59–67.

Kelly, C., Schuler, S. & Johnson, P. (2021). Gaming: the next super platform. Available online: https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/software-platforms/gaming-the-next-super-platform [Accessed 28 Mar. 2022].

Kotter, J. P. et al. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail.

Laakso, M., Nyman, L. M. et al. (2014). Innovation opportunities: An overview of standards and platforms in the video game industry, *Technology Innovation Management Review*.

Lantos, G. P. (2001). The boundaries of strategic corporate social responsibility, *Journal of consumer marketing*.

Latapí Agudelo, M. A., Jóhannsdóttir, L. & Davídsdóttir, B. (2019). A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility, *International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility* vol. 4. no. 1, pp. 1–23.

Lewis, P. V. (1985). Defining 'business ethics': Like nailing jello to a wall, *Journal of Business ethics* vol. 4. no. 5, pp. 377–383.

Marchand, A. & Hennig-Thurau, T. (2013). Value creation in the video game industry: Industry economics, consumer benefits, and research opportunities, *Journal of interactive marketing* vol. 27. no. 3, pp. 141–157.

Meehan, J., Meehan, K. & Richards, A. (2006). Corporate social responsibility: the 3C-SR model, *International journal of social economics*.

Newzoo (2021). Newzoo's Gamer Segmentation: The Community Gamer Explained. Available online: https://newzoo.com/insights/infographics/newzoos-gamer-segmentation-the-community-gamer-explained/ [Accessed 13 Apr. 2022].

Nintendo (2021). CSR Report 2021. Available online: https://www.nintendo.co.jp/csr/en/pdf/nintendo_csr2021e.pdf [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Parmar, B. L. et al. (2010). Stakeholder theory: The state of the art, *Academy of Management Annals* vol. 4. no. 1, pp. 403–445.

Patterson, T. & Barratt, S. (2019). Playing for the planet: How video games can deliver for people and the environment.

Playing for the Planet (2022a). Annual Impact Report 2021. Available online: `https://9888fb1c876fc09a.azureedge.net/media/Playing4` `ThePlanet/Files/Playing4planetreport2021.pdf` [Accessed 29 Apr. 2020].

Playing for the Planet (2022b). Empowering the Games Industry by Playing for the Planet. Available online: `https://playing4theplanet.org/` [Accessed 29 Apr. 2020].

Porter, M. E. & Kramer, M. R. (2006). The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility, *Harvard business review* vol. 84. no. 12, pp. 78–92.

Prescott, J. & Bogg, J. (2011). Segregation in a male-dominated industry: Women working in the computer games industry, *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* vol. 3. no. 1.

Riot Games (2020). 2020 Social Impact Year in Review. Available online: `https://www.riotgames.com/en/who-we-are/social-impact` [Accessed 30 Apr. 2020].

Rittel, H. W. & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning, *Policy sciences* vol. 4. no. 2, pp. 155–169.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). Research methods for business students. Pearson education.

Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. (2016). Research methods for business: A skill building approach. john wiley & sons.

Shayan, N. F. et al. (2022). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), *Sustainability* vol. 14. no. 3, p. 1222.

Sheehy, B. (2015). Defining CSR: Problems and solutions, *Journal of business ethics* vol. 131. no. 3, pp. 625–648.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects, *Education for information* vol. 22. no. 2, pp. 63–75.

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines, *Journal of business research* vol. 104, pp. 333–339.

Steckler, A. et al. (1992). *Toward integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: an introduction*.

Steinke, I. (2004). Quality criteria in qualitative research, *A companion to qualitative research* vol. 21, pp. 184–190.

Stobierski, T. (2021). Eye-opening corporate social responsibility statistics, *Harvard Business School Online*.

UN (2015). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online: `https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda` [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

Van Berkel, K. & Manickam, A. (2020). Wicked world: complex challenges and systems innovation. Routledge.

Vaudour, F. & Heinze, A. (2020). Software as a service: Lessons from the video game industry, *Global Business and Organizational Excellence* vol. 39. no. 2, pp. 31–40.

Wallach, O. (2020). The history of the gaming industry in one chart. Available online: `https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11 /gaming-games-consels-xbox-play-station-fun/` [Accessed 11 May 2022].

Werhane, P. H. & Freeman, R. E. (1999). Business ethics: the state of the art, *International Journal of Management Reviews* vol. 1. no. 1, pp. 1–16.

Yildirim, C. et al. (2018). 'Video game user experience: to VR, or not to VR?' *2018 IEEE Games, Entertainment, Media Conference (GEM)*. IEEE, pp. 1–9.

Zackariasson, P. & Wilson, T. L. (2012). The video game industry: Formation, present state, and future. Routledge.

Zhang, X., Chen, S. & Sandhu, R. (2005). Enhancing data authenticity and integrity in p2p systems, *IEEE Internet computing* vol. 9. no. 6, pp. 42–49.

A   Questionnaire Questions

No.	Leading Question	Topic
1	Where are you located?	
2	What is your role in your company?	
3	In which area do you work?	Demographic
4	How many years have you worked in the video game industry?	
5	On what platform does your company focus on?	
6	To which extent do you believe the video game industry should be involved in CSR initiatives?	Industry Role
7	Do you know if your company is undertaking any CSR initiatives?	Company Check
8	Economic responsibilities: 'Focus solely on profits' vs 'Care about how the profits are generated'	Carroll's Pyramid and CON Models
9	Legal responsibilities: 'Abide to the basic laws and regulations' vs 'Work alongside regulatory entities'	
10	Ethical responsibilities: 'Disregard public expectations on what is considered "morally" correct' vs 'Actively consider public expectations on what is "morally" correct'	
11	Philanthropic responsibilities: 'No resources allocated to philanthropic/charitable initiatives' vs 'Considerable amount of resources allocated to philanthropic/charitable initiatives'	
12	Check company initiatives on the 17 UN SDGs, divided into societal, environmental and economic impact	CSR-SDGs Model
13	In your opinion, what are the most feasible ways that your company can create a positive impact?	Value Creation
14	Is there anything preventing these initiatives from happening?	
15	Do you think these initiatives could contribute to the future of the company?	
16	Do you think the users of your games would appreciate these type of initiatives?	

B Interview Questions

No.	Leading Question	Topic
1	How do you understand the concept CSR? What does it mean in your opinion?	CSR Definition
2	How do you see the responsibility of the industry as a whole towards solving today's problems?	Industry Responsibility
3	How would you see the industry's potential in creating solutions for today's societal problems?	
4	How do you think video game studios could contribute to solving society's problems?	
5	What is your company doing today that you know of or that you are involved?	Company's CSR
6	Why did you implement the initiatives (or why not)?	
7	How the CSR initiatives affect your work?	
8	What type of challenges do you (and your company) face to implement and maintain them?	
9	Do you measure the impact of these initiatives for the company? If so, how?	Strategic CSR
10	Are the CSR initiatives followed from a strategic level?	
11	Do you think they contribute, or are aligned, with the company goals in the long term?	
12	Do you think the initiatives are creating value to the target stakeholders (besides the company itself)?	
13	Does your company need to comply with any regulations or law regarding CSR?	Legal Responsibilities
14	Do you think more regulations should be formulated for the industry?	
15	Does your company hold discussions about ethical implications of the games?	Ethical Responsibilities
16	Do you think the users of the games care about what you are doing towards CSR and how ethical you are with the games?	Value Creation
17	Do you think these types of initiatives generate competitive advantage for the company?	
18	What kind of value do you think these initiatives could generate for your company?	

C   Questionnaire Demographics

Country Distribution

Countries	# Respondents	(%)
Sweden	24	52%
Canada	7	15%
Denmark	7	15%
Germany	3	7%
Others	5	11%

Years of Experience in the Industry

Years	# Respondents	(%)
0 - 1	5	11%
1 - 3	14	30%
3 - 5	8	17%
5 - 7	2	4%
7 - 10	8	17%
10 +	9	20%

Area Distribution

Area	# Respondents	(%)
Art / Design	18	39%
Technology / Programmer	16	35%
Operations	4	9%
Communications	2	4%
Marketing	2	4%
Products	2	4%
Others	2	4%

Role Distribution

Roles	# Respondents	(%)
Game Programmer	11	24%
Managerial Level	9	20%
Game Designer	7	15%
Game Artist	4	9%
Game Producer	4	9%
Others	4	9%

Game Platform Distribution

Platforms	# Respondents	(%)
PC	36	78%
Console	27	59%
Mobile	18	39%

D   Questionnaire Answers

Company Check

Do you know if your company is undertaking any CSR initiatives?

| Response	Count
Yes, it is.	31
No, it isn't. But I think it should/could.	5
I don't know. But I think it should/could.	9
No, it isn't. And I don't think they should/could.	1
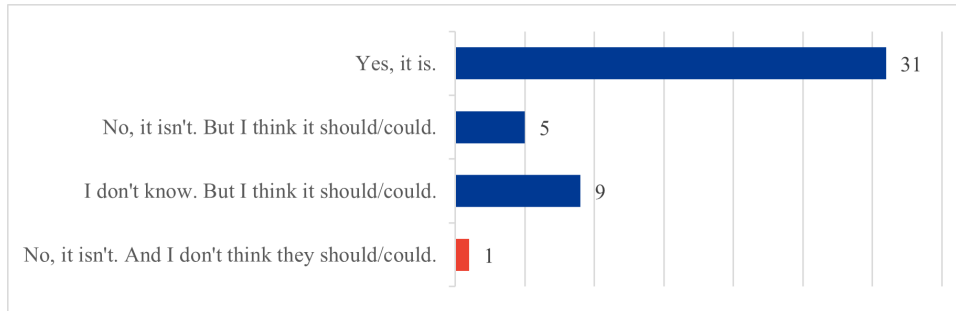
Carroll's Pyramid and CON Models

Economic Responsibilities:
Focus solely on profits (1) versus Care about how the profits are generated (5).

1	2	3	4	5
1	8	9	12	15
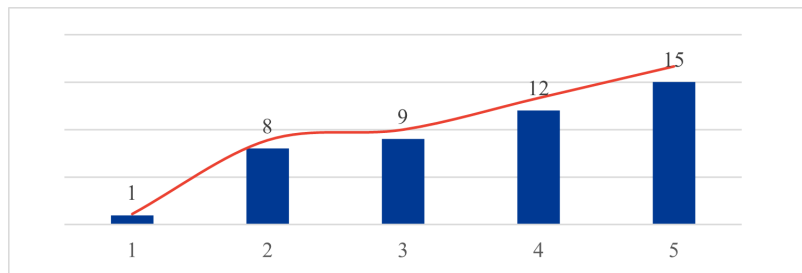
Legal Responsibilities:
Abide to the basic laws and regulations (1) versus Work alongside regulatory entities (5).
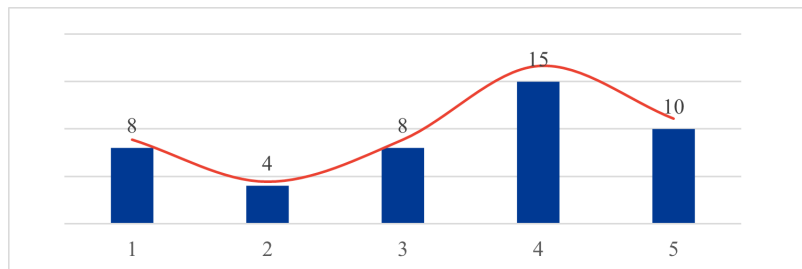
| 1	2	3	4	5
8	4	8	15	10

Ethical Responsibilities:
Disregard public expectations on what is considered 'morally' correct (1) versus Actively consider public expectations on what is 'morally' correct (5).
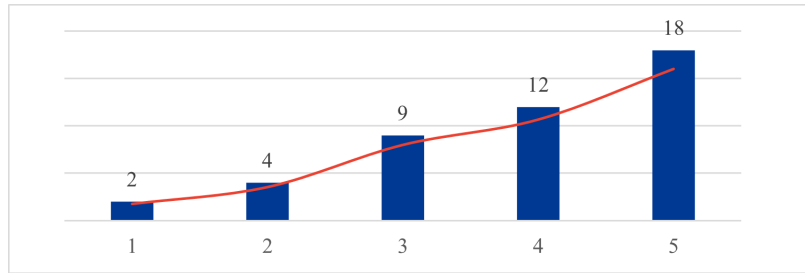
Philanthropic Responsibilities:

No resources allocated to philanthropic/charitable initiatives (1) versus Considerable amount of resources allocated to philanthropic/charitable initiatives (5).
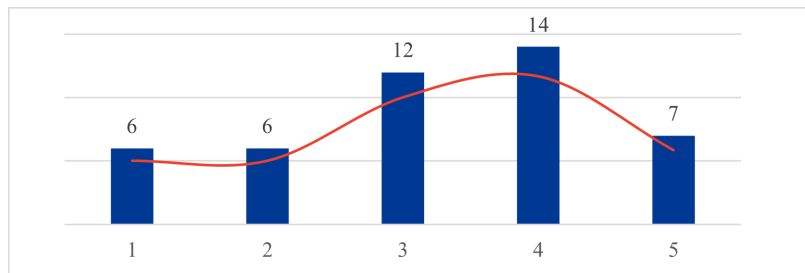
UN SDGs

| Dimensions	Is		Could		Should		Not feasible	
Society	17	38%	10	23%	11	25%	11	24%
SDG1 - No Poverty	10	22%	10	22%	10	22%	19	42%
SDG2 - Zero Hunger	10	22%	10	22%	11	24%	19	42%
SDG3 - Good Health and Well-Being	24	53%	10	22%	10	22%	5	11%
SDG4 - Quality Education	14	31%	10	22%	18	40%	7	16%
SDG5 - Gender Equality	29	64%	8	18%	10	22%	3	7%
SDG10 - Reduce Inequalities	23	51%	9	20%	14	31%	4	9%
SDG11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities	25	56%	8	18%	7	16%	7	16%
SDG12 - Responsible Comsumption and Production	9	20%	18	40%	11	24%	10	22%
SDG16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	9	20%	9	20%	10	22%	22	49%
Economic	17	39%	10	21%	15	33%	5	10%
SDG8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth	17	38%	12	27%	13	29%	4	9%
SDG9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	21	47%	8	18%	15	33%	3	7%
SDG17 - Partnerships for the Goals	14	31%	9	20%	16	36%	7	16%
Environment	9	19%	11	25%	13	29%	14	32%
SDG6 - Clean Water and Sanitation	3	7%	13	29%	11	24%	18	40%
SDG7 - Affordable and Clean Energy	5	11%	13	29%	15	33%	13	29%
SDG13 - Climate Action	14	31%	10	22%	14	31%	12	27%
SDG14 - Life Below Water SDG15 - Life on Land	13	29%	9	20%	13	29%	14	31%

Value Creation

In your opinion, what are the most feasible ways that your company can create a positive impact?
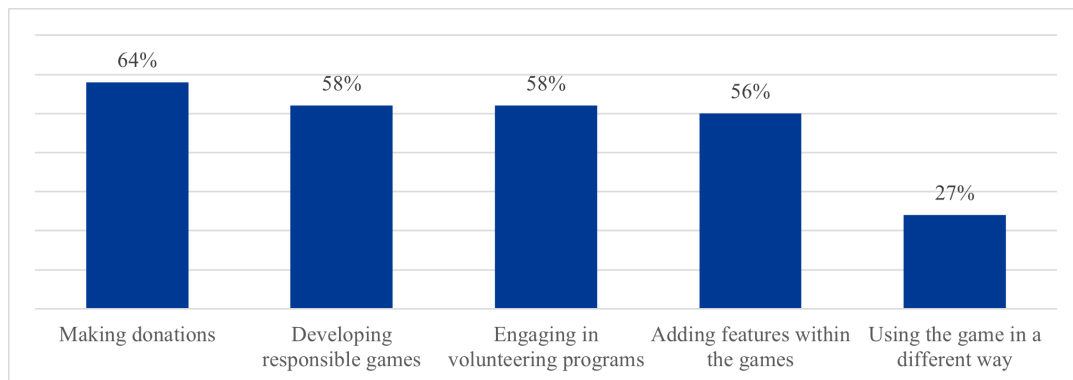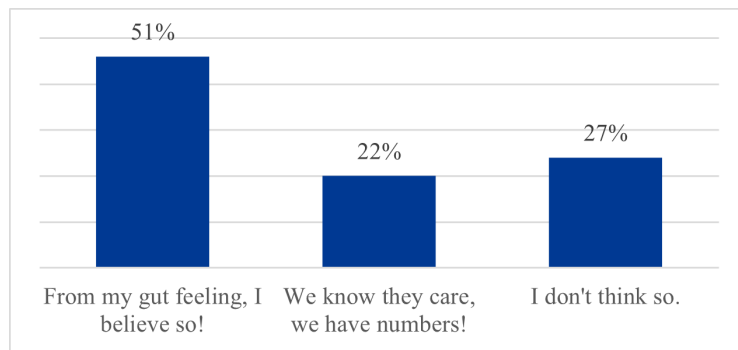
Is there anything preventing these initiatives from happening?
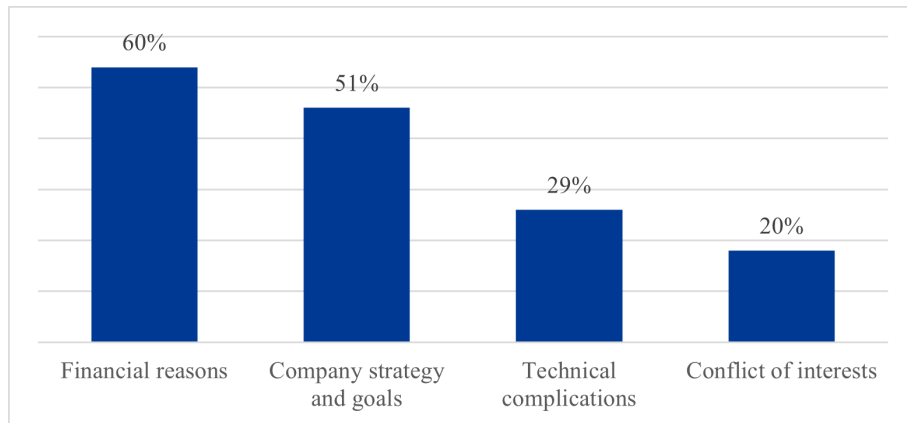
Do you think these initiatives could contribute to the future of the company?
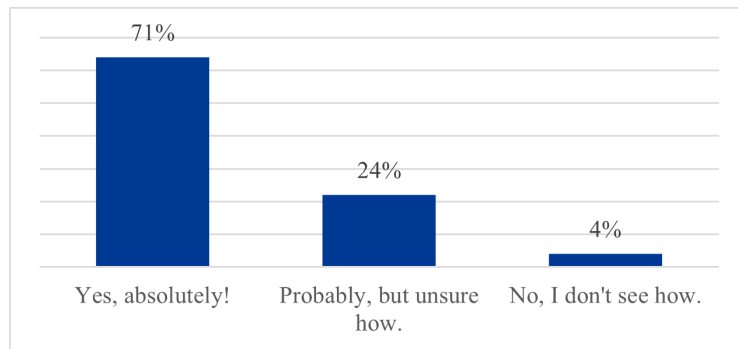
Do you think these initiatives could contribute to the future of the company?

E Interview Answers

Studio Initiatives and Challenges

What is your company doing today in terms of CSR?	
Interviewee 1	Carbon emission goals, lower electricity consumption (green certification), donations. Informally, working on diversity and inclusion.
Interviewee 2	Volunteering, occasional donations, carbon footprint project.
Interviewee 3	Very new studio and new in the position, so most of the things are still in the air while trying to figure out how to do them.

What kind of business challenges do you and your company face at the time of implementing and maintain them?	
Interviewee 1	Pretty easy so far. When speaking about diversity, the fact that the company is creating policies might affect the way everyone takes decisions. In general, the challenges are with the employee's satisfaction with the initiatives implemented and how they affect them. For example, on the environmental side, it involves less traveling and more conscious consumerism.
Interviewee 2	The biggest impact so far was an acquisition process, because the expenses with social initiatives appear on the financial reports and, therefore, they were not prioritized at first.
Interviewee 3	Definitely, money. Since it is a small studio and it is still in the phase of looking for financial stability.

Legal considerations

Does your company need to comply to any regulations or laws?	
Interviewee 1	Although they are not required to do anything yet, they are taking pre-emptive measures and starting to check the necessary requirements for the CSR reports demanded by the government.
Interviewee 2	No legal requirements.
Interviewee 3	No legal requirements.

CSR and Video Game Industry

How do you understand the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility?	
Interviewee 1	Started to develop an interest in it recently, due to new legislation's in Denmark. Mentions environmental and social pillars, but ends without clearly defining what CSR means.
Interviewee 2	Company being aware of its place in the wider society, how to use its resources to improve society.
Interviewee 3	What is your responsibility as a corporation, to add or to be part of the social responsibility we all have in terms of environment, and others.

How do you see the responsibility of the industry as a whole towards solving today's problems?	
Interviewee 1	(1) Believes the industry is not quite there yet and the problems should be put down in an eloquent way; (2) Believes the industry should be more mindful of its environmental impact; (3) The fact that a lot of studios are working on diversity and inclusion is a very good feat and shows promise for the future of the industry.
Interviewee 2	Yes, any company/industry that has so much reach and influence should have responsibility.
Interviewee 3	They should be part of it. Environmental responsibility especially (tech based) and diversity/inclusion.

How would you see the industries' potential to create solution for societal problems?	
Interviewee 1	Pretty good, especially if studios are socially and culturally inclusive/diverse.
Interviewee 2	Studios can be part of the solution, such as in pollution and carbon emission reduction, but more in a mitigation sense .
Interviewee 3	Huge potential, especially in terms of diversity and inclusive.

How do you think video game studios could contribute to solving society's problems?	
Interviewee 1	It could be making the games more diverse, i.e., they could be mindful/educational such as adding features to the games for people with disabilities. It is hard to find a balance where this happens though.
Interviewee 2	Yes, including features in the game in order to raise awareness, promoting a positive impact on the player base. This kind of trend (associating with UN or such organizations) is increasing in momentum and companies are being more and more proactive.
Interviewee 3	Creating solutions in the mechanism of the game for people with disabilities is rather easy. Creating modes that can include people, hence promoting representation, should be present. Also, if you have money to donate to NGOs, you should do it.

Strategic Perspective

Do you measure the impact of these initiatives?	
Interviewee 1	So far, the electricity levels are the only ones that are measured. The goal is to reduce 20% every year. The measurements are made by another company.
Interviewee 2	KPIs within his area are kept and measured every so often, without any defined process. For instance, we can keep track of social media posts about our initiatives and how this affects engagement rate, for instance. Emission rates are also important and the measurement was outsourced, however is hard to quantify.
Interviewee 3	No initiatives can be measured.

Do you think they contribute, or are aligned, with the company goals in the long term?	
Interviewee 1	In the long term, all of the initiatives make sense for the company. Solving the problems that these initiatives address can only be good for the company. The strategy needs to be aligned and integrated with CSR.
Interviewee 2	It is, because it places their studio in the front line, making their company more appealing, especially for future employees.
Interviewee 3	Yes, but they still need to reach their financial stability first.

Do you think the initiatives are creating value to the target stakeholders?	
Interviewee 1	Customers do not really care (as far as it is known), but this might change in the future as the industry is quite young. Now, for potential new employees, having these initiatives in place might bring in the right type of talent.
Interviewee 2	It is good for the recruitment process, as a lot of people are getting on board with companies taking on these kinds of initiatives. If they make it to the media, the brand image will improve, and therefore create value for the company in other ways.
Interviewee 3	Although most people will not care, the few that do will hold the studio in high esteem. Future employees might be interested in joining if they see that the studio is proactive in these initiatives.

F   Sustainability Reports

Company	Report	Last Report	Areas of Focus	CSR Team	Goals, Measurements and Status
Nintendo	CSR report (Nintendo, 2021)	2021 (9th edition)	Consumers, supply Chain, employees, and environment.	Dedicated CSR Team to promote projects inside the company.	Mostly describing the initiatives, without any numbers associated with them.
Riot Games	Social Impact webpage (Riot Games, 2020)	2020 (1st and only edition)	Education, comunity and equality.	Team to oversee volunteering, donations, grants and employee engagement.	Mostly describing the initiatives, without any numbers associated with them.
Blizzard Activision	ESG report (Activision Blizzard, 2020)	2020 (1st and only edition)	Employees, diversity and environment.	CSR vice-presidency, leading ESG practices.	Mostly describing the initiatives, without any numbers associated with them.
EA Games	CSR report (Electronic Arts, 2021)	2021 (2nd edition)	Employees, privacy and security, communities, environment, corporate governance.	Global Social Impact' area to drive the ESG agenda of the company.	Besides describing the goals, it is specified how they are measured and the status of the company in detail regarding each aspect mentioned.