

PERSONAL INFO



Charlese Adriana Saballe

- 📍 Helsinki, Finland
- 📞 +358 44 981 0332
- ✉ charsaballe@gmail.com
- 🌐 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/charlesesaballe>
- 🌐 <https://charlesesaballe.com>

PROFILE

User Research Lead with 15+ years of experience across user research, data analytics, and workforce management, including 6+ years dedicated to research in games, e-commerce, and consumer tech. I lead player research for Merge Mansion at Metacore (€600M+ lifetime revenue, 60M+ downloads), shaping decisions from early concept and live-ops through to brand strategy and long-term direction.

I combine quantitative rigor with qualitative depth and empathy, and I work comfortably in ambiguity, forming clear points of view that help teams move with confidence. I line-manage and develop researchers, coach designers across the studio, and act as AI champion for the research craft.

Beyond research, I am deeply committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging as a volunteer and community organiser in human rights, LGBTQIA+, and anti-racism advocacy. I stay engaged with the global research and design community through speaking, mentoring, and contributing to industry and grassroots initiatives.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Quantitative Research	Surveys, MaxDiff, Conjoint, beta testing, cluster analysis and segmentation, classification modelling, statistical analysis.
Qualitative & Mixed-Method Research	Playtesting, interviews, usability and concept testing, heuristic evaluation, personas, data triangulation.
Strategy & Research Operations	Competitor and market analysis, brand health tracking, player segmentation, insights repositories, panel and vendor management, research roadmap and resourcing.
Leadership & Collaboration	Line management, mentoring, career development, stakeholder management at senior leadership level, workshops
Tools	Python, R, SQL, Notion, Qualtrics, Sawtooth, SurveyMonkey, Google Workspace, GameRefinery, Sensor Tower, Miro, FigJam, Claude, PlaytestCloud, UserTesting, Dovetail.
Domains	Gaming, e-Commerce, Consumer Tech, Start-ups, DE&I, Civic Organisations.
Languages	Filipino Native English Near native (IELTS Test: 8.5, Level C2) Finnish Good (YKI Test: Speaking Level 3/B1, Writing Level 4/B2)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

November 2025 to present	UX & Player Research Lead (<i>Acting initially, formal promotion April 2026</i>)
October 2023 to November 2025	Senior UX and Player Researcher Metacore Games Oy, Helsinki, Finland

Lead player research for Merge Mansion (€600M+ lifetime revenue, 60M+ downloads). Built the function from zero. Partner with design, product, brand, analytics, and leadership across the full game lifecycle.

- Built the player research function from zero, including research intake, roadmap, and insights repository, now embedded in live-ops, feature development, and long-term strategy across the studio.
- Set strategic direction for player research at Metacore, partnering with leadership on prioritisation, resourcing, and team growth.
- Line manage and develop a direct report; scale craft and capacity across the function.

- Design and execute mixed-method research from concept exploration through post-launch live-ops, including player personas, player satisfaction tracking, churn research, brand health, and competitor and market analysis.
- Strategic research partner to senior leadership and cross-functional teams; synthesise complex findings into clear narratives that feed feature prioritisation, event tuning, brand decisions, and long-term content direction.
- Own research operations end-to-end: documentation, templates, guidelines, recruitment, tooling, insights repository, and vendor management.
- Coach designers in research techniques, scaling craft capability across the studio.

Achievements and Impact

- **Strategic research influence:** Brand Health study findings became the foundation of Merge Mansion's brand refresh; player research recommendations adopted as the visual direction for the company's top-priority modernisation initiative.
- **Economy and retention:** Area Satisfaction and Churn research drove rebalancing across 8 in-game areas, reducing friction, restoring flow, and making it easier for lapsed players to return. Milestone area: area churn -22%, area satisfaction up from 3.41 to 3.57, ARPPU +5%.
- **Evidence-based decision-making:** Ran player research alongside the late-areas A/B test, surfacing the disconnect between perceived difficulty improvements and actual satisfaction. Findings informed the decision to revert the change.
- **Feature development:** Research informed the Display Task on Board redesign, a major UI shift bringing tasks onto the main board for the first time. Results: d7 retention +6% (new players); merge goals completed +2.8% (existing) and +6% (new players).
- **AI in research practice:** Research-craft AI champion. Built a Notion-based insights repository optimised for AI retrieval using the Atomic Research framework, enabling cross-functional teams to query past research and self-serve answers.
- **Operations and tooling:** Run ~2 studies per month; introduced new survey tooling unlocking MaxDiff and Conjoint analyses;
- **DE&I:** Member of Metacore's DE&I committee; drafted the inclusive design lens for game development, a practical framework for building DE&I into the player experience.

July 2021 to September 2023

Senior Quantitative User Researcher

January 2021 to July 2021

Quantitative User Researcher

Zalando Finland Oy, Helsinki, Finland

August 2019 to January 2021

Quantitative User Researcher

Zalando SE, Berlin, Germany

Led large-scale consumer research across multiple product verticals, markets, and user segments, generating insights to inform product and portfolio strategy.

- Designed and led end-to-end quantitative and mixed-method research (beta testing, segmentation, experience evaluation), guiding product decisions and launches across multiple teams.
 - Managed research intake and recruitment across teams, defining sampling strategies and prioritising incoming requests.
 - Delivered User Research Basics, and Statistics for UX trainings, raising research literacy across colleagues and stakeholders.
 - Hired, onboarded, and supervised two Research Operations Coordinators (working students).
 - Mentored Qualitative User Researchers in quantitative research techniques.
- #### *Achievements and Impact*
- **AI in e-commerce (2023):** Led concept testing for the Zalando Assistant, an AI-powered conversational commerce experience novel to the category at launch.
 - **Inclusion-driven strategy:** D&I research insights contributed to Zalando onboarding 70+ Black-owned brands in fashion and beauty.
 - **Sustainability:** Launched a research on sustainability communication with brand partners and industry groups, contributing to industry standard development and strengthening Zalando's position as a category leader.
 - **Beta testing:** Guided go-live decisions for 5 major product initiatives at Zalando.
 - **Beauty segmentation:** Identified and established Zalando's Beauty customer segments, which became the foundation for category-level strategy.
 - **Research operations:** Built and scaled the internal research panel to 9 markets with 12,000+ members. Established an accessibility panel of 100+ individuals with disabilities. Optimised participant recruitment, cutting cost by 69% and lifting project capacity from 20 to 30 annually.

- March 2017 to July 2017 **Data Analyst**
Parkkisähkö Oy, Helsinki, Finland
Established and developed reporting and analytics requirements, providing regular data analysis and insights on customer segmentation, utilisation, and demand statistics.
- April 2008 to January 2015 **Senior Analyst, Global Resource Planning**
Sykes Enterprises Inc. (through Sykes Asia Inc.), Manila, Philippines
Served as a level 2 point of contact for resource planning, offering workforce management consultations to clients. Analysed historical and actual arrival patterns to inform resource strategy decisions. Initiated process improvement initiatives. Trained new analysts.
- June 2007 to April 2008 **Workforce Officer, Workforce Optimization Team**
Sykes Asia Inc., Manila, Philippines
Maintained staffing line and scheduling indices, optimising employee schedules for efficient workforce management.
- May 2004 to June 2007 **Senior Reports Analyst, Business Management Team**
Sykes Asia Inc., Manila, Philippines
Managed real-time management operations and analysed reports, identifying trends in KPIs for Microsoft Lines of Business. Investigated data for performance improvement opportunities and provided recommendations. Awarded Best Reports Analyst in 2006.

EDUCATION

- 2021 – 2022 **Masters Specialisation Studies in Big Data Analytics (15 ECTS)**
Arcada University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland
- 2017 – 2019 **Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Information Technology**
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland
Specialisation: Digital Service Design (User Experience) and Software Development
Thesis: Using Machine Learning Models to Predict the Study Path Selection of Business Information Technology Students
- 1999 – 2004 **Bachelor of Science in Statistics**
University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines

TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- May 2025 **Choice Modeling Master Class: Conjoint Analysis and MaxDiff Methods to Prioritize Customer Needs**
Quant UX Association
- January 2021 **How to Interpret UX Numbers: Statistics for UX**
Nielsen Norman Group

SPEAKING AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENTS

- December 2025 **Finnish Game Industry DEI Summit, Helsinki**
Moderator: Facilitated two roundtable discussions on anti-racism, and advancing inclusion and safety for transgender people within the games industry.
- October 2025 **Designing With Ears Open: Listen To Your Players, Pocket Gamer Connects Helsinki**
Panel Speaker: Shared about what "listening to players" means at Metacore, highlighting the value of combining different types of data and approaching player feedback with empathy.
- June 2025 **Career Pivots and Cultural Shifts: A Migrant's Journey into Tech & Games, Womenize! Berlin**
Speaker: Talked about navigating career changes and cultural transitions, and finding a niche and using your voice to uplift others while building a career in tech and games.
- April 2024 **When To Say No: Setting Boundaries At Work**
Panel Speaker: Spoke on boundary-setting and saying no as a strategic act of empowerment for migrant women in tech and gaming.

- September 2021 **Numbers behind the scene: quantitative research in practice, UXHel**
Speaker: Shared about the impact of data on design decisions and foundational steps to establishing UX quantitative research, including creating a scalable research panel.
- August 2017 to April 2018 **PowerCards, Elsevier Global Incubation Programme 2018 and Elsevier Hacks 2017, Helsinki, Finland (3rd place)**
Researcher, Designer: Facilitated the whole design process, led user research, designed prototype, created storyboard and process flow and helped in the presentation and pitch
- June 2017 **UXHel Designing Smarter Cities, Espoo, Finland - (Winner)**
Designer: Collaborated in the design process, built the wireframe and prototype and participated in the pitch.

COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP

- July 2025 - present **Member, AI & Digital Rights Working Group, European Network Against Racism**
- February 2025 - present **Secretary, Anti-Racist Forum, Helsinki, Finland**
- August 2024 - present **Member & Mentor, We in Games Finland, Helsinki, Finland**
- October 2018 to May 2019 **Course Assistant, UX and Prototyping of Digital Services, Haaga-Helia UAS**
- November 2016 - March 2019 **Executive Board Member, ILGA World**

PUBLICATIONS

- January 2022 **Machine Learning Models to Predict Students' Study Path Selection**
Published Paper, International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies
- July 2018 **Experience Changes the Perception and Feelings: A Case Study on MVR Application in Educational Context**
Conference Paper, 10th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (EDULearn2018), Palma, Spain
- September 2015 **Transrespect versus Transphobia: The Experiences of Trans People in the Philippines**
Research Publication, STRAP and Transgender Europe, Berlin, Germany