

Researching the behavioral elements of online video game players. A detailed analysis using SPSS. *Part IV: Research Conclusions and Recommendations*

Valentin-Marius STOICA and Tudor EDU

Abstract

It is well-known that communication was always encouraged by interactivity generating knowledge and meaning, while active participation is enabling valuable content, deeper immersion being created by better video game players' experience. Marketers are challenged to reach online video gamers by leveraging new opportunities identified on the relevant market, the rapidly increasing video game industry offering an interesting example of relationship between the sales of both hardware, and software. The very competitive and dynamic video game market is influenced by both the continuous technological advance, and the changes in trends and preferences of video game consumers, who are attracted by innovation in this video game industry which has become one of the largest entertainment industries globally. That is why a coherent analysis of the video game users' behavior it is really useful. This paper is divided into four chapters, as follows. Part I is an introduction to the video game industry, presenting the economic power of the industry, the main factors influencing the video game consumers' behavior, as well as particularities of the marketing strategies in the industry. Part II presents the marketing environment of one of the largest video game companies, namely Ubisoft Entertainment S.A. The main aspects analyzed are the microenvironment and the macroenvironment of marketing, each with its particularities. The SWOT analysis of the company was also presented. Part IV contains the research conclusions and recommendations for Ubisoft Entertainment SA company based on the results obtained in Part III.

Keywords: Online video game players; Users' behavior; Video game market

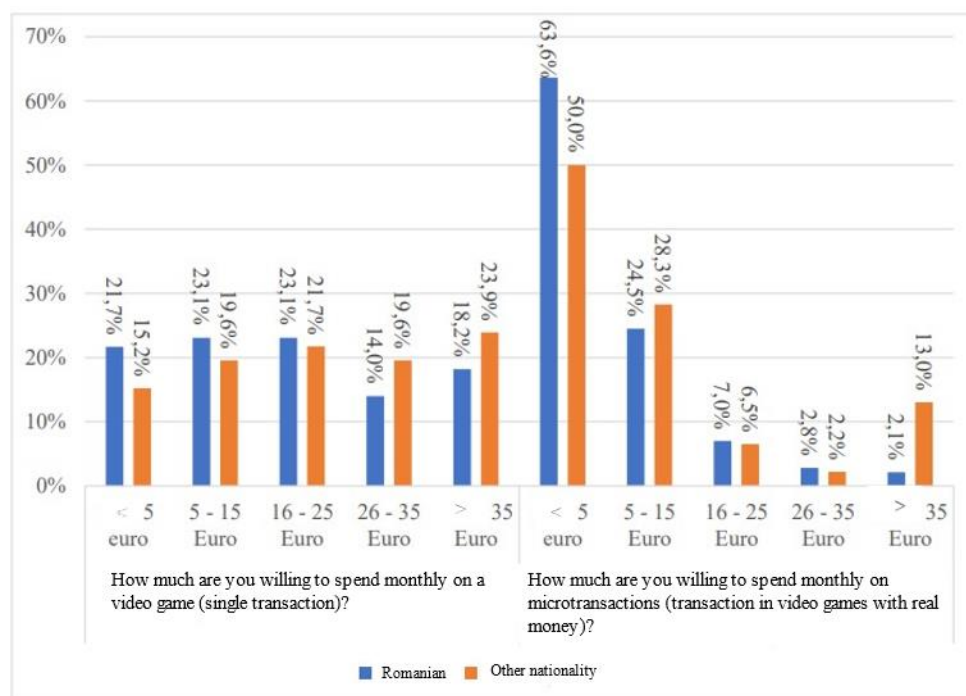
JEL Classification: D83; L82; L83; M31

Chapter IV. Conclusions and recommendations

This study, although exploratory, shows that the profile of video game consumers is a complex one and a subject that needs to be analyzed in detail, especially by video game companies such as the Ubisoft Group. Taking into account the results of the analysis of the study for the Romanian respondents, it can be seen that the majority of Romanian gamers started playing video games before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, are employed full-time, are between 18 and 27 years old, are considered avid gamers, play between 3 and 4 hours per session and follow video game-related activities very often. From the point of view of preferences in terms of video game genres, it can be observed that the Romanian player prefers action / adventure games, role-playing games (RPGs), but also online games. As a device, the Romanian gamer uses the personal computer the most to play video games. The main things he likes about a game are creativity and plot, and he doesn't take into account the popularity of the game or the company that makes the game. The Romanian player rarely buys video games and makes transactions in video games, when they choose to do so, they prefer to pay between 5 and 25 euros for a game. When it comes to in-game micro-transactions, he prefers to spend between 5 and 15 euros per month.

In the paper, various correlations between variables were analyzed to see if there are significant relationships between variables and their outcomes. These correlations were analyzed only for Romanian respondents. The main variable that was analyzed is the frequency with which video games are purchased and video game transactions are made. From the results of the applied correlation tests, this variable has statistical correlations with other variables in the research, namely the frequency of watching video game activities, the distribution of gamer

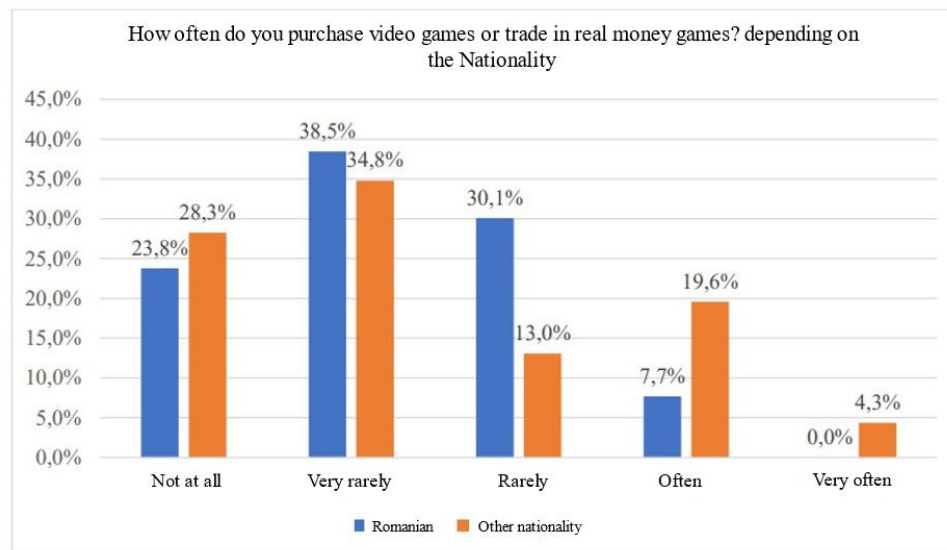
types, the duration of video game use per session. From the point of view of players of other nationalities, the following details about the consumer profile can be observed: Most international users started playing video games before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, are full-time employees or students, are between the ages of 18-27 years old, consider themselves expert or avid gamers, play between 1 and 2 hours per session, and watch video game-related activities very often. Analyzing the preferred game genres, the international gamer prefers action or adventure games, followed by role-playing games and online games. The preferred device to play on is the personal computer, however, mobile phones are also quite popular among international players. The main important aspects for international players are achievements and plot and story. The least important are the popularity of the game and the company that created the game but also the social aspect. They rarely buy video games or trade in video games, but when they do, international players prefer to spend between 16 and 25 euros per game. For the budget allocated monthly on micro-transactions, they are willing to pay between 5 and 15.



Graph 4.1. Chart with answers to questions related to the monthly allocated budget for video games.

Comparing the profile of Romanian consumers with that of consumers of other nationalities who participated in the research, it can be seen that the profiles are similar in most aspects analyzed. The only major difference between the two profiles is in the in-game aspect preferences. Instead, the number of similarities is greater. The main similarities are found among age, occupation, preferences of video game genres, devices used for video games, frequency of purchase, frequency of following activities related to video games, but also among the budget willing to pay for micro-transactions. At the same time, the majority of respondents in both consumer groups started playing video games before the COVID-19 pandemic began and restrictions were imposed. This similarity is very beneficial for video game companies that want to operate in the Romanian video game market, as they can use marketing strategies similar to

those used internationally. A trend that can be seen from the study results is the low frequency of purchasing video games.



Graph 4.2. Chart with answers to questions related to the monthly allocated budget for video games.

This frequency is mainly caused by piracy, one of the biggest problems for the video game industry. For this reason, video game companies must create games that are unique and catch the attention of players. At the same time, online games that are free but contain micro-transactions are becoming more and more popular. By eliminating direct costs, the game becomes accessible to many more players, however, a marketing plan is necessary to make the game known to as many players as possible. Based on the results of this research, I propose the following four recommendations for the Ubisoft group in order to increase the company's market share. First of all, creating video games that contain micro-transactions is a good starting point to increase the availability of the game to more and more people and reduce the use of piracy.

An increasingly popular method to increase awareness of a game is to create video and audio materials that quickly capture and retain players' attention. Such materials often take the form of animations that outline the game's story and plot, but music videos are also increasingly used. Another means that Ubisoft can use is influencer marketing. More and more people access video streaming platforms dedicated to video games more and more often, thus, by partnering with various well-known personalities on these platforms, Ubisoft can promote its products effectively, while also increasing trust in the company and brands.

And last but not least, the interactions between the company and the players are also very important. By organizing events, contests, tournaments, live shows and participating in conventions, Ubisoft can create unforgettable interactions for players, making it much easier for them to become brand ambassadors.

I believe that this research and its results can be an important starting point for the Ubisoft company, as the analysis of consumer behavior and preferences becomes a vital factor for the positive evolution of the company and for increasing its market share.