

## Paper 18

Esports' Feasibility as an Entertainment Media: A Study

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**Abstract** - This research is conducted to find and determine the perks the public can get by engaging in Esports, the adverse effects that can affect Esports and making suggestions on how to improve the Esports scene. This study will be based on interaction in Esports, viewership in Esports, toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports, as well as in-game purchases in Esports. The results of the data analysis showed that interaction in Esports, viewership in Esports, and in-game purchases in Esports have a positive effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. On the other hand, no significant effect was found on toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports to the feasibility of Esports as an entertainment media.

**Keywords** – Esports; In-game purchases; Media consumption; Online gaming; Toxicity; Video games

### I. INTRODUCTION

Video games have been a massive hit among the youth ever since they are found. It's been capturing youngsters' hearts and parenting has never been easier than before thanks to games like Atari's Pong in 1972, the worldwide buzz that is Super Mario in 1985, and games with lifelike graphics and fluid gameplay we've commonly seen these days such as Call of Duty and the annual FIFA games that only gets better in graphics and gameplay as the years go by. To add, playing video games with people (strangers and friends alike) around the world is now a possibility with the invention of the internet, with the internet is a huge part of everyone's lives these days. Video games also promote well-being, especially in youth mental health (Granic, Lobel, and Engels, 2014). As quoted from (Squire, 2011), video games enable the intellectual and social growth of players, as content, overlapping goals, continuous problem solving, social interactions and gaming cultures are critical aspects of learning through games.

Even with limitations like the COVID-19 pandemic, people were still excited to watch Esports games from streaming sites. Spectating Esports games can be seen as the equivalent of spectating any sports, albeit in a different platform (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016). Though there are already lots of research related to video games, Esports is a relatively new topic. According to (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016), literature on eSports is still rare and dispersed, and most of this body of literature has focused on the qualitative documentation of visible phenomenon in tournaments.

Video games have been one of humanity's favorite pastimes in the last thirty years or so. What started as another method of having fun become a way to connect with both friends and strangers alike with the help of the internet in a way of online gaming (Jenny, et al. 2018). Just like other sporting activities, those who excel in certain games were starting to look for opportunities. With that, tournaments for talented gamers started to spawn, mainly in Europe and North America. According to (Weiss and Schiele, 2013.) as stated by (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016), competition, challenge and escapism are one of the primary attributes associated with Esports.

Unlike conventional sports such as soccer and cricket, Esports can be considered a nontraditional sport, which uses technology to make participants exempt from direct action (robot fighting, Esports) (Gawrysiak, 2016). Other than viewers coming to the venue to watch Esports games live, viewership in Esports mainly comes from broadcasting channels and online streaming platforms (Grubb, 2015). Watching Esports from live streaming channels also allows viewers to interact with one another through the chat features available (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016). Based on research conducted by Newzoo in 2017, 42% of Esports viewers do not play the game they watch, similar to baseball fans who watch games on an almost daily basis but do not play the game itself. Despite its potential, many doubt esports' feasibility as entertainment media, especially compared to other sports branches such as soccer (Kane and Spradley, 2017). Gambling in Esports matches can also be considered as one of the ways Esports enthusiasts enjoy Esports. Spectating esports and participation in general forms of gambling are associated with increased esports betting, no direct association was observed between the consumption of video games and esports betting. (Macey, Abarbanel, and Hamari, 2021)

Esports can make brands reach new heights within the industry by striking up partnership deals in the Esports industry (Freitas, et al., 2020). Another industry that has been profiting from Esports is the gambling industry (Macey, Abarbanel, and Hamari, 2020.) For example, Red Bull has been actively involved in Esports since the 2010s, sponsoring teams and tournaments and actively contributing to the Esports community, making the brand associated with extreme activities but also gamers' first choice when it comes to energy drinks. Online betting sites have their dedicated webpage to let their users bet on Esports matches with real money or their in-game

items, converted into real money to gamble with. Some gambling sites are even willing to shell out by sponsoring tournaments and teams instead of just hosting Esports bets. There is no significant relationship between brand image and attention.

Esports has its barriers that prevents it from becoming a mainstream entertainment media. Video games, to some people, is synonymous to violence. According to a study (Barlett et al. 2009), as stated in (Adachi and Willoughby, 2011) have shown, playing a violent video game for 15 min can produce elevated levels of aggressive behavior that lasts between 5 and 10 minutes. Video game players with high in aggression are more likely to prefer games with violence in it, although violent contents do not reliably enhance the immersion of players (Przybylski, Ryan, and Rigby, 2009). Even so, the occasional violence in games may make several parents hesitant to expose their children to video games, thus barring them from a chance to fully enjoy Esports contents. To add, Esports players tend to express their satisfaction, especially in the heat of the moment with expletives, hurling verbal abuse towards their opponents.

### A. Research Aims

Skepticism around video games and Esports has been around alongside the development of Esports, hindering its growth along the way. Judging from the situation, the researcher wants to discover the feasibility of Esports as an entertainment media. The researcher would like to see whether Esports can become mainstream, or stay as a niche entertainment media. To come to a conclusion, the researcher has come up with research questions for the research:

1. What are the advantages customers find in engaging in Esports?
2. What are the negative impacts that can affect Esports?
3. Making recommendations to improve Esports

Even though there are already lots of research related to video games, Esports is a relatively new topic. Literature on eSports is still rare and dispersed, and most of this body of literature has focused on the qualitative documentation of visible phenomenon in tournaments (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016). Published quantitative research on the questions of why people watch eSports or why players wish to attend eSports events is, as of yet, non-existent. With this in mind, the researcher hopes to find answers related to customer's perception on Esports, including why people watch Esports games.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Theory Development Approaches

Judging from the its usage of quantitative method, this research will use deduction approach as this research aims to test verify data and evaluate hypotheses. Deduction approach is used if research starts with theories developed from academic reading, and a research strategy is designed to test the theory. The major characteristics of quantitative research are a focus on deduction, confirmation, theory testing, explanation, standardized data collection, and statistical analysis whereas the major characteristics of qualitative research are induction, discovery, exploration, theory generation, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection, and qualitative analysis (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Generally, deduction is used to falsify or verify theories created in the early stages of the research. Commonly used in qualitative researches, Induction approach is used to generate untested conclusions. Unlike deduction approach, where the data follows the theory, in induction approach the theory follows the data. Induction approach is used to generate and build theories (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007).

### B. Data Collection Method

Due to the quantitative nature of the study, primary data of this research will be collected using survey method with the help of online questionnaire. Online questionnaire in the form of Google Forms is used so it could reach the target respondents easier. The questionnaire will have an opening page to broadly explain the study and a section for every variable looking to be answered. To obtain optimal data and achieve the expected results from the participants, there will be a short explanation in the opening page and in each section of the questionnaire. The questions in the questionnaire will be separated in sections based on the variable, and will come in the form of statements or hypothetical situations for the respondents to answer. The answer will be measured with a Likert scale from one to five. The questionnaire will ask for personal data related to the study (gender, age, and employment status). To avoid biasness, the researcher will only analyze the data given from the participants. The researcher will not take any part in the filling of the questionnaire.

Table 1 - Operational Definition

Variable	Operational Definition	Measurement Indicator	Scale
Interaction in Esports (X1)	What started as another method of having fun become a way to connect with both friends and strangers alike with the help of the internet in a way of online gaming (Jenny, et al. 2018).	1. Why people play Esports games 2. Interaction with fellow players in-game	Likert (1 – 5)
Esports viewership (X2)	Other than viewers coming to the venue to watch Esports games live, viewership in Esports mainly comes from broadcasting channels and online streaming platforms (Grubb, 2015).  Based on research conducted by Newzoo (2017), 42% of Esports viewers do not play the game they watch.	1. Why people watch Esports games 2. Attitude towards Esports streams 3. Gambling in Esports matches	Likert (1 – 5)
Toxicity and Aggression in Esports (X3)	As stated by Adachi and Willoughby (2011), playing a violent video game for 15 min can produce elevated levels of aggressive behavior that lasts between 5 and 10 minutes, Barlett et al. (2009).	1. Do players exert toxicity when playing Esports games? 2. What players get from aggressive behavior 3. Attitude towards toxicity in Esports	Likert (1 – 5)
In-game transactions in Esports games (X4)	Zendle, Meyer, and Ballou (2020) stated that the growth of microtransactions has attracted substantial interest from both gamers, academics, and policy-makers.	1. Do players spend money in Esports games? 2. Attitude towards transaction system in Esports games?	Likert (1 – 5)

Esports as an entertainment media (Y)	Esports commonly refer to coordinated, competitive video gaming, where players customarily belong to teams which are sponsored by various business organizations (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016).	1. Players' expectation towards Esports 2. Attitude towards Esports' future	Likert (1 – 5)
Esports viewership (X2)	Other than viewers coming to the venue to watch Esports games live, viewership in Esports mainly comes from broadcasting channels and online streaming platforms (Grubb, 2015).  Based on research conducted by Newzoo (2017), 42% of Esports viewers do not play the game they watch.	1. Why people watch Esports games 2. Attitude towards Esports streams 3. Gambling in Esports matches	Likert (1 – 5)
Toxicity and Aggression in Esports (X3)	As stated by Adachi and Willoughby (2011), playing a violent video game for 15 min can produce elevated levels of aggressive behavior that lasts between 5 and 10 minutes, Barlett et al. (2009).	1. Do players exert toxicity when playing Esports games? 2. What players get from aggressive behavior 3. Attitude towards toxicity in Esports	Likert (1 – 5)
In-game transactions in Esports games (X4)	Zendle, Meyer, and Ballou (2020) stated that the growth of microtransactions has attracted substantial interest from both gamers, academics, and policymakers.	1. Do players spend money in Esports games? 2. Attitude towards transaction system in Esports games?	Likert (1 – 5)

### C. Population and Sample

In this study, the researcher defines the population as video game players who are aware with the existence of Esports worldwide. In determining the sample of this study, the sample are video game players aged 18 years and above. People who might fit the criteria, but belong in at-risk groups such as criminals, or minors below 18 years old are not included in the participation of the study. Participants come from gaming forums, gaming communities, and the researcher personal acquaintances who are familiar with video games and Esports. The researcher was able to collect 135 respondents to conduct the questionnaire.

### D. Data Analysis Methods

Several tests were performed to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire with the hopes of interpreting the data (Ghozali, 2009) and (Santoso, 2002). Firstly, the data was put through data quality tests (validity and reliability tests) to ensure the data obtained is good enough to be used in the research. After data quality tests have been performed, the data will go through three classic assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests) before going through hypothesis testing procedures to figure out whether the hypotheses determined earlier matched with the analysis results or not.

### E. Hypothesis Testing

#### 1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Test

According to (Sugiyono, 2013), as quoted by (Rosdiana, 2020), Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the effect caused by the independent variable indicators of the dependent variable with the following formulation:

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4$$

#### 2. Determination Coefficient Test (R<sup>2</sup>)

Determination coefficient test is used to discover how much the independent variables can do to explain the dependent variable by looking at the magnitude of the coefficient of total determination (R<sup>2</sup>). A value close to one means that the independent variables provide almost all the information needed to predict the variations in the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2009).

#### 3. Statistical Test t

This test is used to find out how far one individual independent variable can influence in explaining the variation of the dependent variable. The basis for decision making can be done by looking at the probability of its significance (Priyatno, 2014)

- o If the probability of significance is > 0.05, then H<sub>0</sub> is accepted and H<sub>a</sub> is rejected.
- o If the probability of significance is < 0.05, then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a</sub> is accepted.

## III. RESULTS

### A. Data Quality Test Results

Table 2 - Validity Test Results

Variable	Question Item	R count	R table	Information
X1	I regularly play online Esports games.	0.809	0.165	Valid
	I play online Esports games to have fun with my friends.	0.765	0.165	Valid
	I play online Esports games to be better as a player.	0.813	0.165	Valid
	I meet new, interesting people when I play online Esports games.	0.792	0.165	Valid
X2	I regularly communicate with my fellow players when I play online Esports games.	0.787	0.165	Valid
	I regularly watch Esports matches from online streaming platforms.	0.871	0.165	Valid
	I think Esports streams are more accessible compared to other sports.	0.735	0.165	Valid
	I watch Esports matches to support the participating teams.	0.838	0.165	Valid
	I watch Esports matches to learn how to be better at the game.	0.825	0.165	Valid
X3	I gamble on Esports matches, be it with real money or in-game items.	0.708	0.165	Valid
	Insults that I get from other players when playing Esports games motivate me to be better.	0.661	0.165	Valid
	Insults that I get from other players when playing Esports games hurt my feelings.	0.676	0.165	Valid
	I insult my teammates or opponents in Esports games when they play terribly or when I play better than them.	0.827	0.165	Valid
	When I insult my teammates or opponents in Esports games, I feel some sort of satisfaction.	0.844	0.165	Valid
X4	At this point, I'm already used to toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports.	0.742	0.165	Valid
	I regularly spend real money on in-game items (loot boxes, skins, etc.).	0.930	0.165	Valid
	I feel satisfied every time I buy in-game items.	0.927	0.165	Valid
Y	I buy in-game items to impress my friends.	0.893	0.165	Valid
	I think Esports can become mainstream in the future.	0.907	0.165	Valid
	I am confident in the future of Esports.	0.897	0.165	Valid

Based on the table above, question items that have R count values above 0.165 are considered valid, whereas question items with R count values below 0.165 are considered invalid, and removed from further analysis. From the validity test above, it can be concluded that each and every question items from each variable are valid and can be analyzed further.

Table 3 - Reliability Test Results

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
X11	63.5852	265.409	.666	.926
X12	63.0889	272.007	.607	.927
X13	63.6222	267.670	.653	.926
X14	63.3630	267.114	.708	.925
X15	63.5111	270.297	.628	.927
X21	63.6519	261.303	.714	.925
X22	63.3333	271.567	.614	.927
X23	63.6667	265.463	.722	.925
X24	63.3704	263.802	.715	.925
X25	64.2815	264.875	.568	.928
X31	63.7111	277.192	.460	.930
X32	63.7778	273.726	.499	.929
X33	64.1926	275.515	.444	.930
X34	64.3259	275.923	.432	.931
X35	63.9926	272.276	.466	.930
X41	63.9926	258.022	.756	.924
X42	63.8519	260.769	.712	.925
X43	64.2815	261.308	.699	.925
Y11	62.8667	276.101	.528	.929
Y12	62.9556	272.401	.669	.926

Source: SPSS Output Results, 2022

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.931	20

Based on the calculations above (Table 3), it can be seen that the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.931. Since the value of the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.60, it can be concluded that it passed the reliability test.

### B. Classic Assumption Test

Table 4 - Normality Test Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Unstandardized Residual	.043	135	.200*	.989	135	.349

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

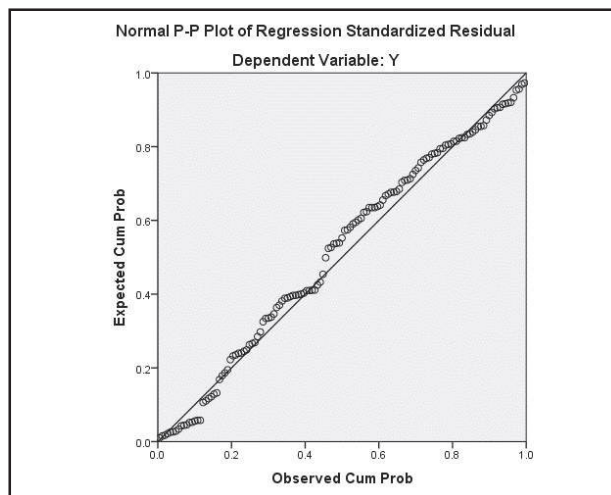


Figure 1 - Normality Test Results

From the table 4 above, it can be seen that the Sig. value for standardized residual is 0.200, meaning that since the Sig. value is over 0.05, it can be concluded that the data of variables come from a normally distributed population.

Table 5 - Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.968	.500		7.923	.000		
X1	.110	.038	.279	2.911	.004	.420	2.379
X2	.127	.037	.354	3.456	.001	.369	2.711
X3	-.050	.029	-.128	-1.765	.080	.736	1.359
X4	.101	.045	.213	2.249	.026	.433	2.312

a. Dependent Variable: Y

From table 5 shown above, it can be seen that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables since there is no independent variable with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values above 10.

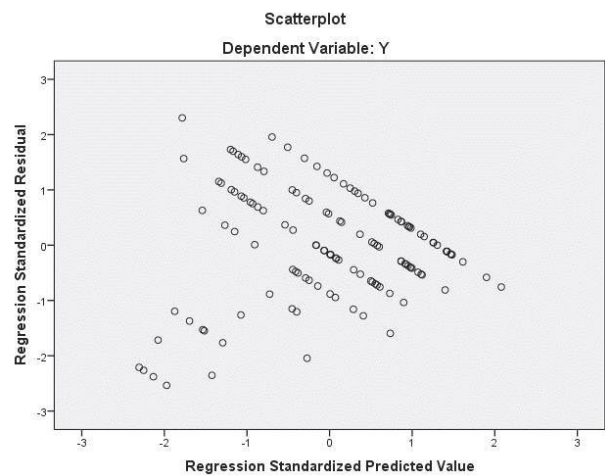


Figure 1 - Normality Test Results

Based on the figure above, it can be seen that the scatterplot test result has a random spread without any discernible pattern. From this, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity in the data analyzed.

### C. Hypothesis Test Results

Table 6 - Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.968	.500		7.923	.000		
X1	.110	.038	.279	2.911	.004	.420	2.379
X2	.127	.037	.354	3.456	.001	.369	2.711
X3	-.050	.029	-.128	-1.765	.080	.736	1.359
X4	.101	.045	.213	2.249	.026	.433	2.312

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Table 6 - Results of Coefficient Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin - Watson
1	.705 <sup>a</sup>	.496	.481	1.393.66	.742

a. Predictors: (Constant), X4, X3, X1, X2

b. Dependent Variable: Y

From table 7, it can be seen that the value of R-Square is 0.496. This states that 49% of the variable Y is influenced by X1, X2, X3, and X4, while the other 51% is influenced by other variables unexplained in this study.

Table 7 - Results of F-Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	105.938	4	26.485	17.233	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	199.795	130	1.537		
	Total	305.733	134			

a. Dependent Variable: Y  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), X4, X3, X1, X2

Based on the F-test results seen on table 8, it can be seen that the Sig. value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ . With that in mind, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted since there are significant influences in Y from X1, X2, X3, and X4.

Table 9 - Results of T-Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.968	.500		7.923	.000		
X1	.110	.038	.279	2.911	.004	.420	2.379
X2	.127	.037	.354	3.456	.001	.369	2.711
X3	-.050	.029	-.128	-1.765	.080	.736	1.359
X4	.101	.045	.213	2.249	.026	.433	2.312

a. Dependent Variable: Y

H0: There is no significant influence from X to Y

Ha: There is a significant influence from X to Y

From table 6, we can see by comparing Sig. value to  $\alpha=0.05$ , it can be concluded that:

- X1: Sig. Value  $0.004 < 0.05$ . Reject H0, accept H1.
- X2: Sig. Value  $0.001 < 0.05$ . Reject H0, accept H1.
- X3: Sig. Value  $0.080 > 0.05$ , Accept H0, reject H1.
- X4: Sig. Value  $0.026 < 0.05$ , Reject H0, accept H1.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of regression calculations performed from the questionnaire in this study show that the interaction in Esports variable (X1) has a significance value of 0.004, where this value is smaller than the error tolerance limit of 0.05. From this statement, it can be concluded that H1 is accepted, which means that interaction in Esports has a significant positive effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. Gamers can find challenge and escapism from their respective daily lives in Esports games (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2016). Other than escapism and challenge, gamers can also find new acquaintances by playing Esports games.

From this study, it can be concluded that the respondents' view on Esports were affected by the viewership in Esports. This can be seen in the calculation results shown by the t-test that is used to measure that the viewership in Esports variable (X2) has an effect on the feasibility of Esports as an entertainment media. The result from the t-test for X2 is a significance value of 0.001, which is smaller than the error tolerance limit of 0.05. From this data, it can be concluded that viewership in Esports has a significant positive effect on investment decisions.

The results of the calculation of this study show that the variable toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports variable (X3) has a significance value of 0.080, which is larger than the error tolerance limit of 0.05. This means that H3 is rejected, which can be concluded that there is no concrete link between toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports and Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. According to a study, it can be concluded that violent content in video games do not reliably enhance the immersion of players (Przybylski, Ryan, and Rigby, 2009).

The results of the calculation of this study indicate that the in-game transaction in Esports variable (X4) has a significance value of 0.026, which is smaller than the error tolerance limit of 0.05. From this fact, it can be concluded that H4 is accepted. Therefore, in-game transactions in Esports have a significant effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. Respondents tend to purchase in-game items in the games they play to increase their immersion and gaming experience. On the game developers' side, in-game transactions can boost their games' profitability and the extra capital can be used for the betterment of the games, or competitions for the games themselves.

#### V. CONCLUSION

From the questionnaire and the research questions presented prior, it can be stated that Esports enthusiasts find several benefits from getting involved in Esports. Those benefits are namely having fun with peers; meeting new people; watch professional Esports matches; and gratification from playing video games and being good at it. It can be noted that a small portion of respondents also gamble in professional Esports matches. However, adverse impacts can also be found in Esports, such as exposure to aggressive behavior from fellow players.

Based on the results of data analysis performed from the obtained data through the questionnaires distributed to respondents, several conclusions can be obtained: (1) Interaction in Esports has a positive effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media, the better interaction an Esports game gives to its players, the more the game can give growth to the Esports industry. (2)

Viewership on Esports has a positive effect on Esports' feasibility as entertainment media. It can be concluded that the significance value of the viewership of Esports variable has a significant positive effect on the feasibility of Esports itself. The higher the number of viewers of Esports, the higher it can reach its status as a mainstream entertainment media. (3) Toxicity and aggressive behavior in Esports variable have a negative effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. There is no significant link that could connect toxicity in Esports to Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. If anything, results from the questionnaire shows that toxicity in Esports ruins the fun of some respondents when playing Esports games. (4) In-game transactions in Esports games has a positive effect on Esports' feasibility as an entertainment media. In-game purchases may increase the fun players can have with Esports games, and purchases made by players increase the games' profitability, thus making the games and Esports industry an interesting business prospect for potential investors.

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