

What are Esports?

Introduction to the Global Phenomenon of Esports

Teodora DOMINTEANU*

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania¹

**Corresponding author, teodora.dominteanu@defs.ase.ro*

Neluța SMÎDU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

neluta.smidu@defs.ase.ro

Andreea VOINEA

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

andreea_voinea1981@yahoo.com

Corina-Claudia DINCIU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

corina.dinciu@defs.ase.ro

Maria-Cristiana PORFIREANU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest/Romania

maria.porfireanu@defs.ase.ro

Adrian IACOBINI

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

adrian.iacobini@defs.ase.ro

Abstract. *Tom Brady, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, and others are household names, while Lee Faker Sang-Hyeok is less well-known. Although Kim Doinb Tae-sang and Luka Perkz Perkovi are still well known, they are also rising to the status of world-renowned athletes. The most popular computer video game in the world, League of Legends, has professional players like Faker Perks and Toinb. The League is one of the many ambitious and well-liked sporting events that make up the fast-growing esports category. Administrators operate in what is referred to as a global gray area. Esports is a lucrative corporate sponsorship option for athletes because of its enormous popularity (some events regularly draw tens of thousands of viewers), but it is also fluid and lacks defined standards. This article describes the global phenomenon of esports; provides an overview of the role and practice of esports; highlights why esports is considered an integral part of the evolving internet culture and introduces the reader to the structure of gaming more broadly.*

Keywords: esports, history, evolution, structures, internet culture

^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6} *Department of Physical Education and Sports*

Introduction

Esports are simply video games played in a highly organized competitive setting.

These games range from the well-liked multiplayer online battlegrounds (MOBAs), which are characterized by their emphasis on cooperative play, to the rising popularity of single-player first-person shooter survival battle royales and virtual reality games. This rise in video games occurs as the young adult population begins to create and control new cultural trends. Of particular importance to these changes is the development of a fundamental relationship between youth and sport.

While the viewership for traditional sports is decreasing the viewership for esports is increasing. (Esports Industry in 2022) The explosion was so substantial that almost all of the top video games available today have some kind of fictitious commercial circuit. What led to this change in direction? In the early 2000s, the narrative opens in South Korea.

To combat the severe economic crisis, the South Korean government has concentrated on building out its telecommunications and internet infrastructure. (www.nytimes.com, 2014) PC Sound quickly became a well-known social space. It is a dining establishment with a bar and other areas used for gambling. These organizations are as common as nearby basketball courts, where gamers congregate to compete and form bonds over a common interest in video games. These nations soon began holding official competitions. Recognizing the extraordinary market created by the region the Korean government stepped in and created the Korea Sports Association (KeSPA) the world's first government body dedicated to the regulation of video games and esports.

Due to the South Korean government's policy for the growth of telecommunications, numerous low-cost television stations mushroomed at the same time. One of them was developed specifically to cover Naver eSports. Esports have become a significant part of Korean culture because of a mix of well-liked social venues that encourage focused competition and live streaming platforms for expert gamers. StarCraft (1998), StarCraft II (2010), and Defense of the Ancients 2 (2013), also known as Dota 2, were developed by Activision Blizzard and Valve Corporation, respectively, and became the first real esports. Dota 2 spawned a potent network of modest-sized competitions that eventually developed into secretive, significant tournaments. However, StarCraft's development of the first organized and sponsored developers helped it gain more popularity on the Korean circuit. Even today, some gaming leagues exist. The prize pool for the DOTA 2 International 2019 winners is \$135 million out of \$308 million, which is more than some traditional sports like golf and ultimate fighting. Dota 2 is incredibly popular, and its current international championship has the largest prize pool of any esports event at five and a half times the second largest prize pool. (www.forbes.com, 2019)

The research questions are:

- What are esports?
- What are the general structures behind esports?
- Why esports should be seen as a part of the ever-changing internet culture?

Literature review

A synopsis of esports' history

Early in the 1970s, amid the revered halls of Stanford University, esports first began to gain popularity and was the unwitting brainchild of a group of Stanford University students. These pioneer hunters could not have imagined that their activities would lead to the popularity of the first competitive game by playing a game called *Space War*. (History of Esports, 2021)

On October 19, 1972, Stanford University hosted the first video gaming tournament for the game Space War. Stanford students are invited to participate in the Intergalactic Space Battle Olympics, with Bruce Baumgart winning the five-man free-for-all and the Tovar and Robert E. Mass team taking first place. The grand prize is a year's subscription to Rolling Stone. (History of Esports, 2021)

Modern competition equipment originated from video arcade competition. The device was introduced in Japan in 1974 by Sega as the All-Japan Games Championship TV arcade video game tournament for the nation. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

Sega organized the tournament to promote the game and promote video game sales in the country. Domestic competitions were held at 300 locations in Japan and sixteen finalists were selected for the finals at the Tokyo Pacific Hotel. Televisions in both color and black and white, cassette recorders, and transistor radios were among the prizes given out. Members of significant Japanese media and entertainment sector corporations attended what *Sega* claims to be the largest event in the history of arcade games. *Sega* stressed the value of these competitions in fostering a competitive environment for televised entertainment games and enhancing manufacturer-venue-customer commercial partnerships. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The first Snake Hustle arcade game was released in the United States in 1977 by Gremlin Industries (bought by *Sega* the year before), and it featured Sabrina Osment and Lynn Reid, two professional female arcade players from the Gremlin Girls. The two made trips to 19 different US cities so that players might compete against them in best-of-three games for the chance to win money. Only seven of the 1300 players who challenged this pair managed to lose. (Drewis D., 2018)

Space Invaders, which introduced the use of a consistent height for all players, inaugurated the dawn of the period of arcade racing games in 1978. Many video games have recently added new ways to compare high scores with players who first played games like *Asteroids* in 1979. High scorekeeping has developed into a competitive hobby. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The first significant video game tournament, the *Space Invaders* Tournament by Atari in 1980, attracted over 10,000 players from all over the country and helped popularize competitive gaming. The winner was Rebecca Heineman. (Marie M., 2018)

After traveling the nation in the 1980s and setting records in numerous games, Iowa-based arcade entrepreneur Walter Day launched *Twin Galaxies*, a business that keeps track of high scores. Later, the group assisted in promoting video games and making its achievements known through periodicals like the *Guinness Book of World Records*, and in 1983 it established the US National Video Game Team. The group participates in events including the North American Video Game Challenge Tour, the *Guinness World Records* Tour, and *Video Game Masters*. (Sunday Star-News, 1984)

In order to introduce audiences to these live gamer challenges and increase interest in video games, *Circus Electronics* employed a multi-city tour in 1983. (Borowy M. and al., 2013) The participants and tournaments of this video game were covered by tabloids and magazines like *Life* and *Time*, and some of the players, like Billy Mitchell, rose to the status of minor celebrities at the time. These kinds of promotional events enhance the competitiveness of the games while also contributing to the nature of marketing and promotion that current esports are centered on. (Borowy M. and al., 2013)

The American show *Starcade*, which ran for a total of 133 episodes from 1982 to 1984 and featured competitors competing to beat each other's top score in an arcade game, was one of the few television shows that were shown during this time. The television show *The Incredibles* had a

video game tournament, and other movies, including Tron from 1982, contained tournaments in their plots. Modern arcade games were played in rounds of competition on the BBC television show First Class in the UK. Super Mario Bros. was a favorite among competitive arcade gamers at the first American National Video Game Team Tournament conducted in the United States by the Recreational Players Association in January 1987.

A 16-player online game called Netrek 1988 was nearly totally created using open-source, cross-platform code. Netrek is the third online game, the first to feature persistent user data, and the first to use a meta server to find open game servers. It was touted as "the first online sports game" by Wired magazine in 1993. (Kevin K., 1993)

Esports differ from traditional sports in a number of significant ways, including the role of game publishers and developers, the risk of obsolescence, and the distribution and accessibility of games.

Discussions

Structures behind esports

Developer tools come in two different varieties. The first to give up are the organizers like Microsoft and Nintendo, who wish to stay away from their titles or commercial activities by letting communities host tournaments and games while still demanding developer consent. Additionally, professional games are actively organized by mobile game developers like Blizzard Games, Activision, and Valve Corporation. Of the two streaming developers, Spotify is the most well-known and expanding the quickest. This means that private companies with exclusive intellectual property rights to the sport are the only entities organizing professional competitions; this means that game developers have the greatest control over how their games are played.

Another important point is that although physical sports are eternal and belong to no one can always get football and sports games depending on their developer's choice. If the developer decides to close the game online, then the game will be lost. Choosing to favor new items or stop monetary losses is a frequent decision. One such instance is Fractured Space, whose development by Edge Case Games was halted at the end of 2018 because of the game's small player population.

Developers are the only party with control over who has access to their games because they are the sole owners of the intellectual property rights to those games. The quality of these games differs greatly from traditional sports. To enable play, region-specific servers are needed. Latency is a term for high latency. Esports are unplayable due to the delay between human input and command reading. The user experience can be negatively impacted by a delay of up to 100 milliseconds; in fact, significant latency prevents professional matches from continuing until the issue is resolved. Most often, a slow network or a distance from the server are to blame for the delay. As a result, players from those areas will never be able to compete in the professional scene or even play the game properly if a developer determines it is not financially viable to support a sizable portion of the world.

Access to the genuine professional scene and distribution are quite different things. To operate in real time and compete with media teams or businesses, players require access to tools and resources. Teenagers and young adults who grew up with YouTube and other free media are the target market because they cannot afford the monthly subscription charge to view certain channels. Because of this, the majority of live sports streams on free-to-play platforms are populated by marketers who have sponsored particular matches. This rule is also ambiguous. It is unlikely that the entire business will migrate to pay-per-view platforms because part of the attraction lies in the real direct connection between players and viewers. Live broadcasts interact

with viewers by answering their questions and having general conversations with viewers. This feeling of intimate and personal connection cannot be guaranteed. Some developers do not even want that to happen. The excitement of the game was very loud about it.

Although essential to esports, streaming has its own set of issues. Professional players and streamers are pushed to stream as much as they can to increase their teams' ad revenue, yet players only receive a small portion of it. They are individually motivated to get up and produce a lot of content in order to attract sponsors, but this can lead to exhaustion and long periods of sitting, which can have negative health effects.

Results

Since 2013, American universities and colleges have offered sports scholarships to esports competitors, including Robert Morris University in Illinois and the University of Pikeville. To encourage collegiate esports clubs to participate in its \$1 million event, Blizzard Entertainment's Collegiate Esports Division introduced a new initiative in 2017. Colleges have begun awarding scholarships to students who qualify to participate in professional sports for academic credit. Participating colleges include Columbia College, Robert Morris University, and the Indiana Institute of Technology. The Harrisburg University of Science and Technology started offering athletic players scholarships in 2018. In an effort to grow esports, the biggest independent league teamed up with regional company Japan Competitive Gaming in 2014.

The breadth of esports competition expands as the internet audience surpasses the physical audience. A sold-out Staples Center hosted the League of Legends World Championship Season 3 in 2013, and in Seoul, South Korea, in 2014, Imagine Dragons performed live at the opening and closing ceremonies in front of over 40000 spectators. excluding games. The first dedicated sports facility in the United States debuted in 2015 when the first esports arena opened in Santa Ana, California. China announced a legislation in 2021 that forbade kids from engaging in what they refer to as "spiritual opiates"—video games—for more than three hours per week. Given that China is a significant market, the law raises questions about the state of the media in the nation.

As a result of decades of technological advancement and tremendous growth this modern phenomenon may have permeated our lives either directly or indirectly through friends and family. Some might say it is an example of the perfect place and perfect time, but its success is no mere coincidence. 500 million viewers and generated over \$1 billion in revenue in 2021 alone.

The classification of competitive video games as sports is controversial. (Ivo v. Hilvoorde & Niek Pot, 2016) Advocates claim that tooling is a rapidly expanding non-traditional sport that necessitates precise timing and efficient execution. Others disagree, arguing that sports should combine mental and physical activities. (Tjønndal A., 2020)

The Wild West game industry is reportedly valued at hundreds of billions of dollars, but the rules are still undefined. There were few laws governing them when they first became a real sensation around the world in 2012 and 2013. There was still a prevalent perception that computer games destroy your brain long after the floodgates opened, audiences started to acquire universal acceptance, and even the money soared.

The panelists openly laughed at the subject in 2013 on a Bryant Gumbel-hosted episode of Real Sports. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>, 2023)

Additionally, a lot of people in the fighting game community set competitive gaming competitions apart from other esports competitions that are relevant to the business world. An esports panel with visitors from the worldwide athletic community explored the future of

recognizing esports as a real sport at the 2015 World Championships, which were hosted by the Worldwide Sports Federation.

On July 25, 2001, Russia became the first nation to recognize "cybersport" as a legitimate sporting activity. On March 12th, 2004, it was once again categorized as a sport following a number of reforms in Russian sports. (Centimeter. Federal Agency for Physical Culture and Sport Order from 2006 Because it did not adhere to the sport's updated standards, it was dropped from the list of sports in July 2006. Esports were once again recognized as an official sport category in April 2017 after the Ministry of Sports voted to add cybersport to the list of sports in July 2016.

Despite worries that video games were addictive at the time, China was one of the first nations to acknowledge esports as a legitimate sport in 2003. (Zhouxiang L., 2016) The government has promoted the esports by allowing players to participate in the sport and qualify for China. In addition, China will help esports athletes obtain official certification from vocational skill testing agencies of the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Social Security. At the beginning of 2019 esports were recognized as a business. More than 100000 people have registered as professional athletes by July 2019 and more than two million people will participate in this profession five years from now according to the ministry.

Some business events are held in the format of traditional international sporting competitions in order to promote esports as a legal sport. The Asian Wushu Games and the Indochina Games, which followed, both featured legitimate contests. The 2007 Indochina Games were the first high-profile multisport event to host official medal competitions alongside other traditional sports. As a previous exhibition bearer or bearer's medallion, equipment has been included.

Additionally, the 2022 Asian Games, the pinnacle of multisport competitions in Asia, will feature tools like the medal fight. As a lead-up to the 2022 Olympics, game-based games like Hearthstone, StarCraft II, and League of Legends were introduced as spectacular events at the 2018 Asian Games. There were six media medal events at the Southeast Asian Games in 2019. The fact that the sailing world championships have now been conducted entirely online since 2018 demonstrates the sport's acceptance by the main sports federations.

The first online game with more than a million unique users is Vendee Globe Shadow Rule 2020–2021. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>)

The Swedish Sports Confederation decided in June 2021 to deny esports recognition as a sporting event, compromising plans for how Valve organized things in terms of travel. The 2021 International Festival was initially scheduled to take place in Stockholm in 2020. International athletes' visas Although Valve attempted to coordinate with Sweden to host players, the event was ultimately moved to Romania. Esports competitions will be held at the Commonwealth Games in 2022 as a test run for what might eventually be a complete medal program in 2026. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>, 2023)

Olympic Games recognition

The Olympic Games are also thought to give esports legitimacy. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) hosted a conference in October 2017 to acknowledge the growing popularity of esports, the fact that competitive esports can be regarded as sports, and the fact that participants compete against athletes in more traditional sports. preparation and training at the necessary level for all sports adapted for the Olympics "with the rules and regulations of the Olympic movement". (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>, 2023)

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach stated that the IOC has been plagued by intense competition and the lack of a global sanctioning body for sport. Thomas Bach acknowledged that many Olympic sports arose out of actual combat but said: "sport is the civilized expression about this. If you have e-games where it's about killing somebody, this cannot be brought into line with our Olympic values." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>, 2023) For this reason the IOC recommends approving other tools for esports that focus on simulating real games such as NBA 2K or the FIFA series.

Safety concerns have not stopped the IOC from exploring the possibility of including it in future Olympic Games. Media spectacle's potential has been demonstrated by the IOC. Prior to the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, Intel sponsored StarCraft II and advanced events in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee, and five South Korean athletes took part in the torch relay. The 2016 Summer Olympics were co-located in Rio de Janeiro with a comparable esports display, but the IOC did not support it.

The IOC maintained that it only recognized simulated sports competitions as official Olympic events during the 8th Olympic Summit in December 2019, although it also stated that it would investigate two options for such competitions going forward. Games that use virtual or augmented reality and require movement (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports>, 2023)

To make the Olympic Games more appealing to the younger generation, the organizing committee for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris is considering including esports into the event in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee and several professional esports organizations.

He claims that these elements must be included to preserve them. Ultimately the organizing committee decided it was too early to introduce esports into the 2024 Games as a medal event but did not rule out other esports-related activities during the Games.

In terms of international governance and organization, organizations like the World Professional Sports Association and International Federations compete for the top rank. It may be necessary, as a global association of sports organizations, to establish extra criteria that satisfy the regulatory requirements of particular sports in addition to a set of norms that are universally acknowledged by all esports groups.

Internet culture in esports

Internet culture has become an integral part of the esports phenomenon, which has experienced a meteoric rise in popularity over the past few years. Esports is a form of competitive video gaming that has evolved into a global phenomenon, attracting millions of players, spectators, and investors from around the world. The emergence of esports has given rise to a unique and dynamic online culture that is deeply intertwined with the broader internet culture.

The focus on online communities and social networking is one of the distinctive aspects of internet culture in esports. Social media platforms and other online forums are used by players, fans, and business professionals to connect with one another and have debates about esports. These online communities offer a venue for people to interact, exchange ideas, and take part in a range of esports-related activities.

Another notable aspect of internet culture in esports is the use of *memes*, *slang*, and other forms of online communication. The use of *memes* (esports memes are a form of internet humor that often take the form of images, videos, or catchphrases, and are created and shared by players, fans, and industry professionals alike) and other forms of online humor is particularly prevalent in the esports community, where players and spectators often use humor to bond and connect with

each other. *Slang* (esports slang is a form of jargon that has emerged in the context of competitive video gaming, and it is often used by players, commentators, and enthusiasts as a way of communicating with each other and expressing their unique identities and perspectives.) and other forms of online communication have also become a part of the esports lexicon, with many terms and phrases unique to the esports community.

The online culture of esports has also given rise to new forms of content creation and distribution, such as live streaming, video content, and podcasts. Many players and industry professionals have leveraged these platforms to build their personal brands and create engaging content that resonates with their audiences. The rise of content creators has also given rise to new forms of sponsorship and advertising, with brands looking to partner with popular esports personalities to reach their target audiences.

However, internet culture in esports is not without its challenges. The anonymity and accessibility of the internet can make it easy for bad actors to harass or bully others, and the competitive nature of esports can sometimes lead to toxic behavior among players and spectators.

These issues have prompted many in the esports community to advocate for greater diversity, inclusion, and responsible behavior online.

All of this demonstrates how fundamentally different esports are from traditional sports, but they also have a lot in common. Teams play scheduled games during some seasons that lead to the playoffs and important international competitions. Now that more players are under contract, the organization is making greater investments in its headquarters and training facilities.

Adaptive Creation Esports is growing in popularity and attracting tens of thousands of viewers. Since the beginning, they have had an international presence.

Esports continues to take an increasing share of the events calendars of major international sporting bodies and is expected to officially take part in the 2026 *Commonwealth Games* in Victoria, Australia. The IOC says the prospect of esports winning medals at the 2024 *Olympics* is premature but their performance at the 2028 *Los Angeles Games* remains open.

Donations are currently the main source of income for a sizable majority of participants. The majority of the early donations came from modest contributors who watched the players compete via the streaming service. These donations, however, are nothing compared to the generous sponsorship and corporate endorsement budgets spent on marketing. Esports athletes have the same power to sell their name, image, or skill to advertising companies as traditional athletes do. A billboard for the Michael Jordan film *Shut Up* just featured RNG Jian Wuji Ji Hao, a Chinese League of Legends player.

Large-name athletes from traditional sports have started to appear on sports teams more lately. The Boston-based Overwatch club was purchased for \$20 million in 2018 by Michael Jordan's joint ownership of Club Liquid and Robert Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots. Businesses are also entering. Every company in the world, including Tinder, Louis Vuitton, Nike, and Adidas, invests in sponsorships. Esports, meanwhile, will only raise the market's overall revenue.

In conclusion, internet culture has become a defining aspect of the esports phenomenon, shaping the way players, spectators, and industry professionals engage with each other and with the broader community. While internet culture has created new opportunities and challenges for the esports industry, it has also helped to foster a dynamic and engaged community of esports players and enthusiasts around the world.

Conclusion

The burgeoning industry of esports has garnered significant attention in recent years, as an increasing number of individuals engage in competitive video gaming as players, spectators, and investors. While the growth of esports has been rapid, its future trajectory remains a topic of considerable interest and debate within academic and industry circles.

Various factors contribute to the potential for sustained growth in the world of esports. One key factor is the increasing accessibility of technology and the internet, which has facilitated the creation of global communities of gamers and enabled the broadcast and streaming of esports events to a massive audience. Additionally, the development of new technologies, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, may expand the possibilities for immersive gaming experiences, enhancing the appeal of esports to a broader audience.

Moreover, the esports industry has attracted significant investment from a range of stakeholders, including venture capitalists, media companies, and traditional sports teams, further underscoring the potential for continued growth and innovation in this space. This investment has supported the development of new leagues, tournaments, and gaming platforms, as well as the creation of professional teams and player contracts.

However, the future of esports is also subject to potential challenges and uncertainties. The impact of emerging technologies on the industry, such as the potential for new gaming platforms or the evolution of esports spectatorship, remains uncertain. Additionally, the relationship between esports and traditional sports may evolve, as some sports organizations have expressed interest in incorporating esports into their offerings, while others remain skeptical.

Overall, the future of esports in the world is a complex and multifaceted topic, with a range of potential outcomes. However, given the current trajectory of growth and innovation, it seems likely that esports will continue to play a significant role in the world of gaming and entertainment in the years to come.

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