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**MANAGEMENT AND WORK WELL-BEING IN THE PROFESSIONAL INDUSTRY:
A CASE STUDY FROM ELECTRONIC SPORTS TEAMS**

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Abstract			
<p>Management and work well-being are essential parts of every organization. Professionals in different industries face multiple challenges and demands in their work, which affect their overall well-being. Electronic sports (esports) players are known to have demanding working environments since the pressures of competitions and performing well are always present. This might be manifested so that professional players burn out and quit their careers before they are 25 years old. Previous studies have shown that stress from different aspects greatly impacts professionals' physical and mental well-being, and intensive but relatively stable computer-based work affects the physical health of professionals. Coaches are usually heard in terms of supporting players, but in this thesis, the coaches are more comprehensive – they are also professionals and have significant roles in the esports industry.</p> <p>This study aims to find learning points from management and work well-being from another professional industry besides business. What factors are essential in terms of management and work well-being that support professionals at different levels? Some similarities with knowledge workers and professionals are that they work in a sitting position, usually in front of the computer. Being in a competitive and high-pressured industry brings up the necessary elements that organizations should implement in their culture.</p> <p>The study used qualitative methods, and empirical data was collected from esports teams through semi-structured interviews. There were six interviews: three professional players, two professional coaches, and one coach at a higher management level from two different organizations in Europe. The empirical analysis highlighted several essential factors from both players and the coach sides.</p> <p>Emphasized topics were good environment and organizational behavior, sharing of job resources between professional players and coaches, and open communication inside organizations and teams. Also, the responsibility of work well-being is divided between employers and employees, and motivation is seen as a great reason to enter the industry, but loss of motivation is also a reason for leaving.</p> <p>Theory strongly supports the empirical findings, and even though the sample size is small, it does not make the subjects less important. In managerial issues, results can be implemented to improve the work well-being of the organization. There are also reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study, as well as limitations of the study and future research suggestions.</p>			
Keywords esports, work-life balance, teamwork, competitive environment			
Additional information			

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies professionals' management and work well-being and utilizes case study methods in esports players and coaches. It discusses organization structures, impacting issues, and many aspects of work well-being. The first chapter introduces the background, objectivity of the study, and research question, along with two sub-questions. The chapter ends with research methods and a description of the thesis's structure.

The thesis is inspired by the increasing interest in work well-being in the media after lockdowns from COVID-19 and home offices during the pandemic in previous years. Combining this with professionals on the competitive side, who use electronic devices such as computers to perform well in their work, and knowledge-based work creates an opportunity to see what elements and factors are important in the management and work well-being of professionals, especially younger side of professionals, and what can be taken into the business world.

1.1 Background

Seaverson (2023) explain that work well-being and balancing between work and free time, combined with the use and power of technology, are current themes in today's work life. Management and organizations' effects on employees' well-being are mainly in the spotlight since jobs are becoming more than just salary and benefits. So, caring for workers is becoming increasingly important for a few reasons. The increasingly aging workforce and rapid changes in environment and technology create an uncertain culture for organizations and employees. Organizations are taking more responsibility for employees' health, such as obesity and mental health problems, which both have long-lasting impacts on the general health of employees. Mental health is especially impacted in many ways, such as financial uncertainty in the current economy and managers' recognition of supporting employees. Even culture and social media affect employee's mental health. Since employees spend a significant amount of time in organizations, it is essential to take care of them so that employees can give something back to the organization. McRae, Aykens, Lowmaster, and Shepp (2024)

support Seaverson's (2023) trends, adding the possibility of great changes in work life due to the increased use of technology, especially artificial intelligence (AI).

Also, in the past years, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of work well-being and reorganized it. It also raised the issue of esports professionals' well-being via social media. Even if team sports are organizations similar to companies and firms by having structures and hierarchy, they differ in many ways. For example, management, usually the coach, is far closer and may interact during the performance. In other words, sports and esports have a horizontal management level rather than a vertical hierarchy because management and coaches are close to players. They interact frequently, and managing is guiding rather than commanding, in a sense.

Having a passion for work is a nice thing, but there should be a balance between work and other aspects of life, and it is called work-life balance. Segal (2022) explains that there are ongoing challenges in current technology-based work. While technology, such as computers, laptops, mobile devices, and internet connections, have improved communication, for example, it also blurs the lines between personal time and work time.

1.2 The objective of the study and research question

Salminen (2019) highlights that work culture still glorifies the idea of efficiency and that workers need to do something all the time, even though it burdens brains, especially among knowledge workers and professionals. Another viewpoint is that if there are many distractions and juggling during the day, it can make the employee feel mentally and physically exhausted. Too much is going on, so focusing on one thing is challenging and requires more energy. (Leitz, 2022.)

Working long days, 50 hours or more per week, has already negatively affected the balance of work and personal time. For people who work for long days, the negative balance can cause stress, burnout, and other health problems, but it can also affect social relationships, such as with friends and relatives. Organizations are realizing that these issues can negatively affect workers' productivity and output, and so, overall, the organization is affected by a poor balance of work and personal life. Organizations have started some policies and procedures to encourage workers to care for

themselves. (Segal, 2022.) Ala-Mursula et al. (2006) continue with similar topics, explaining that doing long days occasionally does not have as great an impact as doing long days frequently or prolonged – problems appear when there is no possibility of sufficient mental and physical recovery. Salminen (2019) continues that dividing work time and keeping enough breaks is essential. It is up to the employee's preference to have breaks, but it is sure the brain cannot focus as efficiently as at the beginning for 90 minutes. It is possible, but it is not recommended for an extended period. Doing long and mentally demanding work requires breaks or good recovery after the day. Overloaded brains can not keep the focus at a good level, which leads to different problems.

There are many similarities between knowledge workers and business and esports professionals, for example. It can be assumed that knowledge workers and professionals work in a sitting position, usually in front of a computer. Martinez Lagunas (2019) explains that sitting is known to be harmful to the body and health, and it is alarming in general as well as in the esports industry. During the day, players sit a lot, and especially on tournament day, they might remain seated for more than 12 hours a day. Even during the breaks, they tend to stay seated while they are analyzing the game or waiting for the next one. Even sitting for 6 hours a day for two weeks shows negative effects on muscles; blood is not getting to the heart, increasing the risk of weight gain and heart disease.

Since the popularity of the esports and video game industry has risen dramatically in previous years, more and more people are attempting to reach the top positions in esports. High motivation and passion for video games and the possibilities of working in a competitive environment create the opportunity many young people want. On the other hand, pro players' careers are not long, and there are burnouts and other reasons to cut short the careers of professional esports players. (Smithies, Toth, Conroy, Ramsbottom, Kowal & Campbell, 2020.)

To demonstrate the shortness of many professional esports careers, one in five players' careers is two years or longer (Smithies et al., 2020). For some games, the average age of competitive players varies from 20 to 26 years old, average retirement age is 23. Some reasons for a short career are the difficulties of becoming a professional esports player and staying at the top level. Some other reasons for young adults to retire or

withdraw are that it is hard to stay a professional player, and it is not only reaction times that would get slower after 25 years old, but it is the stress, pressures, unsure future, and in the end, searching for new opportunities. (Lee, 2020.)

There are several health issues that arise when players spend long hours in front of a computer. Prolonged sitting is detrimental to vascular functions and can lead to lower back pain. Computer vision syndrome, which causes discomfort in the eyes from prolonged close-distance screen viewing, is also a common issue. (Smithies et al., 2020.) Kegelaers et al. (2024) further elaborate on this, highlighting the demanding nature of the esports industry that combines negative physical factors with a stressful environment, placing a heavy burden on young adults striving to reach and maintain the professional level.

The nature of esports described above has many similarities to the business sections. Segal (2022) mentions the possibility of an imbalance of junior employees and senior employees in the finance and banking sectors. There can be differences in junior, for example, more manual and performing-based work, whereas senior employees and professionals can have a broader range of responsibilities and decision-making work. Stress and challenges can be different, but the problem can be the same – not enough work-life balance. Similar aspects are present in this thesis, such as players and coaches in the junior and senior positions.

What can be done to ensure that young adults do not leave the professional field early? Managing job demand is one option, but it can be challenging. The study aims to find aspects of management and work well-being from another professional industry, especially esports, since they have a stressful and dynamic environment. However, on the extreme side of professionalism, there are good sides since it forces to think about the primary factors that support and mark the most. To add depth to the analysis, professionals are from two levels: players, who are independent professionals, and their coaches, who have the authority and are comparable to superior in the business field. Questions are also formed so that both levels are heard. Then, by combining both aspects, the overall research question is answered. Based on the problem mentioned above and reaching the goal of this thesis, the main research question is:

What can we learn about management and work well-being from professionals in the esports industry?

Additionally, to answer better the main question, sub-questions are:

What aspects support professional esports players' well-being?

What can management and coaches do so that work well-being stays at a good level?

There has been an increased number of studies on esports from different viewpoints of esports. However, studies about esports heavily rely on the players' side of the industry, and coaches are left with a more minor role. A similar qualitative study was done by Leis, Lautenbach, Birch and Elbe (2022), which focused on the stress and performance of esports, and Madden and Hartevelde (2021) used mixed methods and interviews to understand the pressures of performing and health of esports players. There were several concerning factors, such as the excessive amount of stress and mental health issues, but also supporting factors, such as communication inside the team and the motivation to win in a competitive environment. There are studies and books on the well-being of esports players, but it is still an emerging sport compared to many other traditional sports. There are still many cultural changes inside esports; for example, no big leading association or society provides the framework for esports globally, and those areas are not studied widely.

1.3 Research methods

This thesis starts with a literature review of organizational aspects, work well-being, and esports. Those themes build a base for empirical results and help to understand empirical data and material better. The empirical material is collected by using semi-structured interviews, which allow for the broad speaking of the subjects or topics and create lines so that the interview has appropriate answers. Because management and work well-being are broad and subjective concepts, a qualitative case study method helps create a complete or in-depth understanding of an event or situation. It includes the circumstances, environment, and characteristics of the people involved in the study.

The empirical materials will be analyzed through different literature review topics and form an understanding of why so many technology-based professionals are stressed or burned out and what could be done differently. More justified reasons for these methods are explained in chapter 5.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has seven main chapters. Chapter 1, Introduction, covers the background of the study, its objective, and its research questions. Research methods are mentioned briefly.

Chapter 2 introduces the organizational aspects that are relevant to this thesis. The connection between subchapters' themes is briefly represented at the end of the chapter. Similarly to Chapter 3, subchapters are selected to support the thesis's aims. It covers the definition of work well-being and some main topics, such as work stress, burnout, and work satisfaction. Teamwork and team leadership are also introduced here since team-based work is one aspect of the thesis. Chapter 4 represents the electronic sport, esports, introducing the environment where professional players and coaches perform. It also goes through some of the games, professional aspects, and teamwork in esports. Narrative literature is used in these chapters.

Chapter 5 explains more about the research and empirical methods. It also represents the data gathering methods, how the data was analyzed, and the structure of the interviews.

Chapter 6 discusses the interview results without theoretical contributions. In chapter 7, Conclusions, research questions are answered along with theoretical contributions. Managerial implications, limitations of the study, and future research propositions are represented.

2 ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES

This chapter introduces relevant parts about organizations regarding this thesis's empirical part. The organization's structure is briefly discussed to show some central elements of the organization. Technology and environment create a base for the knowledge workers' and professionals' work environments. The subchapter is followed by what organizations can offer to employees, giving the organizational viewpoint. The professionalism subchapter explains the employees regarding this thesis. The chapter ends with the professionals' career choices.

2.1 Structure

Friedlander and Brown (1974) define organizations as a complex system with many relevant variables that are combined in complex interactions. Organizations are combinations of different elements, such as structures, relations, and units. This definition can also be seen in organizations creating structures to coordinate the activities of factors and control members' performance. (Ahmady, Mehrpour & Nikooravesh, 2016.)

While there are many external and internal factors in organizations, Honkanen and Rus (2017) remind, that there are relations between every factor, so organizations should be viewed more as an entity. An organization tries to achieve its goals; for example, the systems, operating processes, and people are seen in relation to each other and affect the journey to the goal. The structure also provides methods for determining tasks and duties and coordinating them. Goals have been mentioned as achievements, but they can also affect the structure of the organization as well as strategy, technology, and environment. (Ahmady et al. 2016.)

As the organizations are complex, so are the nature of tasks, jobs, and relations between those. Woods and Hinton (2017) discuss the differences between jobs – some have a superior who monitors every detail, while others have broader and more unspecific tasks and so need more guidance occasionally. Ahmady et al. (2016) look at this in a different light: there are flexible relations and, thus, a simple structure.

There is no need for formality, so, for example, duties are done by mutual agreement, and rather than managing closely, the coordination is direct and informal. One of the most significant changes in an organization's environment and structure is technology and how it is used in work life (Vartiainen, 2017). As in this thesis, the organization is viewed as a group of professional people whom certain people coach to achieve specific goals in technology-based work.

2.2 Technology and environment

The technological change created a new environment for organizations and created rooms and markets for professionals—it also created a new industry: video games and esports. As Kirby and Dylan (1997) argued that businesses need to look at their internal and external resources to keep up with technological development. Usually, science- and engineering-based organizations are at the forefront of technological developments. The concept of computerization started in the 1970s and has greatly impacted working life, for example, by bringing electronic communication, such as email and the internet, to work and everyday life. (Korunka & Vartiainen, 2017). Technology has led to digitalization, which has generated and improved productivity. For example, data collection, analysis, and building databases are not as laborious as before technology, and this highlights the efficiency of working with the results of digitalization. (Laurell, Sandström, Eriksson, & Nykvist, 2019.)

Korunka and Vartiainen (2017) continue the topic by highlighting digitalization as an essential tool of the current working environment. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) affect in various ways today's work life, from manual and industrial work to knowledge-based work – it changes and impacts the organizational structures, relationships between people, productivity, and division of work. As Kirby and Dylan (1997) argued, new markets arrive through new technologies, but they also change some of them and even replace them. Korunka and Vartiainen (2017) speak about how technology changes organizational structures by, for example, demanding more competence from employees.

Technology brings positivity and impacts today's work life in positive ways. As said, it improves productivity, but it can also take away the risk of being injured by a hard

and physically demanding job by replacing it with technology and machines. It also brings an availability to access to a wide range of information, reduces costs, and gives an opportunity to work from somewhere else. (Korunka & Vartiainen, 2017.) It also gives an opportunity to change and adapt to current circumstances faster than before. It can also minimize human error by automating some of the tasks. (Allvin & Movitz 2017.)

If there are positive sides, there are also negative impacts of technology. While using technology, there can be a lot of unsuitable systems and subsystems, which may cause difficulties while performing a task. It can also give too many duties and responsibilities in work life, which leads to burnout. Technology has also reduced the privacy of individuals and organizations. (Korunka & Vartiainen, 2017.) Relating to privacy, the time between work and leisure is merging due to the conditions of many works. Allvin and Movitz (2017) raise the question of who has the responsibility of work life and free time balance, the organization or the individual, due to the fast-paced environment and rapidly changing conditions. They also highlight that most office employees and white collar workers are facing new challenges due to steady technology-based jobs.

Zijlstra and Nyssem (2017) speak more about how technology has changed our working lives and organizations. It affects every part of the organization: structures, relations, and the whole system. Technology also affects the employees' health, which is an essential part of organizations. Whereas in history, people might get health and musculoskeletal problems from heavy and dangerous jobs, in the present days, stable work brings different kinds of musculoskeletal and mental health issues. Technology does not always make the job easier, for example, due to not working as expected and unsuitable communication with other technologies and systems. All of these can affect the employee's motivation, stress, feelings, and even self-confidence. So, what can organizations do to employees to compensate for these issues?

2.3 What organization can offer to employees?

In the technology and environment chapter, there was a discussion of how organizations are demanding more from employees, for example, by adapting new technologies and systems, which employees are required to learn so that they can work.

Technology also affects employees' health. So, how can organizations and workplaces support employees?

As it can be inferred, organizations are affected by internal and external factors. Employees are an essential internal factor. Today, work is seen more as a developmental opportunity than before and a place where people can meet and form friendships. Work and salary can provide necessities and enable better living. (Day & Nielsen, 2017.) Employees' points of view are usually viewed from the perspective of work well-being, but there are a lot of perspectives from the organization's point of view. For example, happier employees are more productive and perform better than employees with lower happiness and well-being (Warr & Nielsen, 2018). As productivity is mentioned with technology and well-being, organizations can advance greatly by combining those elements.

Day and Rundell (2014) highlighted that employees and organizations recognize the importance of well-being in work life. Known to be a good workplace, organizations can raise their profile and popularity among employees. Day and Nielsen (2017) focus on what is known to be good organizational behavior and performance. A healthy workforce is associated with good organizational performance, but maintaining or improving employees' well-being is not easy. They brought up four examples and areas organizations can improve to help their employees. One is how the work is organized, the second is the management and managers, the third is developing individual resources, and the fourth is social relationships. Even though there are certain areas to improve, it is good to remember that a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable or equally effective for every organization and employee because of the different structures and factors (Day & Rundell, 2014).

How the work is organized can be affected by the way work is organized, designed, and managed. It includes some psychosocial factors, meaning it affects employees physically and mentally, like increasing resources to workers and decreasing demands. In general, this means implementing and that employees and managers are communicating how the processes and methods are used so that both understand them. Open communication can create a culture where the process itself empowers both parties. (Day & Nielsen, 2017.) Good implementation also increases employees' job

satisfaction and lowers absenteeism, which usually leads to better performance of employees and the organization (Nielsen & Randall, 2012).

It has been increasingly popular to train managers and leaders to identify and recognize one of the biggest health problems: mental health and work well-being. Training does not always involve recognizing the problems but dealing with them in a manner that leads to a positive outcome for the employees. (Day & Nielsen, 2017.) Cloutier and Barling (2023) highlight the relationship between employees' and leaders' well-being. Management and leaders are among the most significant factors affecting the employees' work well-being. Well-being is related to workplace behaviors, such as performance and interactions, and in the worst case, it can emerge as burnout. Leaders usually have more job resources and demands. However, they have greater access to organizational resources, making it easier to take care of their well-being. Day and Nielsen (2017) also bring again the open communication of leaders and how it positively affects the well-being of employees. Good leadership is even shown to positively affect how customers see the organization, in cases of customer service jobs (Corrigan, Lickey, Campion, & Rashid, 2000). However, as mental health and well-being are being popular than ever, Quinane, Bardoel and Pervan (2021) bring up the question of where the line is between individual, organizational, and social responsibility since work life affects employees' free time.

As there has been discussion of resources in organizations and leaders, organizations can offer resources directly to employees. Directing has been shown to improve and support employee well-being and help deal with the work environment's demand. Resource can mean, for example, training the employees to do their jobs and responsibilities more effectively. (Day & Nielsen, 2017.) As mentioned in the previous fragment, Corrigan et al. (2000) showed that happier employees perform better in customers' eyes due to proper guidance and satisfaction with the work results. Resourcing employees can also mean giving them a job that suits their personality better, for example, giving tasks and responsibilities to a person capable of handling stressful situations, and so does not burn out the other while boring in the other task (Warr & Nielsen, 2018).

According to Day and Nielsen (2017), the last area is group and social relationships. This is specified as group and teamwork, which work together to achieve

organizational goals. The team's well-being and interactions are strongly affected by the respect and dignity of others. It can also be affected by the organization's culture, where, for example, the organization's mission is to support team-based work environments. If the group is not supported, there might be absenteeism of a colleague, which usually means troubles or extra work for other team members and also the organization. The right amount and way of support is seen to affect group-level well-being positively. By making the team strong, they can create norms and build culture inside the team. As humans, the group interacts with others and can share emotions, but it is affected by others' emotions. (Warr & Nielsen, 2018). More specifically, the employees of this thesis, the professionals, are described in the next chapter.

2.4 Professionalism

Professionals play a significant role in this thesis. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2024) definition, professionals are people who have been working a long time in the same type of jobs and have skills and knowledge, or they have a job that needs specific skills, training, or education. Kirby and Dylan (1997) add that professionals gain understanding from facts and problems and let them guide their future actions. De Bruijn (2010) gives examples of traditional professionals, such as doctors, teachers, engineers, and police, and how their work requires specialist knowledge. The knowledge can be maintained by constant training and gaining new experience. De Bruijn also mentions strong motivation since they do what they love and will try to do their work as well as possible.

Even authorities have guidance and supervision, and de Bruijn (2010) highlights the importance of allowing professionals to do their work with as little as possible of organizational interruptions. Professionals who do complex work and tasks should have autonomy and, thus, be trusted with greater responsibility to perform their job. Autonomy gives a greater chance to deliver high-quality professional services.

De Bruijn (2010) argues that professional performance is disturbed by the act of mostly unqualified managers and, even more specifically, organizational protocols and procedures. Whereas Day and Nielsen (2017) sees the implementation and open communication between managers and employees or professionals as a good thing, so both know the requirements of the tasks. De Bruijn (2010) argues that this leads to a

point where professionals cannot act before their actions go through the organizational process, decreasing their productivity and the point of the original idea of being professional. De Bruijn also brings up that managers are needed to maintain the equipment of the work, but professionals should let do what they are good at. Noordegraaf (2011) shares the same viewpoint as de Bruijn (2010). A professional who is unable to perform their work as expected, due to organizational bureaucracy and the pressure to deliver value and profits to the market, is left feeling dissatisfied. However, this is seen as a great opportunity to create a new form of professionalism: organized professionalism.

Noordegraaf (2011) argues that professionals' work needs to be reorganized and even be reorganized by professionals. It is reasonable to give professionals, especially knowledgeable workers, more freedom and some level of autonomy. Professionals cannot escape the changed environment of structured and somehow bureaucratic organizations, so adapting is a better choice since it enables and disciplines their work. Even though reorganizing work is not easy, it changes and develops the professionalism industry itself. Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2015) give another viewpoint: professionals are expected to be active and innovative in the organization's development and improvement. Professionals face the rising demand for continuous change, and they need to be able to negotiate about their work practices and structure change in the organization. They may have many pressures, but it is also important to remember that they are humans as well and need support and relationships between organizations so that the work remains meaningful and helps the organization meet its goal.

2.5 The professionals' career choices

Not all workers or professionals are going to stay working for organizations. Professionals, for example, have good fundamentals for becoming entrepreneurs because they understand the field or industry's details, technical terms, and methods. They are also familiar with the functional operations, which lowers the bar since the most significant learning is already done. (Kirby & Dylan, 1997.) Segal and Borgia (2005) highlight the motivation of becoming an entrepreneur. It is a great personal

challenge since becoming an entrepreneur demands tolerance for risk and other traits like efficacy. So many individuals prefer staying as an employee over someone else.

On the other hand, the entrepreneur is not the only option – sometimes, the circumstances make people and employees think more about their work and career, as Pliner (1990) explains. Involuntary results of downsizing and other reasons to leave the organizations or personal reasons are also options. Organizations can go through difficult financial times, so they need to let go of people. It could also be an unsuitable employee for the organization, or the employee has made a severe mistake. It could also be the opposite: employees like the work itself, but the organization's culture or management negatively affects the employee's well-being.

Then, there is the voluntary part of employees who leave the organization. As well as in the previous paragraph, Pliner (1990) also explains the other side of leaving the organization. One of the primary reasons to go is financial inducement. Other likely reasons are the lack of work or career satisfaction, discomfort with work or tasks, fatigue, or burnout. Feelings are linked to each other – an employee can be discomforted for not moving forward or proceeding inside the company as much as the employee wants, or the discomfort can come from unsuitable working methods or organizational culture. Fatigue or even burnout can occur from the unsuccessful stress management of employees. Still, it can also be too demanding work, tasks, or, as Harter and Blacksmith (2009) continue the topic, managers from the organization's side. Poor management can be a reason for leaving, but also not getting into a better position with different tasks. It is essential to mention that even though the organization is responsible for offering employees a good environment in the workplace, it is not the organization's responsibility to make the career path for the employee. The employee needs to decide on the path. Career management, as Pliner (1990) describes it, highlights the responsibility of an individual to select the career direction and to identify and gain skills needed for the defined career goal.

Not mentioned in Pliner's (1990) research, downshifting could also be a potential reason to leave the organization. Downshifting could be related to consumption or work life, for example, and this thesis observes the work-life side, not the less consuming and even simpler lifestyle side. Chhetri, Stimson and Western's (2009) research highlights that many people work harder and longer hours, and their work life

is often more stressful and competitive than ever before. Cockman and Pyke (2020) add that the work-life balance is seen as more important as the environment of both are becoming more complex and demanding. Therefore, some people live less work-oriented lives and use the excess time for friends and family. Downshifting is a process where people get a state of satisfaction and fulfillment by changing the work arrangement. People are making voluntary long-run changes in their lives, such as changing to a less demanding work culture and schedule, in exchange for enjoying life more. (Chhetri et al., 2009.)

According to Chhetri et al. (2009), downshiffters usually have a reduced income by shortening work hours or changing jobs to less demanding, lower-paying jobs. This group includes those who want to start their own company or organization, go to study, and change their career and industry. If it is a long-term change, family needs are also included in this group. Downshifting is also a result of the negative impact of work life. People are willing to make a change in their wealth if there is stress, fatigue, or unhappiness in their workplace. It is also strongly suggested that if economic pressures, especially from work, are threatening people's personal or social well-being, people prioritize their personal relationships higher than work, and work recedes. Cockman and Pyke (2020) discuss that professionals or knowledge-based workers have a good base for starting a company. If the company succeeds and brings in more money than the previously paid job but still has lower stress levels and demands, it counts as a downshifting.

Chapter 2 covers certain areas of organizations due to their importance in this case study. Organizations are a widely and highly studied field, and many areas are not included in this thesis. What organizations can offer and what career opportunities professionals have are important topics to discuss when professionals are on the verge of burnout due to poor work well-being in a challenging work environment.

3 WORK WELL-BEING

Work well-being is a broad and diverse concept, and its meaning has changed. It is also a subjective experience since it is affected by various factors. (Vartiainen, 2017.) If talked casually between workers, it can mean different things to everybody. For some, it is ergonomic from a physical job; for others, it is the environment created by other workers. A few of the most researched topics are work stress and fatigue, burnout, work engagement, and work satisfaction. (Mäkikangas & Hakanen, 2017.) The effects of team-based work and the well-being of professionals are also important topics to discuss in this thesis.

Wallace (2022) explains that work well-being has been practiced in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and the concept has been developing over time. Global phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic have also influenced work well-being. Currently, the definition by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024) is not straightforward since it has all kinds of aspects of working life: quality, safety, physical and physical environment, workers' feelings, and the climate at the work organization. Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (suom. Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö) (STM, 2024) defines well-being at work as a whole, which includes work satisfaction, health, safety, and well-being. It is affected by good and motivated management, other workers' environments, and workers' expertise.

ILO (2024) argues the importance of workers' well-being since it strongly determines the long-run effectiveness of the organization. General well-being is shown as a positive factor of productivity, and STM (2024) adds the positive effect of increased work commitment and decreased levels of sick or ill absences. ILO (2024) continues arguing that it is important for organizations to take care of their workers because it affects all the processes and areas of the organizations. Whereas ILO highlights the organizations' responsibility of taking care of their employees, STM (2024) divides it equally for both organizations and employees. The organization needs to take care of the aspects of the environment in the workplace, and employees, on the other hand, have the responsibility of maintaining their working ability and professional skills. All employees can affect the positive environment of the workplace.

3.1 Work stress

Work stress is one of the most spoken factors concerning well-being at work. It affects not only the people but also organizations and society. More dynamic and technology-based organizations are creating trends, which may cause more stressful work environments for employees. (Meister, Cheng, Dael & Krings, 2022.) Work stress is normal for every job, and people can handle external pressure. It is good to remember that a good and suitable amount of stress can boost and motivate them to face new challenges. Employee can recover from the stress in their leisure time, but some factors give too much workload. Job demands and job resources are balancing each other – factors that require instant or sustained psychophysical efforts. For example, time pressure, conflicts, and workload are job demands, while job resources make the job easier or more pleasant for employees. For instance, job autonomy, social support, and task variety can ease job demands. (de Jonge & Dormann, 2017.)

De Jonge and Dormann (2017) continue explaining that people and employees react differently to stress, and they classified the reaction into five categories: a) affective, b) cognitive, c) physical, d) behavioral, and e) motivational. Feeling anxious, making wrong decisions, having lower back pain or sleeping problems, and feeling less energetic are common symptoms in different categories. Employees can recover from these symptoms if workload and stress are not overwhelmingly big, but if prolonged, the employees can feel fatigued and have health problems and even burnout. Linden, Keijsers, Eling and Schaijk (2005) continue a similar topic by explaining that burnout is a stress-related disorder, where stress causes mental exhaustion, which is the most important factor.

3.2 Work fatigue

Work fatigue is built up and formed from prolonged work stress, draining employees' resources. It is no longer peak fatigue from the rush, but rather become general and seen in every situation. Work fatigue also has a significant role in job demands and resources. (Frone & Tidwell, 2015.)

Mäkikangas and Hakanen (2017) add that work fatigue is usually defined and measured by fatigue/tiredness, cynicism, and declined professionalism self-esteem. Symptoms are both mental and physical, and usually, the first ones to notice are fatigue and tiredness since they affect the physical and physical resources of the employee. A cynical employee is moving further away from work and doubting the meaning of work. The satisfaction of done work is decreased, and the working method transforms more as mechanics and employees do not want to make an effort for the results. While professionalism self-esteem, the signs are seen when employees judge their work results negatively, the employees doubt and usually feel like their skills are insufficient, and their overall work power is decreased. Work fatigue can occur from all kinds of work, from uneducated to higher levels of management. If an employee experiences fatigue for an extended period of time, it is likely to lead to burnout.

3.3 Burnout

There are a few definitions for the burnout concept. As Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2014) describe, it is a process where there is a progressive depletion of emotional energy and loss of motivation and enthusiasm. As quoted, it is *"a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional life --- the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one's devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired result."* (Bakker et al. 2014, pp. 390). This means that employees who suffer from burnout have low energy levels and lose their motivation to do their job. As in work fatigue, three symptoms indicate strongly if someone has burnout. Employee is emotionally exhausted by being in contact with other people. Employees can have negative, detached feelings and responses to different people, and have reduced personal accomplishment, meaning a decline in employee's feelings about competence and success at work. If these symptoms become chronic, it usually leads to employees' poor physical health and increased absence of sickness. It also indicates a decrease in job performance. Linden et al. (2005) give a few more examples of how job performance is decreased. Burned-out individuals may experience cognitive failures, such as careless errors, but also have trouble with planning the work and working towards the goal.

Bakker et al. (2014) explain that an excessive amount of high job demand over a prolonged period can lead to burnout. Job demands are the aspects of a job that require emotional, physical, and cognitive effort to achieve work goals. These demands are also associated with various symptoms, such as elevated blood pressure and heart rate, and feelings of fatigue. Research has also shown a link between burnout and musculoskeletal disorders. To counter these job demands, there are job resources, which are seen more positively and are linked to work satisfaction and engagement.

3.4 Work satisfaction

Job resources are different aspects that help to achieve work goals or reduce job demands. They can be physical, emotional, social, or even organizational, and they have a positive impact on the employee. These resources can aid in personal growth, learning, and development. (Bakker et al. 2014.) Having suitable job resources, employees are usually more satisfied. Work satisfaction, in the simplest form, it is the factors that the employee is satisfied with and what not, and mostly, it is the overall feeling of the employee about the work. As mentioned at the beginning of chapter 3, work well-being and satisfaction are generally subjective, and every employee feels that they are different. Employees can be satisfied with the work itself, but it is not as committed as employees who describe being engaged in work. (Mäkikangas & Hakanen, 2017.)

There are multiple ways to measure whether employees are satisfied or happy with their work and workplace. It can be wage, safety, working conditions, and management, and even the country's culture may affect how work satisfaction is measured. Individualist and collectivist cultures may affect how important teamwork and relationships between managers and employees are. However, employees who identify and are committed to the organization are more likely to put extra effort into the company, which is, in the end, good for the company and positively impacts the employees' well-being. (van Dick & Monzani, 2017.) Work satisfaction is linked to work engagement because engaged employees are usually satisfied with their work.

3.5 Work engagement

Work engagement is seen as a positive topic in work well-being. Work engagement is almost seen as the opposite of work fatigue since employees usually have high energy, good involvement, and high efficacy feelings. It could also be seen more as a motivation and feeling-based factor: the employee has positive vigor, dedication, and work absorption. The employee is energetic and wants to make an effort to work; the work is seen as meaningful, it has enough challenges, and the employee is proud of the work itself. Employees can also have deep focus, and as time passes fast, it brings satisfaction that can even be hard to let go of. Entrepreneurs, professionally based employees, and service and sales workers feel the most engaged in work. (Mäkikangas & Hakanen, 2017.)

Bakker et al. (2014) describe work engagement slightly differently. Engaged employees identify with the work and, thus, give greater effort to it. Employees can express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during the work or role. As in the burnout paragraphs, being engaged to work impacts employee health. Work engagement supports better health, including healthy cardiac autonomic activity. Employees who are not negatively fatigued from work can enjoy leisure time, such as sports and exercise, hobbies, and social activities, which help employees to relax and detach from work. This does not mean that engaged employees do not feel fatigued in their work. The feeling of tiredness is different from that of those who are not engaged in work or are feeling burnt out. Tiredness and fatigue are rather pleasant since they are associated with positive performance and achievement. The work itself is pleasant, fun, or rewarding, and they can detach from it. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008.) Employees and managers can feel more energetic and inspired, be more open to new things, and be open to new experiences. Trying out and learning new things can boost employees' and managers' creativity. Engaged employees are also receptive, which results in higher active learning and proactive behavior. This usually leads to employees being more organized, careful, and industrious. Combining various factors, employees likely want to keep the positive work situations and actively improve them. (Bakker et al., 2014.)

As mentioned, job resources can counter job demand, and it is shown that job resources are the most important factor when speaking of employee work engagement. Examples of job resources are colleague support, regular performance feedback, and manager coaching. All of these affect better results in work performance because employees feel positive emotions at work, they have better health to do their job and recover from it, they are supported, and they receive feedback on their performance. They can even boost the whole team's performance by being engaged to work. (Bakker et al., 2014.)

3.6 Job crafting

Le Blanc, Demerouti and Bakker (2017) advocate for employees to take responsibility for crafting their jobs. By adjusting their level of job demands and resources, employees can make their work more engaging, meaningful, and satisfying. This can also influence learning, as employees can change tasks and responsibilities or take on more challenging tasks, particularly in today's demanding and diverse working environments. Moreover, when it comes to job redesign, a bottom-up approach is more beneficial than top-down, as employees are unique individuals with different preferences and desires. Job crafting can occur on a daily basis and can take many forms. Attitudes and behaviors can be considered as job crafting, as how the work is perceived and viewed by the employee is a part of job crafting. It can also have a social aspect, for instance, if two employees are not getting along well, changing their schedules or workplaces can have a positive impact on both employees' well-being. Allvin and Movitz (2017) note that the current trend of hybrid or remote work is also a form of job crafting. Even flexible working hours can help employees make changes in their job to better fit their life outside of work. However, it's important to remember that what works for one organization may not be suitable for another.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) go deeper into the benefits and effects of job crafting. They have three different viewpoints: individual motivations, opportunities and orientations' effects, and lastly, organizational effect. Motivation for crafting a job raises some basic needs of the employees. Having control of the work helps individuals not lose touch with the work. If employees do not have any or have very little control over their work or conditions, they might feel pushed away. Employees usually want

to create a positive identity at work in the eyes of others. They might want to change the tasks or responsibilities to match their work better. One more need is a connection to others. It can be as simple as meeting colleagues or in the service industry, seeing and hearing who is using the end results. This can change how employees see their work by having interactions with others. Wanting to change some of the needs indicates that the current work is not meeting the needs of employees. Zhang and Li (2020) support the social part of job crafting – it can create a situation where employees find their job more meaningful and enjoyable.

Employees who want to craft their jobs are more likely to seek opportunities. Having a chance to craft their job, employees can have a sense of freedom, a positive effect on autonomy, and the possibility to gain some abilities. Seeking opportunities and being able to craft positively impact motivation to craft the job and behavior towards crafting. Orientation affects more of the relationship between motivation and behavior or attitude toward job crafting. (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001.)

The last thing that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) mention about the effect of job crafting is for the organization. Warr and Nielsen (2018) continue that even though it is hard to measure, there are links that crafting jobs supports organizational, social, and psychological environments of the organization more broadly. These include new ideas for working, helping others, being cheerful, and doing good quality work.

Job crafting is not about doing more or better; it is more about changing the job so that it is possible to perform better and change the workload to be more suitable for the employees. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) highlight that everybody doesn't have to fulfill motivational needs—they might get those aspects from outside the work. At the same time, if those needs are at a suitable level, employees might not have the motivation to change them, and they might be satisfied with the current situation.

3.7 Teamwork and team leadership

Friedrich and Ulber (2017) explain that most work inside organizations is structured around different teams. Working in teams is becoming more and more common and important since the environment of organizations is becoming more complex and dynamic. There are many reasons why employees in organizations are working in

teams. Teamwork usually creates space for innovation and new ideas because people spend time together. Usually, most people enjoy working and communicating with others, and it affects the social side of work. The social side is especially important and fulfilling if it reduces the workload and stress, gives motivation, and enhances personal development and skills. As mentioned in different connections and contexts, social support in teams improves health and reduces burnout factors. If the team members work well together and can structure their work, members can feel efficient due to the flexibility of tasks. There are also signs that team-based organizations have a flatter hierarchy and that management is improving in quality. It also affects the organization's whole structure, making it less complex.

As the teams interact socially with each other, they create norms and expectations for roles, and they also share knowledge. These all are affected when new members come in, or members leave. Newly coming members can change the structure and dynamics of the team to a more negative outcome, but there is another side – new members may want to fit in and do not want to change the structure before learning and knowing the team well. This puts the teams in a good place to examine their norms and values. (Kozlowski & Bell, 2013.) Van Dick and Monzani (2017) explain that most of the time, workplace teams are a great source for social relationships for adults. Since employee spends their time in organizations, bonds between colleagues can raise the organizational membership feeling. Working with other teams and stakeholders can help employees feel belonging. Elmore, Skelley and Woolley (2014) summarize that teamwork can create feelings that team members respect each other. By respecting others, team members worked harder and more collaboratively, and their communication and ability to work together with other people got better.

Kozlowski and Bell (2013) define work teams so, that they are a) two or more individuals, and b) they exist to perform relevant organizational tasks. They also c) share common goals of the team or organization, and d) their task are related to each other. As groups usually do, they e) interact socially with each other, d) manage and maintain boundaries, and lastly, are g) internalized to the organization, which also sets the boundaries, controls the team, and influences other units. As the team has two or more individuals, the right number of members varied from organizations. In bigger groups, there might be more access to resources, like energy and money, but it can also create laziness among the members. Warr and Nielsen (2018) add that the number of

members is one of the important moderators affecting group performance. The relationship between members is stronger if the group has less than ten members. The number of members can also be given; for example, in esports, team-based games usually have three to five active players in different roles.

An effective team is formed when there is a balance between demands, resources, and team processes. The whole team is also affected by individuals' personalities, abilities, how the organization is structured, and what are the goals, for example. The team may perform better on demanding tasks than an individual because members share the workload, ideas, different opinions, and understandings. Good management or coaching is essential since team leaders create an environment where the teams can trust each other, and by trusting each other, the team is likely to perform better on activities and tasks. (Friedrich & Ulber, 2017.) Kozlowski and Bell (2013) explain more about the team leader's part. There are several different functions for team leaders, but the two most common categories are a) development and shaping the team processes and b) monitoring and managing the team's performance. To excel in these, team leaders need to make the team a connected and well-integrated unit so that their performance is seamless. Team leaders have a critical role when a new member is coming in since it changes the team's dynamic and performance. The coherent team performs better, which is the team leader's goal. A team that works well together allows the members to make independent decisions during intensive tasks and performance.

As Friedrich and Ulber (2017) mention creating the environment, Kozlowski and Bell (2013) explain why it is important and how team leaders can maintain favorable conditions for the team to perform well. Monitoring the team means that the leader collects the data from different events, how the team performs, and what the team does in different situations. A leader takes responsibility for gaining information about the environment and then applies it to other situations. Monitoring also includes forecasting the changes that might come ahead and then using problem-solving skills. Typically, managing and taking action occur when feedback is given. By giving feedback, the team knows that actions and behavior have consequences. Supporting and finding opportunities are based on the responsibilities of the team leader.

Also, the absenteeism of members affects the whole team and even the organization, especially when members are away unexpectedly, or the absenteeism is long-lasting.

As the team is affected by social pressure and norms, those guide how employees behave and interact with others. Crafted jobs supported by other members strengthen the relationship between team members, work engagements, and performance. (Warr & Nielsen, 2018.) Bakker and Demerouti (2008) emphasize the support from a team or colleagues. Employees who get support from the members are less cynical, which leads to better individual performance of the tasks. Also, Mäkikangas, Aunola, Seppälä and Hakanen (2016) suggested that job crafting in a team promotes the team's environment, increasing job engagement. Members who share engagement are motivated to invest in their skills and personal developments, which positively affect the path towards the work goals.

Chapter 3 involves essential elements of work well-being, such as job demands and resources, which create a base for work stress, fatigue, burnout, job satisfaction, and engagement. Job crafting is seen as a tool in work well-being, by adjusting the essential elements. Teamwork and team leadership greatly affect work well-being and play a critical role in esports.

4 ELECTRONIC SPORT

From the environment and professionalism side of esports, there are many similarities between the business industry and esports. Working in front of the computer, having passion, and being professional are similar topics to esports, but esports brings intensely high pressures and competitive environments. It is also a highly dynamic industry and business since it is still an emerging market. The industry has grown in popularity in previous years: prize money and the sponsorships and businesses around it are increasing.

Electronic sports, commonly known as esports, are based on players and video games. Finnish Esports Federation (Suomen elektronisen urheilun liitto, SEUL) describes esports as a competitive sport that utilizes electronic devices. Esports can be practiced solo and in a team, depending on the game genre. Video games can be played by various devices, including computers (PCs) and game consoles. (SEUL, 2021.) Different consoles are Playstation, Nintendo, Xbox, mobile, and so on, but this thesis goes through games and teams that use PC as their device. It is important to remember that not all gaming is esports – the hobby becomes a sport when there are goal-directed competitions against others (SEUL, 2021). The biggest prize pools for computer games are in Dota 2 and Counter-Strike, while the most watched and viewed games are League of Legends and Counter-Strike (Esports charts, 2024A). It is good to remember that there are also games that are newer than previously mentioned, so they are not yet as popular as games that have been on the market longer. Also, there is a broader and deeper history of esports in Asia than in Europe or the USA. Esports organizations are not usually big; even the top five biggest organizations have 21-27 active players in 2024 (Esports charts, 2024B). It is also good to remember that organizations usually have few games they are focusing on and are also financially capable of, so the organization around one specific team playing one game can be wide.

In many other sports, there are regulations and organizations that keep up with the rules and regulations. In esports, several organizations want to manage these rules and regulations, but there is no one and only organization of the official lawmaker of esports. Some countries are more active than others but focus on different things.

However, there are some rules and regulations inside the games which the game makers and companies monitor. (Georgiades, 2021.)

It is good to mention at least two specific genres – First Person Shooter (FPS) and Multiplayer Online Battlefield Arena (MOBA). FPS is a shooting-based game in the eye-level view of the character, and the player can only see what the character sees, besides a minimal map on the screen to ease the location of the player. Usually, the main thing is to eliminate the opponent, and while the match is going on, the characters or items do not get that much better, at least compared to MOBA. MOBA, on the other hand, is viewed from a bird-level view, and the main thing is to destroy another team's base. Players can move so that they can see what happens in other places. Characters have different abilities and get better skills and items throughout the match. (SEUL, 2019A; SEUL 2019B.)

Here is a little more about a few popular games. League of Legends (LoL) is one of the most popular games in esports worldwide. LoL is a MOBA game, and the team is five players against another team's five players. There are different roles between the players and champions. The game is played in real-time, so decisions and strategies are applied immediately. To win, team needs to destroy enemies' base. Champions can be reborn after a specific time. The average game length for professionals is half an hour, and LoL can be played only on a computer with a mouse and keyboard. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) LoL has also made it to popular culture: the Netflix TV series Arcane has the same champions as the LoL video game (Arcane, 2024). This also shows that video games are becoming more popular and broader as a concept.

Counter-Strike (CS) is another popular game in the esports field. It is FPS genre game and played in teams, five against five. Unlike LoL, CS has a defending-attacking position. The attacking team needs to lay a bomb and protect it while the other team tries to neutralize it. Tournaments go through several rounds, changing the roles: best of 30 rounds wins. Where LoL has a longer match time, CS has around 2 minutes. Champions cannot be reborn after death, which affects the time each match is held. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) CS has a special place in esports history because the original version was made in 1999. One of the most popular version was Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, which made the way to the leading games in esports. Later,

it was replaced with other versions, but CS has created one of the milestones of esports history. (Mullane, 2023.)

There are other popular games besides previously mentioned. For example, Valorant, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), and Dota 2 are popular. Games like Rocket League and Apex peaked in popularity the previous year. (Esports charts, 2024A.) How the esports begin is introduced in the next chapter.

4.1 Background and culture

As a sport, esports is new compared to football and skating, for example, which have been popular for decades and even generations. Overall, the history of electronic gaming could start from the past when the first computers were invented in the 1940s, and simplistic coding and programming were designed after that. One of the most well-known multiplayer games, Spacewar!, was invented in the 1960s at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (Conner-Simons & Gordon, 2019.) Later, one of the first events in esports tournaments' history was in 1972, when the "Intergalactic Spacewar! Olympics" was held on Stanford University's campus (Good, 2012).

It has been a long way from prizes such as one year of subscription to Rolling Stone magazine (Good, 2012) to thousands of dollars up to millions (Esports Earnings, 2024). During the 2000s, the rise of access to the internet had a massive impact on gaming—it was possible to be online and play against others from different parts of the world. CS, with other games like LoL, made the path for the esports concept.

It is essential to mention that the video game culture, communities, bloggers, streamers, and the sport itself is highly male-dominant. Both Jenson and Castell (2018) and Nagorsky and Wiemeuer (2020) agree that many studies may be slightly biased because they predominantly feature male participants. Jenson and Castell (2018) highlight that video game and esports culture and economics are still rising due to game developers making tournaments and competitions. The markets are highly profitable, including competition for media rights, merchandise, tickets, sponsorships, advertising, et cetera. For example, in 2016, the estimates of the video game industry were close to US\$100 billion (Minotti, 2016), and also in 2016, one of the most played games, LoL, published by Riot, reported that their eSports Championship Finals were

viewed by 43 million people (Jenson & Castell, 2018). Efreem (2022) explains that esports has several employment aspects. Esports have affected, for example, pop culture, marketing, designers, coders, and partnerships. In pop culture, TV series, and fashion partnerships with one esports team make the esports image more approachable for a larger audience. However, who are the players and coaches in the industry?

4.2 Professionalism in esports

Nagorsky and Wiemeuer (2020) go through the technicalities that there is no general agreement on how esports relate to traditional sports. Giakoni-Ramírez, Merellano-Navarro and Duclos-Bastías (2022) explain that there are many similarities to traditional sports like football, soccer, and ice hockey. Professional players are signed up with professional esports organizations and get paid by the team and sponsors, and companies also recognize them. Contracts, player buyouts, and many other things exist in traditional sports. Rather than comparing esports players to traditional sports, they are sometimes called “cognitive competitors” because of their high cognitive skills. While comparing pro players and military air traffic control and some strategies for military management, they found many similarities between the requirements for getting the work done. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

As mentioned in a couple of genres, there are different mechanisms and rules inside the games that pro players need to master. And as the definition of professionalism is, pro players actively practice their skills and knowledge to perform better. Problem-solving, inductive, and spatial imagination skills are needed, as well as eye-hand coordination and social abilities. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) One significant factor that professional esports players should have is the ability to focus on the ongoing game intensely. If players do not focus, they can make mistakes, which can cause a loss in the match. Since professional esports players are known to have good focusing skills, it does not mean they are always focusing on the game. Usually, thoughts drift from time to time, but one important skill is to be able to recognize it and focus back on the game. A positive outcome from training a lot is that it becomes almost automated at some point, and players do not need to focus so much on the basic things. This eases the workload during games. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

Like in traditional sports, tactical and cognitive abilities affect the results of performance and games. Almost all the most popular esports games require strategic thinking and decision-making, not only thinking about one player but also the whole team and what is best for the team. This includes past knowledge about the rules, applying new information, adapting to different situations, and learning from those. Especially adapting is a game-changing ability in competitive esports. Games and matches are dynamic, and changes happen in seconds, so players must be flexible and react quickly to new situations. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) The communication aspect should not be forgotten: compared to casual players, professional players tend to develop more meaningful connections with other team members since they all work towards the same goal, and communication has a crucial role. (Giakoni-Ramírez et. al, 2022). Players receive a lot of information quickly, and they need to make decisions in seconds while the game is going on. A player's actions influence how other team members and the enemy team react and do. This means that players are required to have high cognitive skills, in other words, handling the information, which comes from perception, remembering, learning, and decision-making while communicating with others. They also need to have good spatial perception skills. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

In car racing or soccer, esports count coordination and skills as essential abilities for professional players. The game is controlled by the reaction time of what the player sees on the screen and how the hands react on the mouse or the keyboard. The mouse and keyboard affect how the champion or character moves inside the game and what skills or weapons are used. To be at the pro level, players have to master a lot of different weapons, skills, and champions, which takes time and effort. This also requires good coordination skills and synchronous movement of fingers, hands, arms, and eyes. Another aspect of coordination is spatial thinking. Players need to know where they are on the map and where their team members are. Also, knowing where the enemy is brings the prediction and reaction aspect and how to act in those situations. Those are vital aspects to master since predicting what the enemy might do next or what team members are doing next are essential components of successful gaming. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) Several topics influence the work of professional esports players, but one of the main ones is teamwork in esports.

4.3 Teamwork in esports

Haataja and Leinonen (2022) also highlight the importance of communication and interactions between the players. Especially when the team size is small, five members, for example. Traditional sports, like soccer and ice hockey, can have 30 members on the same team, so everyone can not communicate simultaneously. Players communicate more intensively with each other than, for example, in soccer. They also can not see what happens on the other side of the map, so players keep their team members aware of what happens in different parts of the game. As Nagorsky and Wiemeuer (2020) continue, team-based games are about how the team acts together. Therefore, social abilities play an essential role in successful performance. Communication between players and coaches is important, but it is also affected by team structure and the dynamic of teamwork. Social behavior and responsibility in competitions are especially relevant. Can others be trusted and relied on? How does the team act inside and outside the game after losing or winning? The team's social cohesion and communication are significant factors and part of team-based esports.

As Giakoni-Ramírez et al. (2022) highlighted in the previous chapter, players need to respect and treat each other well inside the teams. Not everyone agrees with everyone, and that is one key point for professionals to learn. Good communication skills also include properly giving feedback. Giving feedback, from coach to player or player to player, is a learning situation, even though it can feel devastating. That is also why professionals must know how to handle dissatisfaction and disappointment. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

4.4 Job resources and demands

As in sports in general, mental skills are essential at the top level. Since skills and abilities are usually sharpened to the very top and there are little to no differences between players, motivation, self-esteem, and ability to handle losses and disappointments can make the difference in who wins and stays at the top. Haataja and Leinonen (2022) speak about the high motivation that professional players have. Motivation plays the role of why people are doing the thing and why they are involved in it. Strong motivation can help training through hard times and disappointments, and

loss of motivation has been one of the most common reasons for quitting. Internal and external motivation factors play a significant role in performance and results. Internal motivation comes from the players – they can enjoy playing, and it gives them satisfaction and positive experiences. Wanting to be better and win tournaments are also internal factors. External factors are usually given or forced, like prize money and fame. These also include the negative aspects since people can easily make negative comments on the internet. Attitude from outsiders is also an affecting factor. Giakoni-Ramírez et al. (2022) spoke about similar topics, giving the esports scene more value in the beginning. With time, more experience, challenges, and time, external factors became more important.

Sports and esports have similar mentally demanding factors and pressures: time, precision, situational, complexity, and stress pressures are involved in esports matches. Professional esports are also about stressful situations, dealing with disappointment, and personal performance in the team. Therefore, players must know how to handle these pressures and be accurate while being calm and adapted. (Kegelaers et al., 2024.) On the other hand, there are strong minds of motivation to improve an individual's skills and become better at facing challenges and new situations. That is why professional players are being trained so that different personalities learn from their weakest points to perform well in a team. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.)

Sitting for extended periods is bad for individuals' health since it is a stable position and may cause lower back problems. Professional esports players are in conditions where musculoskeletal issues are possible due to their relatively stable but tense position. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.) Haataja and Leinonen (2022) add a couple more inconveniences or bothers from work for esports players. Those are tiredness of the eye due to looking at the screen without breaks, and one common issue is a pain in the arm or wrist due to intense use of them on the keyboard and mouse.

Overall well-being and work well-being affect how people sleep, drink, and eat. Especially in cognitive work, people's brains can rest and learn from the day's events. It also prepares for the next day's challenges. Sleep is also one of the most significant factors that affect communication and interaction between humans – one can be irritated easily. At the same time, the other is quiet and not communicating, and it is hard to reach. It can also affect the whole team's performance if one is not in shape or

is saying things they would not usually say. (Kegelaers et al., 2024.) Sleep and staying hydrated are essential for professional players because sleeping enough and staying well-hydrated positively affect reactions, eye-arm coordination, and decision-making processes. Drinking enough water also means players do not feel tired or get headaches and can focus better on the game. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

One significant stress factor for many esports players is the money. Instead of getting money from selling tickets in the arena, teams get money from sponsorships and selling fan products. Getting sponsorships may be financially beneficial since sponsors can also fund housing, salaries, and equipment. Still, they usually require hours of work per week, away from team practices and resting time. (Harrison, 2015.) Since esports can be played anywhere in the world, players need to travel a lot, especially if the number of tournaments per year starts to become close to three digits. Different time zones and the travel itself are also away from the training and resting time of the team, not to mention how travel affects sleeping, eating, hydration, and seeing relatives and friends. As most team games are played with an internet connection, it is hard for players not to see the negative side of the internet. In public, there have been cases and interviews of players receiving negative comments or threads. Players cannot be entirely out of social media because many sponsorships require that the team show or tell their products or services (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.) Being one of the most stressful factors in esports, matches and tournaments are essential to the game and its environment.

4.5 During matches and tournaments

Before the match, players can have some preparations or routines so that they can give their best in the match in the event and tournaments. Each player can have different things, so finding the right factors for everyone is essential. (Haataja & Leinonen, 2022.)

As well known, basic technological skills are required to be a professional player. Knowing how to handle relevant devices, such as a computer, mouse, or internet connection, and how to manage and change settings is part of esports. Modifying a mouse's speed and knowing communication options inside the game or via headset

affect an individual's performance. Changing the whole set, for example, a customized chair, computer, or mouse, is up to players' preferences. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.)

Because the skills and abilities to handle the game are close to being the same level at the top position, habits outside of the tournaments usually make the difference between winners and losers. If players' sleeping, eating, hydrating, and exercise levels, for example, are at a good base, they are more likely to perform better. Handling stress is essential because stress can affect all of the mentioned factors - players who are stressed about something might react differently. One cannot sleep so well, while the other loses appetite. It is also important to note these so that they can be appropriately handled. (Leis et al., 2022.)

While intensive tournaments have been discussed, in esports, matches are usually held in one single day. This means that players need to maintain high skill levels all day long. Even though there are differences between games, LoL, for example, has a much longer duration than CS, and between short CS matches, players can recover better. (Nagorsky & Wiemeuer, 2020.)

4.6 After esports career

It is good to remember that after a career, there are unique skills learned from the competitive esports career. For example, players have good digital intelligence and perform well in rapidly changing and attention-demanding environments. They are also good at communication since team-based games require efficient communication. Improved cognitive abilities are due to the rules and strategies learned, and they can handle large amounts of information. These can create a good base for a future career somewhere else. (Smithies et al., 2020.)

Haataja and Leinonen (2022) point out that since the esports industry and era are relatively new, the constant change may calm down eventually. And by understanding and studying more of esports players, the team can take better care of the players. For example, early on, practices in mental exercises are going to be important for young and future professional players. For instance, sports psychologists are going to be more

common and used in esports, which helps the new professional players to overcome the pressures of the industry.

One more opportunity after an esports career is becoming a coach in the esports industry. While there are many ways for people to become coaches in the esports industry, coaches are still a relatively new thing in esports; when thinking of other sports, soccer, for example, has some legends who have passed away due to old age, but esports is not there yet. Networking is essential for aspiring coaches, especially for those without a background as players. It involves starting from grassroots teams and organizations, being open about ambitions, and working towards coaching professionally. Gaining a reputation in the industry and having a passion is important since becoming and staying in the competitive esports industry is hard. (Marie, 2023.)

Being an esports coach requires some level of self-organization and personal development. They are crucial in providing support and being present in various ways. Responsibilities include making sure the communication and strategies are polished and players' personal skills are used appropriately. It also requires critical thinking and managing relationships inside the team. Communication is highlighted in coach work because it affects how the coach is seen in the team and how the team members perform together. (Giakoni-Ramírez et. al, 2022; Marie, 2023.)

There can be different roles for coaches. For example, an analytics coach can work around specific elements of the game, as well as with analysis, strategizing, and preparations. Specific elements can depend on the game, but it can be with different maps, characters, and items used in the game. It gives time to another coach to focus on well-being and mental health but also creates space for sports psychologists. Even though coaches do not have to be professional players before becoming a coach, it usually helps since the knowledge of the game is essential. Being interested in esports and motivated helps in the role of coaching. Still, it also takes communication and team-setting skills because while players are skillful in their games, coaches must demonstrate their strategies and ideas clearly. Even though games vary rather a lot, for example, MOBA and FPS games, ideas behind coaching are the same. (Marie, 2023.)

This chapter discusses the empirical part of this thesis. Starting from the definition of esports, continuing the similar themes as in other main chapters, it explains how dynamic the esports environment is. Interviews with professional esports players and

coaches will add depth to the theoretical part of the thesis and give examples of what aspects should be learned from professional esports. Interviews will also highlight what should be implemented in professionals' management and work well-being.

5 METHODOLOGY

This chapter represents more of the theoretical and empirical methods used. The theoretical chapter explains why different sources were chosen and what limitations there are. Empirical methods explain more of the choice of interviews, and data-gathering methods introduce the target group and the time used in the interviews. The structure of the interview is also explained more in the last subchapter.

5.1 Research methods

Research begins with a narrative literature review of topics and themes. It uses previous findings and studies to create a theoretical base for the research. (Salminen, 2011.) A literature review is a broadly used research method that can be described, more or less systematically, as a way of collecting and combining previous research. It is also used to provide an overview of the topics or themes covered in the study and show what areas are missing from the research. A literature review can also show if there is some conflict or disagreement on the topic between sources and researchers (Snyder, 2019.)

There are some guides to make sure the review is accurate, precise, and trustworthy. Using reliable sources, such as articles and books, is one way of making sure the literature review is not biased. (Snyder, 2019.) Reliable sources, such as peer-reviewed articles, where other experts have evaluated the article, were easily found in chapter 2, Organizations, and chapter 3, Work well-being. Using more than one source to describe the concept was more common since the concept was usually viewed from different viewpoints depending on the article. Using known researchers in their field and those who have been studying the field for a long period were more common than in chapter 4, Electronic Sport. Some fields in esports are more studied than others. For example, esports players are more studied than coaches and while there are parts of coaching in the chapter 4, those are based on journalism articles, which are not peer reviewed but are still based on the professionals' interviews in the field. There are also a lot of studies on the topic and themes of esports players' health and well-being. Those

studies varied from interviews to tests and even clinical experiences and terms, depending on the viewpoint of the well-being.

Most sources are from Google Scholar, using terms like organizations, work well-being, professionalism, entrepreneur, and esports. There were a lot of leading words specifying the meaning of articles, like professionalism in organizations or the well-being of professionals. Also, a few notable sources were books. One is about organizational psychology, whose chapters were written by different researchers. Those researchers are well-known in their field of study. Other books are about work engagement and esports. The articles were found in various resources, and they were used to explain some concepts or to create a base for further. News and other sites were used as well to explain things, especially in esports.

The primary language was English, and the second was Finnish. Regarding organization and work well-being, old and new articles, and news have been found widely since topics have been studied for a long time. On the other hand, Esports is still being studied as a concept, and fewer articles and research studies have been done before 2010. The interest in the topic has risen, and now, articles can be found more easily. However, unlike organizations, esports has been harder to view historically in the long run due to its freshness in interesting topics and themes.

5.2 Empirical methods

Case studies cover and involve single or multiple cases and can have numerous levels of analysis. These studies usually combine different methods of data collection—interviews, questionnaires, and observations are a few examples of how to collect data (Eisenhardt, 1989). Becker et al. (2005) continue that case studies are qualitative and descriptive research that looks at individuals, small groups, or a group as a whole. Jamshed (2014) explains that interview is the most common form of collecting data in qualitative research. There are different kinds of interviews depending on the structure of them. Interviews are usually semi-structured, lightly structured, or in-depth – unstructured, which is suggested when long-term field workers can express themselves in their own ways and pace. Semi-structured interviews have open-ended questions, and there is usually an individual or small group answering at the same time. Semi-

structured interviews allow speaking widely about the subjects or topics but also create lines so that the interview has appropriate answers. Interviews are held once with an individual or a group, and usually, the interview lasts at least 30 minutes, but it can continue for more than an hour. However, Becker et al. (2005) and Myers (2000) continue that results and conclusions are not for the universal and generalized truth - they focus on the exploration and description. Due to the sample size of six people and using semi-structured interviews, a single case study is the right term to describe this thesis.

Becker et al. (2005) also explain that there are a couple of examples of how to use the data from case study methods. The first is holistic, which refers to drawing conclusions based on the information as a whole. The second is through coding, which means researchers are systematically looking at data to categorize specific characteristics of actions. Coding was used in this thesis because finding factors that are essential in the management and work well-being of professionals is the aim of this thesis.

Qualitative and quantitative do not limit each other out; they can complement each other well. However, qualitative methodology is more suitable when wanting to ascertain issues or wanting to have an in-depth or extensive understanding of the issues, and interviewing, among observation, are common ways. Semi-structured interviews have open-ended questions and individual or small group answers simultaneously. Semi-structured interviews allow speaking widely of the subjects or topic, but they create lines so that the interview has appropriate answers. Interviews are held once with an individual or a group, and usually, the interview lasts at least 30 minutes, but it can continue for more than an hour. (Carminati, 2018; Jamshed, 2014.)

Jamshed (2014) also highlights that handwritten notes are relatively unreliable since they may miss some key points. The recording makes it easier to focus on the interview's content and allows for using some verbatim transcripts.

5.3 Data gathering methods

The target audience for the interview was active esports players and coaches in the European field. Since working in teams was one aspect of the thesis and games, the targeted games had three to five players in the team, plus the coach and other members.

The most common inquiry method was via email, but social media was also used for those who did not show email addresses in their information. The common inquiry was sent to eight different organizations, plus three coaches. Most of the teams and organizations did not answer; all thought esports is known to be busy in the springtime due to qualifications and tournaments depending on the game. The inquiry explained that the interviews and answers are used in the thesis, and it also highlighted the anonymity of the interview and what happens to interview information after the thesis is done.

The number of interviews was six: three players, two coaches for the teams, and one higher level coach. The organizations are located in the European area. The interview preparations were originally for Microsoft Teams and Discord - Discord was popular for practical reasons since it is a popular communication application.

Interviews were recorded, and only the audio was recorded by the audio recorder application. The interviewees got a notification when the recording started and were also reminded of the data privacy rights. In Table 1 below, there are times for interviews. Interviews lasted between 53 to 88 minutes, and the average time for an interview was 72 minutes and 20 seconds. Due to the long time used in interviews, the analysis for those can be more in-depth than in regular surveys. Players and coaches were also introduced to the data privacy notice, which was sent before the interviews to inform how the data is used and handled.

Table 1. Interviews' time

Interview number	Role	Name	Lenght (min)	Date
Interview 1	Coach	Coach 1	87	17.4.2024
Interview 2	Coach	Coach 2	88	19.4.2024
Interview 3	Coach	Coach 3	73	23.4.2024
Interview 4	Player	Player 1	60	24.4.2024
Interview 5	Player	Player 2	53	25.4.2024
Interview 6	Player	Player 3	73	4.5.2024
	Total time		434	
	Average time		72,33333	

For the small number of interviews and to secure the interviewees' privacy, specific information such as the games, organizations, and age are not shown. There was one female and five male participants from two different organizations. The age between players and coaches was 23-35. Players and coaches had been in multiple previous organizations and teams before the current one. Their experience in their current roles varied from 1,5 to 5 years, even though the total time as a professional esports person varied from three years to almost 20 years. It can be said that they are experienced in the esports industry.

5.4 Data analysis

After the interviews, the recorded audios were transcribed into different Word documents, with questions one below another and answers right after every question. The document was named Coach 1, Coach 2, Coach 3, Player 1, Player 2, and Player 3, so anonymity remains. In the result with direct citations, Interview 1 refers to Coach 1, and Interview 4 refers to Player 1, and so on. After interviews and transcriptions, a few topics and themes were more apparent than others, and it was easy to see when, for example, all the coaches' transcribed documents were in line, so it was easy to follow different answers. Those repeating topics and themes were highlighted in the documents, so some kind of coding was utilized, but answers were taken into account as a whole.

Similar methods were used by Leis et al. (2022), where some examples of final codes, such as stressors and coping strategies, were extracted from an Excel spreadsheet. Madden and Hartevelt (2021) used similar methods as in this thesis: interviews were recorded and transcribed to be used in the analysis part. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide in-depth information to strengthen the theoretical part – participants spoke of the support, or the lack of it, and the connection to wellness in esports.

5.4 Interview's structure

There are two inquiry bases: one for the coaches and one for the players. Questions for both can be found in the Appendix section. For practical reasons, the language of the questions is English.

There are two questions before the five main sections: age and whether the coaches and players have been in different teams before the current one, and if yes, how many. Those are asked for general information. In those five sections, the total amount of the main questions is 37 for the coaches and 32 for players. There are some support questions, nine for coaches and eight for players. Other questions along the way were asked to complement the answer and make the conversation and interview more flowing.

The first section is about role and background, where coaches can tell their journey of becoming an esports coach. There is also the information of their responsibilities and position in the organization. Members of the team is seen as the size of the team they are coaching, and hierarchy question goes more in-depth of the structure of the organization.

The second section focuses on the well-being of players and coaches. It focuses on the coach and the journey of well-being during their time as a coach. It includes the positive and negative factors of well-being and the commonly known fatigue in esports. Players' well-being is asked from the coach's viewpoint inside their organization and in general. Communication is seen as one part of well-being, which is the last question in the second section.

The third section focuses on job crafting and job demands. Before asking questions, both terms were explained briefly. Then, the questions revolve around the previous terms, and communication is brought up again to share things. Well-being is also brought up again to learn more concrete things and aspects of well-being.

The fourth section is about stress, feelings, and motivation. It combines organizational and well-being matters, starting with the beginning of an esports career and then about leaving esports. It also contains the players' side of leaving and how it is seen in the coach's side. There is also a question about what esports organizations should

implement to support the well-being of players and coaches. There are also general questions about leaving the esports industry and, on the other hand, motivating factors to stay in the industry.

The fifth section is the last one, containing the role satisfaction and other questions. The purpose of this one is to find out if being a professional is worth it and if they can see their future in the industry. It also contains questions about what they would change and keep in their organization and what they would change and keep in the esports industry and culture. The last few questions are about advice for those who would like to become coaches and what coaches would say to a younger version of themselves. The question is whether or not they would choose the same path. The last question is a closing question, so they can freely discuss the topics.

Players' questions are similar. There are fewer questions than in coaches' questions. The first section is the same: role, background, and the team. The second section is about players' work well-being and how the coaches and other team members support it. Different questions come from the viewpoint of what the coaches and other team members do when the team is performing well or poorly. Communication is justified as previously.

The third section is the same as coaches, job crafting, and job demands. Before asking questions, both terms were explained briefly for clarification. The questions are mainly the same, just from the players' viewpoint. The fourth section combines stress, feelings, and motivation, and the questions are pointed to the players' experiences and opinions. The fifth and last section is career Satisfaction and others, and the questions are mainly the same.

6 RESULTS

This section focuses on the results of the interviews. The section is divided into two categories, one for the coaches and another for the players. Language in this section is freer than in previous chapters since this chapter is based on coaches' and players' narrations. Using some casual terms and direct citations describes the topics better than writing in formal language, as Jamshed (2014) expressed it – verbatim transcribing. Coaches and players mentioned the things and statements in this chapter based on their experience and knowledge and there are no theoretical contributions. Even though some represented answers are in the shape of first, second, and last, answers do not represent interviewees in Table 1; it is more to represent the answer in more logical ways. A numeral representation for the answer is not suitable or reasonable since answers are wide and descriptive and not numerical or measurable.

6.1 Results from coaches' interviews

As mentioned in Chapter 5, there are five different sections. Results follow the same pattern and go section by section, starting from the section on Role and background.

6.1.1 Role and background

Coaches have different paths in how they become coaches. Whereas it is relatively common for players to transfer into a coach or similar position of not directly competing, all interviewees have a history of interest in video games since they were young. They also had different environments from their relatives or families; they either did not understand the video game culture or then got support from the family early on in their lives. Two of them were players before and before moving to the coach positions, they felt they were either too old, the skills were not good enough, or they wanted to proceed or move forward in their career journey. Two of the three were also doing other esports-related things, such as commenting, being an observer, writing, or generally doing something for the events and tournaments. Their experience and responsibilities in the roles varied a lot depending on the day. They had the same duties in running the day-to-day things, signing in for important events,

and making the schedule for the practices, tournaments, or events day. Where it varied the most was the interactions with the players and direct citation from one of the coaches:

“Sometimes it feels you are a kinder garden teacher and in the next day, you are a professor in the university” (Coach 3),

which was explained that since they are working with people, especially young people with no or little typical work experience or only work experience in esports organizations, it is not always as professional as they would hope. Because of the young age of some players, one of the coaches mentioned that it is essential for the players to learn how to be good human beings and great players and show them some important values so that conflicts do not get ugly. Keeping motivation high, listening and solving conflicts, and focusing on performing well were the integrative answers.

Team sizes varied from the game genre and if they had some substitute players or assistant coaches in their team. There is a hierarchy inside the organizations, and it is seen in a positive way. Since the organizations are relatively small, people know each other and the organizational structure well. There are some natural structures of the CEO being at the top, other management positions, and coaches and players. It is not always clear whether or not the coach is always on the top of the team – sometimes it is more of a supporting role and equal to the players, but most of the time the coach gives responsibilities and has the team's last word. Being a coach also requires flexibility since different games require different styles and roles. The hierarchy and different role responsibilities are more seeing of who pays the bills and salaries, some formality in certain protocols as in more traditional organizations. All of them mention that it is important for the teams and organizations to have somebody who says what to do and have some sort of discipline and order, even though the interaction is rather casual for most of the time. They also said it is hard to have higher authority if the members of the teams are just a bunch of friends, so the team dynamic is more complex when there is no clear authority.

6.1.2 Perception of players and coach's well-being

The second section is Perception of Players and Coaches' Well-being. It was almost a united answer that the well-being varied a lot between the (previous) organizations,

but they felt that the organization they are currently in is interested in what they are doing. One brought up that it is important that the CEO feels the same, and most top-position persons need to know that people are doing well. Learning from previous organizations' mistakes makes it easier not to do the same in the current organizations. Two of them, with the history of a professional player, also brought up the factor that it is, in some way, more stressful being a coach than being a player. They both highlighted that especially on event or tournament days – it is still up to the players to perform well, and coaches can not do that much. Both of them mentioned different reactions to the end-of-the-day feeling. Another felt that, after a relatively normal day, it was not as wearing as being a player. At the same time, the other mentioned that one stressful thing while being a coach is not able to see the direct impact on the team, in the case of winning, for example. One also felt that there has been a normal workplace where the coach has felt better about itself.

The main factor influencing work well-being was the possibility of working from home. Another factor was the freedom to do anything, even though it was sometimes seen more as the hardness of a decision load:

“It is not traditional office work from 9-5, where things can be leave at the workplace after a day, but because of the freedom of the work, you are kind of always working.” (Coach 2)

The coach needs to be self-driven – there is no guidebook on how to do something so that it can be seen as a double-edged sword. One coach divided the influencing factors into things coaches can and cannot control, and the two other coaches had similar answers but did not directly mention dividing the factors. Professionals have some control over choosing the right organization, which has a good environment, not just for the contract money and games. There is also the possibility to choose "how" hard you make your job and example was on the authority and respect side. With the proper respect, coaches create an environment where it is easier to work. Young players are also passionate about the games, so holding everything together, even if it is not going so well, is important and creates a long-lasting impact. Coaches can also lose their jobs quite rapidly if they are not performing well. Coaches cannot control the results themselves, as coaches do not directly impact the game as players do. The stressful situation is, in the end, up to the players how they handle it. Sometimes, it is due to

mistakes, or the opposite team is better or performs the best game they have ever played – there are a lot of mental things going on most of the tournament times. There is also the factor that game developers have a significant impact on the game, and sometimes they develop the game in a way that is good for the business itself but makes the game or competition harder. Fans might also lose interest in the game if developers cannot keep it fresh and interesting – the dynamic environment is something every coach has to accept in a certain way. But as there are different games inside genres, there is somewhere little diversity if coaches want to change the game they are in. Also, the tournament's schedules are given by outside parties, so there is no control over those and the schedule inside the day.

A similar answer, but with a slightly different viewpoint, is the question of challenges and stressors. If organizations have little input or interest in what coaches and players do, all falls on coaches. It also raised the issue of being good at a young age without experience in working in more common and traditional jobs. Coaches felt that young people might not have the etiquette of behaving and acting in the workplace, such as coming to work on time and realizing work is not always fun. Sometimes, it is mandatory to do things that need to be done and to take practice time seriously, even if it involves practicing the same thing over and over again. It also raised the outside things that coaches do not have any control over, such as problems with family, relationships, moving, war, and the current economic situation.

United answer to whether they had been fatigued during their time as a coach was no. They have felt stressed, but compared to players' roles, they have not burned out. There has been tiredness due to the tight schedule from the game developers' side since they make some league schedules hard: too many games and short breaks make the day long and difficult. It also depends on the game. Stress sometimes eats the motivation, but knowing it is over soon helps. Coaches have seen fatigue and burnout among players. It is not that common, but it is not as rare. They think one of the reasons is bad skills in handling sleep, nutrition, and exercise routine – too little sleep, bad food choices, and being on their phone for days. They notice those from the lack of motivation for the games and practices, being late in the practices, being quieter, or not interacting as much as before. The results of the games and practices themselves

might not decrease. Young players have a great passion for the games, so that could be one reason to forget the importance of taking care of themselves.

When the overall question of players' well-being was asked, history was brought to answers. 5 to 15 years ago, there were no nutritionists or sports psychologists involved, but in recent years, those are more common because organizations realize taking care of the players is good for the business but also for the reputation. So it is also up to the organizations, but coaches were unanimous that being in top positions and taking care of yourself is much easier, not only from the financial viewpoint but also from the overall viewpoint of support. They mutually agreed that players are also responsible for their own well-being since the majority of the well-being happens outside of the coach's reach. Organizations can give the tools, but it is up to the players to decide what to do.

Some stressors and challenges players face are competitive side and stress, performing at the right time, using discipline, and social and public pressures. Some players handle the pressures and stress of competitions differently, which can also affect performance. Performing badly in competitions makes some players nervous because people speak about the players on the internet since they are famous and well-known. Coaches try their best to support young players, especially those who are facing these challenges for the first time. They remind players that there are a lot of quiet supporters in the fan base. As mentioned before, the lack of work in more normal workplaces raises the issue of work being mandatory again. Since the youngest players are sometimes around 17 years old, they have not finished their basic education and have jumped into the competition world without understanding what it takes to be professional. Coaches know young people are sensitive to receiving feedback, so they need to be more delicate compared to players over 25 years old, for example.

Communication inside the team is casual. Coaches highlighted the importance of getting respect and authority among the players. It is a good balance between being strict and making jokes to lighten the communication. They see face-to-face with the players around once in 2-3 months. They were again united when thinking about seeing more often face to face: it would be healthier to meet more often since the way of communication changed from voice and video chats. But on the other hand, they are

happy that they can live wherever their personal life is and work from home or abroad. It allows them to work from their home country, for example.

6.1.3 Job crafting and demands

Before asking the questions, terms of job crafting and job demands were briefly represented. Coaches feel they have control of their work since being a coach is independent work. Due to players being from different countries around Europe, practices do not usually start early in the morning but rather around the midday hours and last 6-8 hours, allowing the coaches and players to do things in the morning and evening. All thought, not having 9-5 work makes sometimes seeing friends harder. When asked what they liked the most about the work as a coach, the first answer from all three was being part of the team and the competition environment. Reasons for those were slightly different; one liked that all team members have video games in common, even though the team and organization are full of different personalities. Another reason is that coaching allows them to help players, and the coach knows the importance of supporting and listening to players. The last reason was being part of the team's growth and success, meeting the fans, and being part of the esports.

On the other hand, demand and concerning factors raised the mental load of multiple competitions and pressures of performing well. The fact that players and coaches are in some way easily replaced if needed or if you do not understand your job is something relatively concerning. Coaches have a lot of responsibilities in terms of how they build their team and how good the social chemistry inside the team is. There have also been wrist injuries from the players' side, which is always a pity, and the physical condition and side of the work is, without doubt, a negative side of the work. Financial aspects and issues depend on where the teams are on the chart: big prize money and financial stability are rather top-heavy, so being in the middle or at the bottom is up to the passion, even though some education that coaches have would offer them more stability and financially better life.

Coaches felt that although most organizations are small and people know each other well, they can speak almost anything openly. They try to be transparent, but there are certain things they cannot talk to all members of the teams, but rather privately:

“Nobody likes to be pointed out, so therefore discretion is important and mature people know that.” (Coach 1)

Coaches highlighted the importance of not letting young players burn out because nobody benefits from it. Coaches have also noticed the benefits of using a mental coach or sports psychologist inside the industry. Due to international work, speaking to someone with the same native language can help some players, even if another person is the CEO.

Some previously mentioned things are similar to the issues of what coaches would change in their work. For one, it was the opportunity to see more often face-to-face; for the second, the slight lack of professionals in the esports industry and lack of general work ethic are shortages, and when fixed, would make the work easier. The third answer was the lack of feedback from the player and higher-position persons as well since the work is independent and creative.

When the well-being question is asked again, there are few new mentions. For example, not being in the classic office environment and doing work there allows one to focus on the job and not be distracted by colleagues or other things in the office. Even though the financial aspect has brought in different contexts, monthly payments are still creating stability compared to work in commentating or writing articles, where the payment methods are different.

6.1.4 Stress, feelings, and motivation

When asked whether becoming a coach affected stress levels or overall happiness, answers varied. The most positive answer was that becoming a coach increased the happiness and passion involved in the role. There was one neutral answer, that it did not change anything; even though the stress level might increase a little, the coach does not overthink things. Then, the negative aspect of becoming a coach was an increase in personal stress levels and a decrease in happiness, even though passion and interest in video games are involved. The coach thinks that recent game results might affect happiness since the coach remembers being happier at the beginning of the coach's career.

Yet again, coaches gave a united answer to the question of motivation reasons for moving away from coaching. They answered from the viewpoint of the industry as well. The answer was if they lose their motivation and passion towards esports, especially video games, which is not likely to happen since video games have been in their life since childhood. Good ethics and treatment from the organization side were also important factors – if coaches cannot find well-balanced organizations, they will not settle for a worse one. One coach mentioned that sometimes the treatment from society eats the motivation, especially when middle-aged and older people might not understand the concept of esports and that video games make a living these days. When asked whether they had been thinking about leaving, there were different answers. One has not thought about it since the coach is happy and feels lucky in the current position. The other felt that one's skills could be better utilized in higher and vice management positions, and when they spoke about the situation with the CEO, the coach got the position and is happy at the moment. The last one has thought about it but was not prepared for it. The coach has an education, which jobs the coach also enjoys, but the passion is still in video games and esports.

Regarding the players leaving, all coaches mentioned the young age and the importance of basic education so that players can continue to universities or colleges. The most common examples from previous years were that some players under 20 decided to continue and graduate from the basic education, like high school. They support and spoke about the positive and negative sight, but all were agreed that education is important and encourage to finish the school. One mentioned the importance of having plan b, in the case of leaving organization or the industry. Having a brand helps a career within the esports and video games industry, such as a streaming or content creator career. Choosing to become a coach is also an option, but coaching is not for everyone, and not every player can continue becoming a coach; since then, there are an over-saturation of coaches.

The overall question of leaving esports goes through similar factors as previously mentioned. Financial instability, especially in the middle and lower-level leagues – the esports dream of being at the top is hard to achieve, and not all can achieve it. However, the pressures at the top are also different. The treadmill of constant competition and stress frequently travels, and yet the social pressure, since esports is not fully accepted

by society or even by closest family members, like parents. Some countries are more accepting toward esports, but there is still the majority of doubt in European countries. It will take generations to change the position of esports.

Strategies that organizations should implement are also mentioned before. Mental coaches and sports psychologists were concrete things organizations should implement. Another helpful thing is the use of a nutritionist, since young people are still looking for how to take care of themselves after moving away from their parent's house. The overall support for mental health and things that happen outside the practice should also be important for the organizations, but coaches understand that the financial aspect is limited in that sector.

Support from the team members divides the answers as well. While organizations give much space to do what the coaches want, it also brings a lot of responsibility. The coach did not feel that the work was supported enough, there was not enough feedback, and players were not always used to speaking about their feelings and what was going on in their lives. On the other hand, smaller organizations are small, and people know each other well, so the support is there if people have the courage to ask.

The last question to end the fourth section concerns the motivation for staying in esports. One answer summarizes the reaction of coaches:

“Being able to do what I love and getting paid from it.” (Coach 2)

The thrill of competition is a unique aspect of work life, and one coach was motivated to be able to say belonging to the top position – not many people can say that they are at the top percentage within the industry. Fans are also a rewarding aspect since they are honest and love what the coaches are doing.

6.1.5 Role satisfaction and others

Coaches were pretty satisfied with the career journey they have had. They all agreed that there have been ups and downs during the journey, but they would not know those unless they tried. There were examples of satisfaction when the experience of being

player can be utilized in coach role. They have had breaks in the competitive side, but it has not bothered them. When asked the aspect of the most fulfilling and rewarding part of the job, the answers were similar to each other – being able to make the team so that it is successful and social chemistry is good. Placing the people so they can do their best and when they make an effort in the practices, and it shows in victory times. Common supervision and guidance, but not micromanaging people, and letting the people and players have some sort of freedom and things still run smoothly are rewarding as well.

Measuring success had similar answers – how the team worked and performed together. All through wins and losses, the results are one of the most common ways of looking at success, but it all depends on the game, teams, and position of the coaches. Return on investment is another aspect that organizations follow. If a young and unknown player was bought at a relatively affordable price to a team, and the player shows great skills and fits into the team well, it is a good investment. But if, for example, an expensive and known to be a skillful player is bought, and the player is doing mediocre performance and does not fit in the team, the player is not going to be long in the team. Games also make a slight difference, depending on the popularity, for example.

The question of career aspirations, within or outside the esports industry, raised different answers. One coach knows that the coaching career will be continued in the long run if nothing dramatic happens for the game. The coach enjoys video games and coaching, so there is no reason to leave the industry. The other coach thinks more in a neutral way; there is a lot of volatility and dynamicity in the industry, so the coach has not thought about other choices. The coach would like to be part of the organization in the future and see how it develops and grows. The third coach said in the interview that coaching is not something the coach would like to do in the long run or even after five years. Content creation or somehow being part of esports is challenging, and it is a competitive industry even if people are not players or coaches, so the coach wondered if a degree in another field would bring more stability in life. The coach also mentioned that since esports is still developing, there might be a lot of open doors for careers and occupations that people have not even heard of yet. And the coach does not even know if there are going to be some new games that are different from the current one.

In one way or another, in terms of important factors in career satisfaction, the organization was mentioned in all answers. A good organization is one that supports and treats players, coaches, and staff well. Also, the organization is doing the right things:

“--- being in the good side, while the whole industry is still pretty wild west in many terms.” (Coach 1)

Wild West, in this citation, is more explained as a place where there are still a lot of different and contradictory things since there are no regulations. Another important factor for coaches is that they feel that their job is appreciated and meaningful. Financial things, in terms of being able to provide a decent life, were also important, and professionalism was also mentioned by two of the coaches. Trust and authority inside the organization are also seen as important.

Changing something in their team or organization brought many kinds of answers. One coach would not change anything: even though there are sometimes pressures from the organization side to change something in the team, at some point, the coach believed in the team, and further changes were not needed. The diversity of games and teams was a possible changing factor for one of the coaches; all thought it is probably going to happen as time passed and the organization get bigger. The third coach mentioned that sometimes the professionalism by the players' side is forgotten, so then the time the coach would use in practicing and supporting the players goes for the basic things, such as being on time for practices. The question of what they would keep in their team or organizations raised the factors in career satisfaction. Coaches felt that their organizations were good, and especially the culture inside the organizations was nice. Two of them mentioned that it is especially nice that people know each other well, communication is mostly casual, and since being in relatively small organizations, the environment and people make it feel like they are a family.

What would they change in the industry or the culture of esports raised different issues around esports. Since the scene and industry, especially in Europe, are still new and developing, there is a lot of network exploitation, and new faces might have difficulties coming to the industry. There are also a lot of friend groups, which itself is not a bad thing, but for the development of the team, there are usually different levels of skill and willingness to put effort between the players. Esports is not for everyone, no matter

how fun it is to play with group of friends. One coach would change some of the structure of the events, tournaments, and even league levels so that new faces would have easier to show themselves, and there would be some new faces in the top levels. The third one also mentioned the relatively small social circles inside the esports but raised the topic of education for esports, players, and coaches. Social settings are still lacking behind compared to many traditional sports, but time and generations will probably change those issues. One coach spoke about the women's side of esports and whether or not there should be separate leagues for men and women. The coach sees much the same struggle in the women's side of esports as the men's 10 years ago. The coach also thought that it would probably take 3-5 years before the organization gets the financial benefit from women's teams since the sponsorships and viewers are still lower in quantity than in men's esports. Valorant was one game the coach took as an example - it is more supporting and has, in a way, an accepting culture towards women in the game industry, but it is not the same in every game.

Keeping matters in the esports industry and cultures slightly contradicted, and coaches noticed this. All of them enjoy that esports has the unique culture of joining people together regardless of nationality because video games are something that connects people. It does not matter what the event is; there are like-minded persons around. Also, the casual environment around esports was seen as a positive thing – there was no excessive or unnecessary amount of bureaucracy and other corporate hierarchy problems. But it has its downsides when speaking of lacking professionalism and a casual environment in the industry: some organizations are still looking for their boundaries and balances. Valorant example was also brought up by another coach, and there, the support for the women's team was seen as a positive thing in the industry and culture, and other games should take notes from them.

For the second last question, giving advice from those who are aspiring to become coaches in the e-sports industry received well-justifiable answers. Being in esports is a passion for the industry:

”Don’t do it because you think you are gonna get rich and famous, do it because it’s the thing you really really wanna do, and have passion for it.” (Coach 2)

The same coach reminded that the matter should be the case in every workplace because it has a great impact on people’s well-being. The coach also emphasizes that

reaching the top is hard, and not all are going to achieve the esports dream, so having a backup plan is important since the industry is highly unstable and volatile. Another one had an emphasis on contacts and how people treat others. Since networks in the industry are still small and there is almost always somebody who knows you, treat the people nicely because it can create opportunities in the long run. The contacts from years behind can reach the person, so good communication skills are important. Being a good human being was necessary for the third coach. The coach coaches both the game and the people. Knowing game strategies is important, but it is also essential to coach and guide the players, especially when they are young and developing from teenagers to young adults and adults. Showing some role modeling and bringing good values in general, but also having some level of discipline, makes the industry sustainable in the long run. It also makes the respect and authority part of the job easier, and the coach does not lose the as easily.

The last question, what would they say to a younger version of themselves, was for information would they encourage themselves to be in the industry. They all wondered would they say anything, since there are many events and situations, they are happy that those happens. One coach was satisfied that there was previous, more traditional, work experience before becoming a coach, the second one would give some financial tips since the future for the younger self since life is full of surprises, and the third one would not change things, because the coach would not know if changing things would have ended up in the different path.

6.2 Results from players' interviews

Players' interviews are also divided into five sections, as in Chapter 5. Results follow the same pattern and go section by section, starting with Role and Background and ending with Career Satisfaction and others.

6.2.1 Role and Background

All players have played video games since childhood, since from age six to ten. One knew there were tournaments they could watch with a family member, and the other two knew they were good at the game and they had the potential to be a professional

player. They have been playing in non-professional teams, for example, with their friends in high ranking, but all of them are now in professional organizations and played for several years. Their roles on the team included characters that required a lot of action and were the first ones in conflict, as well as supporting roles. One of the players felt that the role was flexible, and the player had the ability to change between roles if needed. They are happy about their roles, although one felt that changing could be a nice try since the player has always played the same role. The team size is relatively small; they all have two coaches, and some have an assistant player on their team.

They have a hierarchy in their teams and organizations, but players feel that it is a good thing. Since they have been playing with friends in non-professional teams, it is good to have somebody who has the last word in decisions – otherwise, it would be chaos. Especially in argument or conflict situations, the coach is good and acts objectively in the situation, and it does not affect the friendship between players. Players felt they are equal between other players, although one player felt that since the player has more strategic thinking, the player is heard more often.

6.2.2 Work well-being

When asked about their work well-being, answers were somewhat similar. They love what they are doing, but being a professional esports player requires a lot of effort. Two of the players explain that it is challenging, both mentally and physically. They need to organize their time well so that they can exercise and spend time with their relatives and friends. One of the players has had problems with the wrist, and now the player is taking more care of the physical aspect. But eventually, one of them is living the dream, and two others are happy because they are able to do what they want and have learned a lot. Stress is present, especially mentally, but it teaches a lot, and working with others is especially seen as a positive thing along the journey.

When asked what factors influence work well-being negatively, burnout and injuries were the two answers. Positive things such as social contact and mental and performance coaches are seen as great things since players can speak with them openly about the issues in teams or outside of the team. Private life also needs to be sorted

since it has impacted one player's performance. Even though there are some things that players cannot control. The overall well-being of players is a tricky question because players agree that on the very top, players enjoy the biggest prize money and have more stability in their lives, whereas the middle level or lower can have challenging times, from the organization's perspective or them sacrificing some social relationships, for example. However, the feeling of winning is rewarding, and they believe it is common for everyone.

Some challenges are the same: burnouts and injuries. Even though a break from the game helps to recover from burnout, it was hard to find things to do since gaming is something the player did most of the time. But for one player, there was also some negative atmosphere in the previous organization, which made the gaming slightly heavier. One speaks about the outside of the esports problems: not being able to see family and friends as much as the player hopes because of the heavy practices or the practice hours. They all had one word for the question of whether they have felt fatigue or tiredness:

“Definitely.” (Player 1; Player 2; Player 3)

They do not think there is a player who has not felt fatigued, but players need to know how to handle it. They remind themselves that they are doing something they are passionate about, but even then, it can be wearing to do the same thing without proper breaks occasionally. Two of them felt that when they were younger, they had more energy for playing, for example, 10 hours per day, five times a week, but when they got older, they understood that it is essential to take care of the mind and body because it helps to perform better in competitions.

They all have seen fatigue or burnout of another player. It shows either that the player is done with the game, meaning it is wearing the player down, or that the player has no energy to communicate with teammates, and the enthusiasm is gone. They notice the symptoms from players they know well, but they might not see symptoms from strangers. Players try to cheer others up, remind that they are good at what they are doing, and see the good side of the work. One has seen the burnout turn into quitting esports, although there were study matters as well, but the player did not re-enter the esports in a couple of years. One player also mentioned the benefits of having a

mandatory break after big events or tournaments because there is a fresh feeling of returning.

Players understand they have the biggest responsibility of taking care of their well-being since the well-being extends to life outside of working hours. Coaches offer tools to players to take care of their well-being, but they also listen if players have something to say. Mental and performance coaches are also helpful since they can see better when the player needs medical help, physically or mentally. Supporting and respectful environments also help with overall well-being.

All of the players explained that during challenging times, for example, after losing games or tournaments, they communicate actively inside the team. They try to see what went wrong and fix it. One player spoke about motivating the team back on the game, for example, going through what is something the team is good at and what went right in the match. Sometimes breaks are also necessary to perform better the next time. When the team performs well, they also go through what things were good and what things they can be better at. Players have high motivation to develop themselves. Sometimes, the hype is present, but coaches keep players' feet on the ground so that their egos do not expand too much.

Players communicate in various ways inside their teams. They see three to five times a year, and seeing each other is divisive. One player would like to see other players weekly face to face because the player thinks it is good for communication when people see each other. They mainly communicate in English, and since English is not the native language for many players, there can be misunderstandings when there are no face-to-face interactions. The second one would like to see more often, although working from home is a nice advance since there is no time-consuming travel time to work. The third understands why the majority of other players want to see each other more often, but for the player, seeing just a few times per year is fine since the player generally enjoys spending time alone.

6.2.3 Job crafting and job demands

The third section briefly explained concepts of job crafting and job demands. They all are relatively happy about their working hours, even though they can not control the

time of practice and work. It is up to the coaches and their decisions. They felt that their current organizations are flexible; if something needs to be done in their private life, they can have a day off relatively easily. Some have substitute players, which makes it slightly easier. Since players can be in different countries and time zones, matching practice and work times can be inflexible. They are happy that they can work from home or some other place, and two of them were satisfied with the work schedule, starting between 10-12 am, because they could sleep longer or do something in the morning.

They all enjoy the competitive side of esports. Two of them mention the adrenaline and pressures of being good – they enjoy showing that they are professionals. One enjoys the continuing learning and development of being a professional player and in person since competitions have taught one to handle the pressures of being in front of a large group of people, for example. Other things mentioned were fans and how energetic they are, being able to travel to compete and work from other countries.

One did not want to think much about negative things since the current organization is good and treats people nicely. Two others mentioned the unstable work environment – the work can end at any point in practice, and there are a lot of eager new players coming, so players are kind of easily replaced, and it concerns them in the current economic situation. They also mentioned that since they live on their own, younger players, who might live with their relatives, have more time to focus on the game and practice than those who need to do daily housework. Another thing mentioned is that being at the top requires a lot of time as well, and it is a hard life to balance sometimes. Sometimes, practicing specific things, such as aiming with a new weapon or after an update, can be frustrating. Also, some younger players, who do not know how to handle feedback or criticism well, can sometimes be hard team members. But the player understands that being in the organization and professional is new, so patience is a good thing to learn for the older players.

They all can speak openly with their teammates and coaches. For one, it was important that the coach build the team so that it works well together. The second thinks it is good to have trust in others so that communication can be open. The third summarizes that it is almost like a family that players can open up about the positive and negative

sides. The third also noticed that mental health issues are more important, and even in five years, there is a massive change in attitude.

Two players would not change anything, although they mentioned that it would be nicer to be at the very top, and another one would like to see team members more often face to face. Otherwise, they are happy in their current organizations. One would hope for more efficiency in working hours and suggested that it would be nice to have goals for the day to structure it better.

What aspects support their well-being and job satisfaction spread to different answers. First mentioned performance or mental coach, since the player can tell everything to the coach. The organization helps with the traveling expenses, and sponsors can give new mice, computers, and so on, so players can use the money for something else. The second mentioned that experience in esports and knowing the player is good gives some certainty and self-confidence in what the player is doing. The third mentioned the good communication and environment in the organization, which support the overall well-being.

6.2.4 Stress, feelings, and motivation

Players agreed that they were more stressed at the beginning of their careers than later. One felt that there was more stress in the study area than in the esports since it did not fit the player. Another was nervous and stressed in the beginning, but it changed to happiness, and happiness has increased over the years of being a professional player. Also, confidence level is increased due to better skill levels. The last one felt the biggest difference in making professional contracts – it engages people better, but it also makes the hobby work. When speaking of motivation to move away from being a professional player, there were two kinds of answers. Two of them talked about not being good enough or if there is no possibility to proceed to the next level in their ranking. Two of them also mentioned the loss of motivation, and if they cannot do it financially, side work in a different field is not an option, and it would eat the passion because they cannot fully live their passion.

Speaking about leaving esports, they all mentioned the transition to another organization and how it felt. It was hard, especially when the organization was good,

but they knew it was better for their career. One player knows that esports is not going to last their whole life, but now it is not the time to think about leaving. Another player mentioned that it was close that the player would not play at the moment due to losing so many social contacts in personal life, but the coach gave the player a break to figure out what was best. The overall reasons for leaving are familiar to previously mentioned issues. Not being good enough, losing motivation and passion, and financial issues and uncertainty were the most common reasons when players thought about the whole industry. One of them mentioned that the industry is sometimes immature since coaches have a great impact on building the team; they can favor friends, even though they are not always the best choice for the team.

All players have received support from their teammates or coaches when they have changed organizations. But it has been different in every organization, and one player spoke about almost blocking the possibility of change by changing the buyouts of the player to too high. Otherwise, people in the organization would have been supporting and happy about the possibility of getting better as players. For one, the first change was the hardest because there were a lot of friends, but they were supportive. Another one also mentioned the hardness of changing organizations and familiar people, but the player must think about what is the best option for the career.

Motivation for staying in esports was first the same, but other reasons varied a little. All of them have enjoyed video games since their childhood. Two of them are very competitive personalities and enjoy the pressure of competing. One also enjoys the competition, but because it has taught the player to control the stress. They also mentioned things like being able to travel a lot and working from home or from another country. Passion and motivation were also mentioned by all the players.

6.2.5 Career satisfaction and others

Players were satisfied with their career journeys. One hoped to be at the top level, but due to a change in the game arrangement, that changed. Another wondered about the current economy and how it has impacted organizations, even though previous organizations have been good.

Regarding future career aspirations, they all hope to be on the players' side for years. Coaching was an option for two of them, and they felt that they could contribute a lot to the coaching side. One would be a content creator or is considering coaching because the player wants to be involved with esports. Other options outside of esports are continuing with the previous degree of study or starting a business in a different industry.

Important factors in terms of career satisfaction had some similarities between the players, but other answers differed a lot. A common factor was the financial aspect: players can pay their bills and live relatively normal lives. First, one likes to see good statistics and improvement over time. Succeeding in tournaments and games is also important. The second is happy that the hobby became work, and the player is now able to live with the passion job. The player also needs an opponent who challenges the team because it drives them to get better after every tournament and game. The third one spoke about the improvement as a person:

“Personal improvement is a must if you want to be better as a player – it is like shaping up as a person also.” (Player 3)

The player also spoke about meeting fans and how eye-opening it is to meet unknown people who know the player and want to speak and take photos together. Knowing that 5000 people are watching the stream is different than seeing the same amount of people in the arena.

Players would not change anything major in their teams. They praised their organizations and teammates. One would like a better salary, but it is not a deal breaker. Another one would hope for a better structure in their days, but since days can also change rapidly, it is a hard task for coaches. They would also keep their teammates because they have become close friends over time. One player mentioned the good care of mental health, getting support from other players and coaches, and would like to keep it that way.

When they spoke about what they would change in the industry or the culture, they all mentioned the unstable environment in one way or another. The first and second would hope for some professionalism in the industry but without the bureaucracy and paperwork. It includes the issue that it is hard for new players to become professionals

since a lot of contracts are based on networks and someone knows another one. One player said that despite the level of skill the player had at the beginning of the career, there was also a lot of luck and the right time involved. The third brought up the challenging time of being a player, and not everyone understands it. If the tournament went bad, it is not because players were bad or they did not practice enough. Taking care and focusing on taking care should also be more important in organizations because there are still a lot of organizations that do not care about the issue. It is also hard to explain to some people what the player is doing because esports is not well-known, especially among older people. Two players raised this issue, and separately, they were wondering and hoping that when the current generations are older, they understand better the concept of esports. Game developers also have a hard time because they try to please the big audience, such as fans, but sometimes at the cost of making the game less enjoyable or functional in tournaments and games.

Fans were mentioned by all players when speaking of what they would keep in the culture. Even though there are always haters, the real-life audience is a big thing for everyone because the energy they give boosts the player's motivation. One game, Valorant especially, was highlighted by the good culture. The game supports the female league more actively than other games, and in general also, if some player says something hostile or racist things, the player can be kicked out fast due to being negative and not being a good influence. There are also some connections between other esports persons; even though players do not know each other, they have something in common. There are certain professional and top-level manners, even though they still need a lot of improvement.

Players gave different kinds of advice to those aspiring to become professional players. The first one highlighted that it is important to have the mentality of an athlete – wanting to show who is the best. Taking care of the physical and mental sides is also important. Sleeping, eating, and exercising enough is as important as taking care of mental health. Building a little wall against haters is also helpful because there will always be people who do not like what the player is doing. Being mature enough and respecting other people makes a good path. The second player reminds the competitive environment of esports. If a new player is already playing well and performing well, professionalism is worth trying. Being good at the middle level is not enough, and even there, luck cannot help. The third would say that being a professional player requires

a lot of time and can cost some social relationships, but the industry also gives a lot. Since the industry is dynamic and changing, there are still many opportunities. Being open and respectful towards other players can also create opportunities, so it is important to have manners and a good reputation no matter what age the player is.

Players were optimistic and positive when asked what they would say to the younger version of themselves. One would encourage the younger version since there was not that much support from relatives. Another would encourage them to follow their passion. Even though being positive about giving a message to the younger version, the player would not say much because the player was already determined to become a professional.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter focuses on answering the research question and sub-research questions. The theoretical framework is implemented with a literature review of the organizational aspects, work well-being, and esports environment. Even though all topics are broad and have multiple viewpoints, some specific views, such as professionalism, teamwork, and what those both are in esports, are utilized when the empirical part of the study was done. The analysis part, interviews, and transcriptions explain more about the management and work well-being in the professional industry, which utilized case study methods from electronic sports teams. The results are now reflected and compared with the theoretical framework and the literature review. The chapters also go through managerial implications, limitations of the study, and future research proposals. This chapter also goes through the study's reliability, validity, and generalizability.

7.1 Answers to research questions and theoretical contributions

The thesis uses case study methods from electronic sports teams to view the management and work well-being in the professional industry. Combining professionals and knowledge-based workers on the competitive side who use electronic devices such as computers to perform well in their work creates an opportunity to see what elements and factors are essential in the management and work well-being of professionals. What was not as big a part of previous studies from esports was the management side's or, as familiar, coaches' side. Coaches are mentioned in numerous ways in esports, but there are fewer studies on what differs the coaches and players in terms of work well-being, for example. Bringing the coach's side gives more in-depth knowledge of how the professionals at different levels influence the topics and themes. To remind, the main research question is:

What can we learn about management and work well-being from professionals of esports industry?

And sub questions are:

What aspects support professional esports players' wellbeing?

What can management and coaches do so that work well-being stays at a good level?

Sub-questions are first to be answered to conclude the main research question better:

What aspects support professional esports players' wellbeing?

Based on the results from players' interviews, answers are strongly supported by the theory. Vartiainen (2017) explained that one of the most significant changes in an organization's environment and structure is technology and how it is used in work life. It created a new industry, esports, as well. The organization greatly impacts players' management and well-being since it creates the environment where players perform. Structure and the technology-based environment support the overall topic, but good organizational behavior was highlighted in the interview, and Day and Nielsen (2017) also support it. It is how the organization acts and how people inside it treat each other. It is linked to professionalism, where the work ethic was raised high, which the theory did not mention as much. Also, being professional without excessive bureaucracy was seen as a great positive thing within the industry. Noordegraaf (2011) shares the same viewpoint: professionals feel dissatisfied when they cannot perform their work as expected due to organizational bureaucracy.

Day and Nielsen (2017) see open communication between professionals at different levels as a good thing because there is a mutual understanding of the tasks and goals. Friedrich and Ulber (2017) continue supporting the fact that players benefit from good management and coaching since trusting and respecting each other shapes the environment they are in. They are likely to perform better in a good environment. Players' answers shared these themes, highlighting that the organization and the people inside it have a great impact on their well-being. However, players also see the importance of their responsibility to take care of themselves since it affects the workplace environment. STM (2024) agrees with the players, explaining that both organizations and employees are responsible for their well-being. Providing tools from the organizational side is essential, but it does not erase the significant impact on employees' time outside of work. As Allvin and Movitz (2017) and Le Blanc et al.

(2017) discuss, one of the trending forms of job crafting, remote work, is seen as a positive factor in employees' well-being. Players support it strongly, adding that one of the best sides of the work is the possibility of working from anywhere as long as a computer is with them.

Players highlight the connection between stress and motivation. As de Jonge and Dormann (2017) spoke about different stress reactions, motivational was the most mentioned. The players recognized symptoms as feeling less energetic, and it was also one of the reasons players have burned out in the esports field. Haataja and Leinonen (2022) agree with the players, explaining that high motivation in the esports industry can help in training through hard times and disappointments. Losing motivation and passion is, according to Bakker et al. (2014), a loss in job resources, leading to an imbalance of job demands and resources.

Another highlighted aspect was the dynamic environment and the unstable financial aspect, which are concerning factors in professional players' work well-being. Players know that even though playing something they enjoy, but if there is not enough financial compensation, they will leave the industry. Pliner (1990) explains the different reasons for leaving an organization or industry, and the financial aspect was one of them, along with the lack of work or career satisfaction, discomfort with work, fatigue, and burnout.

Answering the second sub-question: *What can management and coaches do so that work well-being stays at a good level?*

Coaches explain their job similarly as Marie (2023). Being an esports coach requires some self-organization, and coaches have a crucial role in providing support and being present. As the theory supports the importance of management in employee well-being, coaches see it in the same way. While coaches are aware of their authority over the players, they want to support players' well-being. Providing support from the coaches' side and on behalf of an organization, according to Cloutier and Barling (2023), they are sharing the organizational resources because they have greater access to them than players. The rising importance of support toward mental health issues was also recognized, and Day and Nielsen (2017) support the idea of dealing with the

issue in a manner that leads to a positive outcome for the employees. It can be a sports psychologist that the organization offers, for example.

Having open communication and an environment inside the organization is recognized by the coaches. Friedrich and Ulber (2017) explain that the social side is especially important in reducing workload and stress, and social support in teams improves health. Coaches' responsibilities are creating a team where players can work together well and coaches highlighting these. It also makes their work easier if players get along with each other well. Working well and professionally is important for coaches, and Kozlowski and Bell (2013) explain that it is essential that team leaders maintain favorable conditions so that the team can perform well and meet the organizational goals. Coaches also support the players, especially during stressful and pressured times, and coaches teach them how to handle those. As Kegelaers et al. (2024) summarize, it shows professionalism that players can learn how to handle those issues.

Motivation towards the industry and video games was seen as a great thing among the coaches. However, when it emerged that players do not focus on taking care of themselves outside the working hours, it became a problem. Especially among young players, who are still learning how to take proper care of themselves, coaches see the same issue as Kegelaers et al. (2024): it affects the whole team's performance if one player is not in shape due to poor sleeping, drinking, eating or exercising. These can also emerge as musculoskeletal issues because of the tense position as coaches and Nagorsky and Wiemeuer (2020) explain. Coaches have similar thoughts with ILO (2024): if players have positive work well-being, there are great effects on the long-run effectiveness of the organization and team.

Coaches recognized the financial aspect and stress among the players and coaches jobs. Due to esports' dynamic and unstable environment, leaving the industry is not surprising. As Smithies et al. (2020) explain, esports professionals have good digital intelligence and improved cognitive abilities, which can create a good base for a future career somewhere else. Coaches add the importance of basic education and having work experience in general because those have great affect in any workplace, within esports or outside of it.

The main research question utilizes the data from sub questions: *What can we learn about management and work well-being from professionals of esports industry?*

There are a lot of different professional industries besides esports. Esports have some similarities with the business industry, such as knowledge-based work environments and working in front of a computer. Esports adds the competitive side, high dynamic, and pressured environment where professionals are primarily young. Some essential factors to implement in business are especially the sharing of resources between professionals. As both subquestions support and Bakker et al. (2014) explain, important job resources include colleague support, proper management, and coaching. These affect them so that there are better results in work performance because employees feel positive emotions at work, have better health to do their job and recover from it, and are supported. These can even boost the whole team's performance, leading the organization and team closer to the favorable goal (van Dick & Monzani, 2017).

As one of the previous studies by Leis et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of communication – especially between other players- but coaches' support played a significant role. Professionalism and open communication are essential for different levels of professionals, and both Day and Nielsen (2017) and Haataja and Leinonen (2022) highlighted these, but from different viewpoints. Players and coaches recognized the importance of good communication inside the organization and the team. Day and Nielsen (2017) support good and open communication inside the organization since it affects the performance and well-being of the organization. Haataja and Leinonen (2022) emphasize the communication inside the team when the team is performing. Since teamwork is an essential part of esports represented in this thesis, good communication inside the game can be transferred to teamwork in the business field – if there is no proper communication between the employees, the task is more likely harder and can cause unsuccessful performance of the team.

Regarding work well-being, responsibilities are shared so that employers provide tools and support to employees, but employees take care of their well-being and maintain their working abilities in their time outside of the organization (STM, 2024; Seaverson, 2023). Noordegraaf (2011) and Meister et al. (2022) highlight both that dynamic and technology-based organizations are creating an environment that may cause more

stressful work for employees, but professionals cannot escape it, so they need to adapt to it. Tools, such as a strong level of communication, offering professional help such as a psychologist or nutritionist when needed, and providing preparedness for stressful situations greatly impact the work well-being of both levels of professionals. These are tools that happen inside the organization, reach employees' free time, and are used in situations where employees' skills are tested.

Smithies et al., 2020 explain that motivation and passion for industry are seen as a reason why people are coming to a specific industry. Motivation is part of job resources, and it can be supported by good work well-being. High motivation has a positive effect since employees can feel more energetic toward work, and the job is seen as meaningful (Mäkikangas & Hakanen, 2017). But As Giakoni-Ramírez et al. (2022) explain, motivation can change when time passes, and employees have more experience and face challenges. It is essential to notice when the motivation is gone, since it has an effect on employees' work well-being. As the previous answers to the subquestions mentioned, loss of motivation can lead to burnout. Linden et al. (2005) discuss that burned-out individuals may experience cognitive failures, such as careless errors, but also have trouble with planning the work and working towards the goal. Those aspects are not good for the organization but not the employees.

7.3 Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, this thesis has raised important topics that should be implemented in the business world to consider the well-being of employees at different levels. There are also helpful aspects of what drives organizations towards success and better performance. Even though the sample in this thesis is small, it does not rule out the fact that players' and coaches' opinions and thoughts are useless—they are still professionals but in different fields. Implicating aspects of the conclusion into the business world could be beneficial.

Day and Nielsen (2017) discussed the importance of good organizational behavior and performance. Having good working ethics, creating a good and healthy environment to perform, and having open communication between people inside the organization are essential to keeping an eye on so that work well-being is also at a good level in the

organization. There were mentions of not-so-great organizations in the interviews: it is important to mention that people are not going to be in the organization for long if they are not treated well. There are some issues that many professional field employees face: how to deal with stress. De Jonge and Dormann (2017) spoke about how stress affects everybody differently, and the theory aligns with the results. Support from the organization, including the help of other professionals, such as healthcare employees, was highlighted. Still, the employees are also responsible for taking care of their body and mind mentally and physically. Aspects from esports affect the work well-being of employees. Haataja and Leinonen (2022) speak about the high motivation that professional esports players have. Motivation plays the role of why people are doing the thing and why they are involved in it. Strong motivation can help training through hard times and disappointments, and loss of motivation has been one of the most common reasons for quitting. Especially in dynamic environments, management should pay attention to professionals' motivation. This is, again, part of good organizational behavior. Cloutier and Barling (2023) mentioned that management is one essential aspect of organizations and how employees feel about themselves. Suppose an organization provides a good and steady environment in which to perform. In that case, it is more likely that managers, employees, or coaches and players, feel better about themselves and can impact the motivation by supporting it.

From previous studies and results of this thesis, employees can have a checklist of how their organization supports their work well-being and how the supporting elements, such as open communication, occur in the organization or in the team. It also creates a line that even though professionals' work can be demanding and stressful, there are also some responsibilities that employees have. Employees might not always notice that they are fatigued or burned out, so some examples that Bakker et al. (2014) mentioned might be helpful. Since burnout is a process rather than a quick incident, there is a progressive depletion of emotional energy and a loss of motivation and enthusiasm. These symptoms can be seen from colleagues of the employee who suffers from burnout.

The study's results are in line with previous studies on the important aspects of management and work well-being in professionals. Based on the findings and conclusions, there are several aspects of what organizations can implement in their long-term and short-term strategies at the management level. Martinez Lagunas (2019)

mentions that learning strategic thinking has benefits, and creating a culture of open and respectful communication brings many benefits in the long run since it greatly affects well-being. This also helps with short-term issues since there will be newcomers in any field, and being able to brief them quicker with good communication is definitely beneficial.

7.4 Limitation of the study

As Salminen (2011) explains, a literature review can create a general view of the topic or theme to help understand different topics or issues. The reliability of the study is ensured by using sources from various authors and letting the sources discuss similarities and disagreements with each other. Becker et al. (2005) continue that reliability also considers the repeatability of the study and, therefore, the process of the data gathering and analysis process is presented so that the study can be done again. Qualitative methods are there to complete the theoretical part, and both Jamshed (2014) and Becker et al. (2005) explain that qualitative methodology is suitable when the interest is to gain an in-depth understanding, and case studies are also a common way to utilize it. A semi-structured interview allows the narration to wander a little around the main open questions. Case studies are usually conducted by individuals or small groups, which serve this thesis's interest well. Connecting topics in different ways in the thesis helps to understand the multidimensional aspect of management and work well-being. Becker et al. (2005) highlighted that as being a qualitative case study, the validity of the study should be judged by the purpose and meaning of a qualitative case study: using reliable sources and utilizing and combining the case studies aspect, such as interviewing a small sample of people to understand more deeply of the topics and themes. Previous studies and theories of the themes created the base for questions, which were utilized in answering research questions.

Carminati (2018) explains that qualitative case studies have the potential to provide an understanding of and describe the human experience. However, it is up to the purpose and terms used in the study so that there is no misunderstanding or mixing up the related issues. Myers (2000) continues that even though there are many positive aspects of qualitative methods, there is a lack of objectivity and generalizability.

Generalizability is defined as the findings can be generalized to the entire population using only the study's sample, which is a quality of quantitative research.

Empirical materials include two relatively main factors, players and coaches, that help to view esports' management and work well-being viewpoint. Even though the interviews are in-depth, the sample of six people is relatively small compared to the number of organizations, teams, and players – it is hard to keep exact numbers since organizations can combine teams that utilize different game consoles and mobile devices. Compared to this thesis which only considers gaming via computers and organizations and teams in Europe. Therefore, the generalization of the study can be highly questioned and, possibly, concluded as not suitable for generalization. However, it does not mean that the study did not teach anything from the professional industry – even with the sample of six people, they all brought up independently similar topics and themes, which are also emphasized in the theoretical part of the thesis. This study taught or at least showed consideration from professionals who are doing their jobs in stressful environments and with computers or monitors. Even though esports professionals are on the extremity side of professionalism, they teach a lot about well-being and working in teams in a stressful environment. Seaverson (2023) brought up the general trends of the well-being of employees, which do not differ much from the employees of esports, players, and coaches.

7.5 Future research

To avoid being discouraged by the study's limitations, the overall topic raised the importance of management and well-being in professional industries. Topics in the conclusions could be tested out in a practical experiment, where the themes of one professional industry are applied to another professional industry, for example, in the field of business.

Another interesting suggestion is how players and coaches holding similar positions, as in this thesis, are in different regions, such as Asia and the United States, and whether the results differ from those in Europe. Similarly, from the historical viewpoint that was brought up slightly by the interviewees, topics, and themes could be studied again after specific years and compared to see if there are any changes in

the results. Similarly, the study could analyze independent esports players and compare the results between teams and single-player-based games.

In terms of esports, an emerging industry in Europe, another interesting viewpoints can yet be discovered. Is there going to be something new that the dynamic environment creates?

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APPENDIX 1 Interview layout for players:

-How old are you?

-In what team you are at the moment and in how many teams you have been working with?

1. Role and background

- How did you begin your career as a professional esports' player?
 1. How long you have been playing games and how long you have been professional player?
- Can you describe your current role and responsibilities within the esports team?
- How many members there are in your team?
- In the esports, is there team hierarchy between you, team members, or coaches?

2. Work well-being

- How would you characterize your overall well-being during your time as a professional e-sports player?
 1. Is there some ups and downs?
- What are the main factors influencing your work well-being while you are actively competing?
- Are there any challenges or stressors you encountered during your time as a player?
- Have you felt fatigued in your time as a player?
- How does your team members and coaches support your overall well-being?
- How did the team members or coaches support you in challenging time?
- What does your team members or coaches do when the team is performing well?
- How do you communicate inside the team?

3. Job crafting and demands

Job crafting is the change in physical and cognitive factors that employees make in their tasks or responsibilities to fit better for their strengths and passions. Changing work hours or being able to work from home are examples.

Job demands are physical, mental, social, or organizational factors that require instant or sustained psychophysical efforts. Examples include time pressure, conflicts, and workload.

- Do you have control of your work, or can you craft it?
 1. If yes, how?
- What do you like about the most as being professional player?
 1. Is there something you specially enjoy?
- What are some big demands in your work as a professional player?
 1. What factor concern you most?
- Can you speak about these specially enjoyed things and problems openly with your team members or coaches?
- What would you change in your work as a professional player?
- What aspects support your well-being and job satisfaction the most?
 1. Is there some little things that supports your well-being?

4. Stress, feelings, and motivation

- Have you noticed any significant changes in your stress levels or overall happiness since becoming competitive gamer?
- What could motivate your decision to transition away from being a professional player?
- Have you been preparing leaving esports or thinking about it and if so, how do you prepare for the transition?
- What could be reasons for leaving esports career?

- How did the team or coaches support your decision to leave the esports or organization?
- What motivates you for staying in esports?

5. Career satisfaction and others

- How satisfied are you with your career journey within the e-sports industry?
 1. Is there differences between organizations?
- What are your future career aspirations, within the e-sports industry, or outside of it?
- What factors are important to you in terms of career satisfaction?
- What would you change in your team?
- What would you keep in your team or what things you are happy with?
- What would you change in the esports industry or culture?
- What would you keep in the esports industry or culture? What would you say to younger version of you?
 1. Is there some specific age you would like to say that message?

Is there something you would like to say about these topics we spoke about?

APPENDIX 2 Interview layout for coach:

-How old are you?

-In what team you are at the moment and in how many teams you have been working with?

1. Role and background:

- Have you been playing as a professional esports player and if so, how did you begin your career?
- How did you enter the field of coaching/training within the e-sports industry?
- Can you describe your current role and responsibilities as a coach within the e-sports team?
- How many members there are in your team?
- In the esports, is there team hierarchy between you, players, and other team members?

2. Perception of players' and coach's well-being:

- How would you characterize your overall well-being during your time as a coach?
 1. Is there some ups and downs?
- What are the main factors influencing your work well-being while you are actively coaching?
- Are there any challenges or stressors you encountered during your time as a coach?
- Have you felt fatigued or tired in your time as a coach?
 1. In what ways it affected you?
- Have you seen fatigue or tiredness of players during your time as a coach?
 1. How did you notice that?

- From your perspective, how would you characterize the overall well-being of players in the e-sports industry?
- What are some common challenges or stressors that players face, and how do you support them in managing these issues?
- How do you communicate inside the team?
 1. Is it formal/casual?

3. Job crafting and demands

Job crafting is the change in physical and cognitive factors that employees make in their tasks or responsibilities to fit better for their strengths and passions. Changing work hours or being able to work from home are examples.

Job demands are physical, mental, social, or organizational factors that require instant or sustained psychophysical efforts. Examples include time pressure, conflicts, and workload.

- Do you have control of your work, or can you craft it?
 1. If yes, how?
- What do you like about the most as being professional coach?
 1. Is there something you specially enjoy?
- What are some big demands in your work as a professional coach?
 1. What factor concern you most?
- Can you speak about these specially enjoyed things and problems openly with players and team members?
- What would you change in your work as a professional coach?
- What aspects support your well-being and job satisfaction the most?
 1. Is there some little things that supports your well-being?

4. Stress, feelings, and motivation

- Have you noticed any significant changes in your stress levels or overall happiness since becoming competitive coach?

- What could motivate your decision to transition away from being a professional coach?
- Have you been preparing leaving esports or thinking about it and if so, how do you prepare for the transition?
- How do you assist players who are considering transitioning away from active competition?
- Overall question – what could be reasons for leaving esports career?
- Are there some things or strategies that you believe esports organizations should implement to support the well-being and career changes of their players?
- What motivates you for staying in esports?

5. Role satisfaction and others

- How satisfied are you with your career journey within the e-sports industry?
- What aspects of your role as a coach do you find most fulfilling and rewarding?
- How do you measure success in your role?
- What are your future career aspirations, within the e-sports industry, or outside of it?
- What factors are important to you in terms of career satisfaction?
- What would you change in your team?
- What would you keep in your team or what things you are happy with?
- What would you change in the esports industry or culture?
- What would you keep in the esports industry or culture?
- Based on your experiences, what advice would you offer to those who are aspiring to become coaches in the e-sports industry?
- What would you say to younger version of you?
 1. Is there some specific age you would like to say that message?

Is there something you would like to say about these topics we spoke about?

APPENDIX 3 Reporting the use of artificial intelligence

For some complicated sentences throughout the thesis, Grammarly was used to check the punctuation and correct grammatical tense – even though it is not a full AI application, there are paid features that use AI. Grammarly has a feature that AI writes the whole text again with a more suitable tone, but it was not used in this thesis since it can change the meaning of the chapter. Other applications, like ChatGPT, were not used.