



Hak cipta dan penggunaan kembali:

Lisensi ini mengizinkan setiap orang untuk mengubah, memperbaiki, dan membuat ciptaan turunan bukan untuk kepentingan komersial, selama anda mencantumkan nama penulis dan melisensikan ciptaan turunan dengan syarat yang serupa dengan ciptaan asli.

Copyright and reuse:

This license lets you remix, tweak, and build upon work non-commercially, as long as you credit the origin creator and license it on your new creations under the identical terms.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The development and history of the game industry has always been comprised of dynamic, changing trends. Single game releases that are successful enough have the potential to revolutionize an entire genre, as rival developers who take notice of that game's success are able to realize *why* it's successful, and capitalize on the trend with their own twist on the existing game. In fact, this type of phenomenon seems to be making a return in the current state of the game industry; this time with the *battle royale* genre.

At it's most basic definition, *battle royale* is a genre of games with a free-for-all interaction between a large amount of players where the last man standing wins (GameSpot, 2019). The genre name itself is taken from *Battle Royale* (2000), a Japanese movie based on a novel where 42 middle school students are given weapons and forced to eliminate each other until only one is left. According to *GameSpot* editor Phil Hornshaw's article in *Digital Trends* (2019), the *battle royale* genre of games is defined by five core elements that all of them have in common: a massive-sized world map for players to explore; a free-for-all gameplay with large numbers of players – usually ranging from 90 to 100 in a single session – where each player only has one life, and the last man standing wins; resources with different qualitative and quantitative values scattered around the map; players starting with little to no resource and having to loot for resources that are scattered

by default or dropped by other eliminated players; and a system that, one way or another, forces acceleration of the game state in order to prevent stagnation, such as the closing damaging barrier featured in several games of the genre such as *Fortnite Battle Royale* (2017).

The *battle royale* genre has reached massive success in the recent years both locally and internationally. Statistics from *Katadata.co.id* (2019), have shown that as of March 2019, *Garena Free Fire* (2017) and *PUBG Mobile* (2018) are the first and second best-selling games respectively in Indonesia, with *Free Fire* reaching 20 million total users, and *PUBG Mobile* trailing close with 13 million. Internationally, *Fortnite* (2017) as well as the original PC version of *PUBG* (2017) are the most played games of 2019, with peak concurrent player numbers of 8.3 million and 3.2 million respectively (McMahon, 2019). Both of these statistics show how massively the battle royale genre has affected the game industry as we know it – a repeat of the same phenomenon previously mentioned.

The game that started the *battle royale* genre as we know it isn't a full-fledged game, but rather, a customized mod for the survival sandbox game *Minecraft* (2009). These mods are commonly known as *survival games* or '*Hunger Games*' mods, as they are heavily inspired by, and are meant to recreate a similar experience to the novel and television series *The Hunger Games* (2008), which tells a story about a survival game where multiple contestants are tasked to do whatever it takes to survive until they're the last man standing. In these mods, players are typically spawned in a random spot in the middle of a large map with supply chests containing food, health recovery items, as well as weapons. Then for a few seconds,

players are granted bonus health and speed, which expires early if the player damages another player during that time period, which innately provides disadvantage towards players who attack early, encouraging them to focus on collecting resource in those seconds in order to provide all players a fighting chance. Once those few seconds pass, players are then ‘allowed’ to attack others. The resources the players can loot and collect are comprised of different-tiered equipment and items, and players are able to loot from randomly generated chests or from other eliminated players. Over time, the ‘deep freeze’ begins to generate from the outside, turning the areas it touches into snow that kills each player character that steps into that area. This is later replaced with a ‘world border’ that kills the player characters inside periodically, rather than instantly.

Although *Minecraft’s survival games* mod didn’t start a trend, it set the stage for future *battle royale* games to come. The mod has it all; a survival-centric free-for-all last man standing interaction with multiple players, a large map accommodating at least 24 players, players starting with no resource and having to gather as they play, loot with varying tiers, the ability to loot from others, and the ‘world border’ system keeping the game from stagnating. This format was then taken into other games as a mod, primarily in the *first person shooter* genre, such as *DayZ* (2013), *Arma III* (2013), and *H1Z1* (2015), the latter of which was an official mod, and it’s popularity led to *H1Z1* splitting into two games in 2016, with *H1Z1: Just Survive* containing the main survival horror game, and *H1Z1: King of the Kill*, later renamed to *Z1 Battle Royale*, turning the mod into an official standalone game, becoming the first ever standalone *battle royale* game.

PUBG was then released in 2017 – a standalone game created by Brendan Greene, who had also created the *battle royale* mods of *DayZ*, *Arma 3*, and *H1Z1*. *PUBG* achieved success unlike any other *battle royale* games before, or any other game in general – by June 2018, one year after its release, the game had sold more than 50 million copies in total, and was being played by 87 million players daily (Hornshaw, 2018). Following this success, many developers began to recognize *battle royale*'s potential and created their own twist on the genre by adapting existing franchises with their own unique quirks into the genre, each bringing something new to the table, such as *Paladins' Realm Royale* (2018), *Battlerite's Battlerite Royale* (2019), and *Counter Strike: Global Offensive* (2012)'s *battle royale* game mode *Danger Zone* which was released in 2018. In particular, *Epic Games' Fortnite* franchise, which was announced in 2011 and originally meant to be a single player third person shooter with fortification and tower defense elements (Narcisse, 2011), released a *battle royale* game using the same franchise titled *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, released also later in 2017. *Fortnite* in particular is a special case, as *Fortnite*'s immense success surpassed even *PUBG*, reaching 125 million total players by June 2018 (*BusinessofApps*, 2019).

There are several aspects that can affect a game's success, such as its gameplay, visuals, or its marketing technique. However, in the *battle royale* genre's case, the writer believes that the design of the gameplay itself is the largest factor towards the genre's success. This is supported by Brendan Greene, the creator of *PUBG* himself, as well as *The Darwin Project* (2018) creative director Simon Darveau: according to them, the *battle royale* genre's main appeal is how

the genre seamlessly combines the freeform play existing in large scale survival games with a structure that prevents each game session from drawing out and stagnating for far too long. The *ZI* franchise's general manager, Anthony Castoro, also adds that the *battle royale* genre's permadeath system that prevents players from respawning upon death, combined with its session-based system that minimizes the time spent between losing the game in a session and reentering another one, incentivizes a high-stakes game style where survival is important, while minimizing the frustration caused by losing and restarting back from zero (Hornshaw, 2019).

One particular factor of interest in battle royale games are the lenticular design that the gameplay design itself brings. Lenticular design is a term in game design coined by *Magic: the Gathering* lead game designer Mark Rosewater (2014), which refers to objects in the gameplay – the cards, in *Magic's* case – that appear differently depending on the ways players look at it, which usually depends on the player's experience in the game. In battle royale games, the multiple different gameplay elements create a high amount of complexity, yet the games often allow players to begin playing right away without any tutorial. For a game to contain a large amount of complexity while being simpler for players to begin playing, a game must be 'easy to play, hard to master'; a theorem coined by Atari founder Nolan Bushnell (1971), which is facilitated by lenticular design.

One could make a case about the genre's visual style appealing to players; however, there are two important factors to note. Firstly, the genre began as – and is still heavily saturated with – adaptations of existing franchises, without changing

their visual style – meaning that the art direction present in *battle royale* games mostly have been present even without the adaptation into a new genre. An example of this is the adaptation from *Paladins* (2016) to *Realm Royale* (2018). Lastly, *battle royale* games have always varied in it's visual style – the genre began with *Minecraft*'s blocky, low-poly 3D style, followed by the more realistic visual styles present in *PUBG*, *Z1*, and *Arma 3*, more stylized, cartoony 3D styles such as present in *Fortnite* and *Realm Royale*.

The games' marketing and popularity also have little to do with their success – according to UK news platform *The Week* (2018) most of *Fortnite*'s public success owes itself to celebrities and famous public figures such as the rapper Drake and the *YouTuber PewDiePie* streaming their own play of the game. However, according to Hornshaw (2019) in his article, this is yet another byproduct of the *battle royale* genre's gameplay design – the pacing of the game balances itself well, favoring a balance between resource gathering and rare, yet tense action, which makes it entertaining both to play and to watch, thus taking advantage of the immense popularity of streaming platforms.

Having established the intricacy of the genre's gameplay design as the largest factor to it's success, the writer has decided to research and analyze the games of the genre through the point of view of it's gameplay.

1.2. Research Question

What are the gameplay design elements and principles present in two games of the *battle royale* genre, and how does lenticular design affect it?

1.3. Problem Limitation

The topic covered in this thesis is the analysis of the development in video games of the battle royale genre, in order to obtain data about the battle royale genre from a gameplay perspective. Analysis is limited to only two video games included in the battle royale genre: *Fortnite Battle Royale* (2017) and *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* (2017), and is limited to only the gameplay part of the game design as a whole.

1.4. Thesis Goals

The goal of this thesis is to analyze the gameplay design of video games in the battle royale genre, and how lenticular design affects them.

1.5. Thesis Benefits

Benefits are divided into three sections: for the writer, for other people, and for the university.

For the writer: As requirement to graduate from the university, as an asset and opportunity to learn more about designing gameplay for a currently trending genre, and as part of a game design portfolio.

For other people: To increase the knowledge for game developers in Indonesia about the gameplay design in a currently trending genre, therefore providing developers with more asset and knowledge to capitalize on the market.

For the university: As a study and reference material for other students, especially students who wish to analyze the same topic or other similar topics.