

eSport vs. Sport: A Comparison of Spectator Motives

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Abstract

eSports—organized video game competitions—are growing in popularity, with top tournaments drawing crowds of spectators rivaling traditional sporting events. Understanding the extent to which eSport operates similarly to traditional sport is vital to developing marketing strategies for the eSport industry and informing academic research on eSport. Prior research has examined eSports in isolation from traditional sports, overlooking direct comparisons to understand the degree to which eSport spectators are motivated similarly to traditional sport spectators. The current study measures widely-used sport consumption motives to examine their influence on eSport spectatorship and game attendance frequency. In South Korea, spectator motives across one traditional sport (soccer) and two eSport contexts (*FIFA Online 3* and *StarCraft II*) were measured. MANOVA results identify similar patterns for 11 out of 15 motives across the three. Significant differences between contexts include vicarious achievement, excitement, physical attractiveness, and family bonding. Multiple regression analysis results show that spectators across contexts have distinct sets of motives influencing game attendance. The current study demonstrates that traditional sport and eSports are similarly consumed, suggesting that sport industry professionals can manage and market eSport events similarly to traditional sport events.

Keywords: eSport, consumer behavior, spectator sport, marketing, spectator motives

eSports, organized video game competitions, are increasingly receiving mainstream media recognition as sport (Funk, Pizzo, & Baker, 2018). Yet, considering eSport as a form of sport is still perceived by many as subversive (Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). The establishment of national and international governing bodies has added structure and regulation to a quickly growing industry, institutionalizing the practices of competitive gaming (Seo, 2013). eSport has many of the components of traditional sport, including players,

teams, managers, leagues, competitions, marquee events, endorsement deals, player transfer fees, college scholarships, and a dark side with match fixing, doping, and gender-related disputes (Jenny, Manning, Keiper, & Olrich, 2017; Newzoo, 2016; Gies, 2016). The increasing institutionalization and broadening consumer and participant markets of eSport has attracted major corporate sponsors, such as Microsoft, Samsung, and Red Bull. The global eSport industry generated revenues of more than \$325 million worldwide

in 2015, with projected revenues of \$465 million in 2017 (Newzoo, 2016). There is increasing recognition of eSport as sport among industry stakeholders. eSport teams are being managed by traditional sport organizations (e.g., Philadelphia 76ers), covered on traditional sport media outlets (e.g., ESPN and Turner Sports), organized by traditional sport leagues (e.g., e-Ligue 1 and NBA 2K eLeague), and formally recognized by major university athletics departments (e.g., University of California–Irvine)—highlighting growing connections between traditional sport and eSports (Conditt, 2016; Rovell, 2016; Sarkar, 2017).

eSport represents a new area for study in sport consumer behavior (Funk, 2017). Understanding whether eSport operates similarly to traditional sport is key to developing appropriate marketing strategies for the eSport industry and can inform academic research. If eSports and traditional sports are similarly consumed in accordance with the same spectator motives, existing theoretical and practical approaches to sport consumer behavior are likely applicable to eSport, as well. Existing eSport research has centered on eSport consumption, focusing on playing and spectating (e.g., Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011; Weiss & Schiele, 2013). This research examined eSports in isolation from traditional sports (e.g., soccer, baseball, and basketball), without comparing the two, and thereby was unable to understand the extent to which eSport spectators are motivated similarly to traditional sport spectators (e.g., Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Other scholars have applied traditional sport definitions to examine eSport as sport (e.g., Jenny et al., 2017; Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). While these studies provide a starting point for future research, they do not extend our knowledge of eSport spectators from a consumer behavior perspective or aid in eSport marketing efforts. If eSport and traditional sport spectators share similar motives, eSport marketers can utilize established sport marketing practices.

Understanding spectator motives (e.g., social opportunities, vicarious achievement) is essential, as these motives are predictive of behavioral outcomes such as game attendance frequency (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Funk, Beaton, & Alexandris, 2012). Behavioral outcomes in sport marketing research can encourage sport marketing professionals to identify the most relevant motives needed to understand sport spectators. There are similarities in the consumer experience of attending eSport events and traditional sport events. Similarly to traditional sport spectators, eSport spectators may be seeking social opportunities to come together, watch their favorite players and teams compete live, and to be part of an exciting

experience where they can see the best players in action (Eventbrite, 2015). As such, many of the motives for attendance may be common across traditional and eSports. However, eSport spectator motives have not been assessed at eSport events or compared to a traditional sport consumption context. Given the growth of the eSport industry (Newzoo, 2016) and lack of research, there is a growing need for academic study in this area.

The current research adapts consumer behavior motives from established sport consumption motivation scales. Specifically the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC; Trail & James, 2001) and the Sport Interest Inventory (SII; Funk, Mahony, & Nakazawa, 2001). Motives from the MSSC and SII were selected given the scales' established validity within the sport marketing literature. Comparison of spectator motives between eSport and traditional sporting event contexts permits assessment of similarities and differences between the two. The use of selected motives from the MSSC and SII is not meant to be inclusive of all possible consumer motives, but motives from both scales were selected to capture a broad range with the aim of identifying similarities in consumption patterns.

Research Context

Existing definitions of modern sport emphasize its physical, competitive, and institutionalized dimensions (Guttmann, 2004). Whether eSport meets these criteria and falls within the boundaries of sport is a source of ongoing debate (e.g., Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Heere, 2018; Hilvoorde & Pot 2016; Holt, 2016; Jenny et al., 2017; Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010; Witkowski, 2012). Specifically, a critical aspect of the debate centers on the perceived lack of physical skill in eSport (Jonasson, 2016). An established feature distinguishing a game from sport is the physical application of skill (Coakley, 2008; Suits, 2007). Some scholars state that eSport lacks the physicality required to be considered sport (Jenny et al., 2017). Yet, advocates for eSport as sport suggest that eSport shares many of the central features of traditional sport. Proponents argue that eSports involve interpersonal competition, skill training and development, adherence to rules, goal attainment, coordination, and agility (Crawford & Gosling, 2009; Holt, 2016; Wagner, 2006). The debate over eSport as sport provides a starting point for additional research and the need for a novel approach to advance the conversation.

Considering how eSport meets many of the criteria for sport (e.g., organized, competitive, institutionalized), the current study takes a consumer behavior perspective as an approach to move the dialogue

forward. Sport management is an applied discipline and sport marketers could build on existing marketing strategies if eSport consumers operate similarly to traditional sport consumers. Sport industry professionals, beset with the many challenges of their jobs, do not have the luxury of time to wait for academics to resolve theoretical disputes and develop definitive answers about the management of sport (Boucher, 1998). Thus, the current study considers the possibility that traditional sports and eSports are consumed similarly to provide guidance to practitioners managing and marketing the growing number of eSport events.

eSports and related events are rapidly growing in global popularity. However, eSports in the West are in their relative infancy when compared to their established place in the culture of some East Asian countries (Li, 2016). For instance, in South Korea, eSports are governed by a national association (Korean eSports Association; KeSPA), which certifies professional players, provides ranking lists, and arranges competitions (Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). Thus, the current study was conducted in South Korea, where traditional sports and eSports both operate within stable and mature environments.

Literature Review

Defining eSport

eSports are organized video game competitions, most often in the context of organized tournaments (Jenny et al., 2017). eSports encompass an array of platforms, from personal computers to gaming consoles and genres including sport-themed games such as FIFA Online 3, and real-time strategy (RTS) games, such as StarCraft II (Seo & Jung, 2014). Sport-themed and RTS games are two of the most popular genres of eSports (Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). Sport-themed eSports imitate physical sport, while RTS games are representations of fighting or military battles (Burk, 2013). Similarly to traditional sport, eSports contain comparative measures to assess a player's level of performance within the game (Seo, 2013). In sport-themed eSports, these measures could be consistent with the rules of a physical sport, such as scoring goals in a soccer match (Crawford & Gosling, 2009; Seo & Jung, 2014). In RTS eSports, an individual player controls an entire virtual army, which is viewed from an aerial perspective with players focused on defeating or destroying their opponents (Buchanan-Oliver & Seo, 2012; Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010) via an array of possible objectives, most commonly destroying their opponents' structures and units.

Prevalent stereotypes depict gamers as young, single men living in their parents' basement (Casselmann,

2015). However, Newzoo, a leader in eSport market intelligence, found that most eSport fans are employed full time, 44% are parents, with a large segment (38%) of female consumers (Souza, 2015). The Entertainment Software Association reports that women represent a rapidly growing segment of gamers (Entertainment Software Association, 2016). Industry reports further suggest that eSports consumers are racially diverse, resulting from eSport's Asian roots moving into North America and Europe (Price Waterhouse Cooper [PWC], 2016). One aspect of the stereotype is accurate, however, as eSport spectators tend to be young—a potential selling point for marketers looking to appeal to the next generation of consumers (Souza, 2015).

eSport events are live, competitive tournaments of predominantly professional gamers (Eventbrite, 2015). Premier eSport events draw huge crowds and quickly sell out marquee venues, such as The Staples Center and Madison Square Garden (PWC, 2016). With eSport spectators' desire for more events, in more places, and more often (Eventbrite, 2015), understanding eSport event spectator motives can facilitate the marketing of eSport events and improve the spectator experience. Industry reports suggest that eSport event spectators represent a vast source of untapped potential (PWC, 2016), further highlighting the need for research into eSport spectator motives.

Sport Motivation Research

Sport consumer behavior researchers have built on the work of Hebb (1955) and Deci (1971) to understand sport consumer behavior by identifying motives salient to sport consumption. Hebb (1955) defines motivation as the processes that energize and direct purposeful behavior, with Deci (1971) adding that motives encourage behaviors because of the enjoyment generated by the activities. Motivation is one of the most heavily studied constructs in sport-related research (Snelgrove, Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2008), with most spectator behaviors fulfilling social or psychological needs (Robinson, Trail, Dick, & Gillentine, 2005). Sport marketers have established the importance of motives on game and event attendance, with individuals attending for different reasons and desiring different aspects of the experience (Robinson et al., 2005; Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003).

Sport consumer motives are multifaceted and have been examined through a number of different frameworks (Funk et al., 2009; Wann, 1995). These frameworks include, but are not limited to, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, push-pull factors (Crompton, 1979), psychological needs (Sloan, 1989), and psychological involvement (Funk & James, 2001). Funk and James (2001) introduced the Psychological

Continuum Model (PCM), which provided a platform for the systematic study of sport spectators. The PCM has been used extensively in subsequent sport consumer behavior research.

The body of literature on sport consumer behavior has emphasized the study of motives to help explain sport spectatorship. Research on sport consumer motives has provided valuable insight in understanding sport consumption behaviors (Trail & Kim, 2011) and identified that these motives are also a central predictor of sport consumption decisions (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003). Common motives include vicarious achievement, drama, excitement, entertainment value, and social opportunities (Funk et al., 2001; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001).

Recently, sport consumer motivation research has focused on developing deeper theoretical understanding of sport consumer motives. Funk et al. (2012), guided by self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985), suggest that sport consumer motivation can be theoretically conceptualized as extrinsic or intrinsic. Kim, James, and Kim (2013) categorized motives into hedonic, psychological connection, and social influence to understand the relationship between motivation and commitment. Common across the studies of sport spectators is the study of what drives people to attend sport events (Won & Kitamura, 2007). Various studies on sport consumer behavior share the assumption that consumers' behaviors are driven by their motives (Snelgrove et al., 2008). Researchers have identified salient motives in order to examine sport consumption decisions (Kim, Greenwell, Andrew, Lee, & Mahony, 2008), with the goal of better understanding sport consumer behavior (Funk et al., 2012).

Various scales exist to measure sport consumer motives. The Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS; Wann, 1995) and Motivations of the Sport Consumer (MSC; Milne & McDonald, 1999) were among the first to categorize sport spectators' motives. Trail and James (2001) suggest that these scales offer limited validity and reliability. Subsequent sport consumption scales include the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC; Trail & James, 2001) and the Sport Interest Inventory (SII; Funk et al., 2001). The MSSC and SII were developed to measure motivations for sport spectator consumption to evaluate psychological motives of spectator consumption. Both scales measure conceptually similar motives such as aesthetics, social interaction, and vicarious achievement.

The current study compares traditional sport spectator motives to eSport spectator motives to better understand the behavior of eSport consumers. It compares one traditional sport (soccer) to two eSports

(*FIFA Online 3* and *StarCraft II*), thereby drawing a direct parallel between a traditional sport and two eSports. Spectator motives for one traditional sport may not be entirely representative of motives to attend all sports, but the emphasis of the current study is on exploring whether eSport consumer behavior operates similarly to traditional sport consumer behavior. Additionally, there is a scarcity of academic research on sport marketing in Asia (Yoshida & Heere, 2015). The current study addresses this scarcity in the existing literature by comparing spectator motives in South Korea. Yet, as proposed by Yoshida and Heere (2015), sport consumer behavior patterns in Asia are marked by universal psychological constructs. The current study focused on a psychological construct, motivation, as the foundation for the following research to assess the possibility that eSports and traditional sports are consumed in order to fulfill the same spectator motives.

eSport research is still in an early stage. Industry reports suggest that eSport spectators share similar motives with traditional sport spectators (PWC, 2016). Spectators of eSport are similar to spectators of traditional sport in the respect that neither wants to miss the big game, with eSport spectators going to live events to be a part of a stimulating experience where they can see the best eSport athletes in action (Eventbrite, 2015). Furthermore, existing eSport spectator research finds that athlete aggressiveness positively predicts spectatorship (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017), similar to the conclusions of Lee, Trail, and Anderson (2009) who found an analogous relationship in hockey and collegiate sport contexts. Thus, considering the similarities between traditional sport and eSport, the current study adapts items from the MSSC and SII to assess the possibility that traditional sport and eSport spectators share sport consumption motives.

eSport Consumption Motives

Prior eSport research has focused on the motivation to play eSports. Past research suggests that eSport participation is driven by competition, challenge, escapism, and skill development (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011; Weiss & Schiele, 2013). eSport spectating frequency is predicted by escapism, acquiring knowledge about the games being played, novelty of new players and teams, and athlete aggressiveness (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) did not distinguish between different eSports, treating motives to spectate eSport as universal across all games and genres. Furthermore, their research viewed eSport in isolation from traditional sport, missing opportunities to identify shared motives between traditional sport and

eSport. James and Ross (2004) compared motives that influence consumption across sports to develop targeted marketing strategies. The current study adopts a similar approach by comparing eSports and traditional sports to identify whether widely researched sport motives also influence eSports consumption. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Traditional sport and eSport spectators have the same sport consumption motive patterns (i.e., statistically similar mean scores across contexts).

Absent from prior research on eSport consumption is the measurement of game attendance frequency—a commonly assessed behavioral outcome in sport consumption research (e.g., Funk et al., 2012)—its relationship with spectator motives. Behavioral outcomes such as game attendance frequency are important for sport marketers, as spectator behavior is a significant component of revenue production (Fink et al., 2002). In line with the first hypothesis that traditional sport and eSport spectators share sport consumption motive patterns, the relationships between motives and game attendance frequency should follow similar relationships established in sport marketing literature. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Spectator attendance motives impact game attendance frequency similarly across traditional sport and eSport contexts.

Method

The purpose of this study was to compare spectator motives for attending traditional sport and eSport contexts. Data were collected in three research contexts: a traditional sport (soccer) event, a sport-themed eSport event, and an RTS eSport event. South Korean professional sport and eSport contexts were selected as the research setting, as both have a prominent presence in Korean culture (KOCIS, 2016; Seo & Jung, 2014). For eSports, *FIFA Online 3* represents not only an eSport, but also is a virtual representation of professional traditional sport. Furthermore, *FIFA Online 3* represents the same traditional sport (i.e., soccer) included in the study. Finally, *StarCraft II*, an RTS game depicting military science fiction battles rather than a virtual representation of traditional sport, is one of the most popular eSports in Korea, often colloquially referred to as Korea's national sport (Gayomali, 2010).

In each setting, a team of research assistants collected data from spectators using pen-and-paper surveys. The first event was a Korean professional soccer league match (K League) at Tancheon Stadium. The second event was a sport-themed eSport event featuring the soccer-based game *FIFA Online 3* at Nexon Arena. The

third event was a RTS eSport event featuring *StarCraft II* at Nexon Arena. Tancheon Stadium is the home field for Seongnam FC, while Nexon Arena is a dedicated eSport stadium that hosts events for multiple eSport titles. Both Tancheon Stadium and Nexon Arena are in the greater Seoul metropolitan area in South Korea. All events at which data were collected were regular-season matches in professional leagues for the respective sport or eSport.

Data Collection Procedure

Spectators at each match were asked to complete a one-page, double-sided survey consisting of 15 items assessing their attendance motives, one item for game attendance frequency, and five items regarding demographic information. In each event setting, a team of research assistants distributed approximately 200 printed questionnaires to randomly-selected spectators before and after an event. Outside the main entrance to Tancheon Stadium, every third spectator was approached and asked to complete and return the survey. Inside Nexon Arena, a similar procedure took place; every third spectator was approached and asked to complete and return the survey. A total of 606 questionnaires were collected from three different events. Questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and usability of the responses. Seventy-eight research participants marked the same response to each item (straight-lining; Herzog & Bachman, 1981) and were subsequently dropped from further data analysis. An additional 11 surveys were incompletely filled out and were also dropped from further analysis. A total of 517 completed questionnaires remained: 187 for K League soccer, 178 for *FIFA Online 3*, and 152 for *StarCraft II*.

Participants

Participants' demographic characteristics—age, gender, household income, level of education, and employment status—were collected. Overall, the 18–24 year-old age group ($n = 337$, 65.2%) was most prevalent and a majority of participants were male ($n = 382$, 73.9%). The less than ₩20,000,000 South Korean Won (approximately \$17,700 USD) household income group ($n = 192$, 37.1%) was larger than that of other household income levels. The average annual household income in Korea is approximately equivalent to \$47,000 USD (KOSIS, 2017). Reflecting the age range, most participants indicated their education level as some college degree ($n = 331$, 64.0%) and their job as student ($n = 401$, 77.6%). Detailed participant demographics are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

		Overall		K League		FIFA Online 3		StarCraft II	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Age	Under 18	71	13.7	15	8.0	35	19.7	21	13.8
	18–24	337	65.2	118	63.1	115	64.6	104	68.4
	25–34	70	13.5	25	13.4	23	12.9	22	14.5
	35–44	33	6.4	23	12.3	5	2.8	5	3.3
	45 and over	6	1.2	6	3.2	0	0	0	0
Gender	Male	382	73.9	136	72.7	127	71.3	119	78.3
	Female	135	26.1	51	27.3	51	28.7	33	21.7
Income	Less than ₩20,000,000	192	37.1	64	34.2	71	39.9	57	37.5
	₩20,000,001 - ₩40,000,000	124	24.0	44	23.5	45	25.3	35	23.0
	₩40,000,001 - ₩60,000,000	109	21.1	41	21.9	35	19.7	33	21.7
	Over ₩60,000,000	92	17.8	38	20.3	27	15.2	27	17.8
Education	Some high school	67	13.0	14	7.5	33	18.5	20	13.2
	HS graduate	31	6.0	15	8.0	10	5.6	6	3.9
	Some college	331	64.0	113	60.4	114	64.0	104	68.4
	College degree	75	14.5	43	23.0	16	9.0	16	10.5
	Master's / Professional degree	13	2.5	2	1.1	5	2.8	6	3.9
Employment	Full-time job	65	12.6	28	15.0	19	10.7	18	11.8
	Part-time job	42	8.1	15	8.0	13	7.3	14	9.2
	Homemaker	2	.4	2	1.1	0	0	0	0
	Student	401	77.6	137	73.3	145	81.5	119	78.3
	Not currently employed	5	1.0	4	2.1	0	0	1	.7
	Other	2	.4	1	.5	1	.6	0	0
	Total	517		187		178		152	

Instrumentation

The survey comprised three main sections: spectator motives, consumption behavior (i.e., game attendance frequency), and demographics. All non-demographic items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale anchored with (1) *strongly disagree* and (7) *strongly agree*. Spectator motives were measured using a single item for each of 15 dimensions from the Sport Interest Inventory (Funk et al., 2001) and the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (Trail & James 2001). Specifically, included motive items measured: interest in [sport], vicarious achievement, excitement, interest in a favorite player, aesthetics, social opportunities, drama, role models, entertainment value, wholesome environment, opportunity for family bonding, acquisition of knowledge, player skill, player attractiveness, and player aggression. Items were tailored for each specific data collection context (e.g., referring to “Seongnam FC” versus “FIFA Online 3”) where necessary. Specific

items to represent each dimension were selected based upon a review of item wording and factor loadings reported by Funk et al. (2001) and Trail and James (2001). Self-reported game attendance behavior was measured with one item (“I frequently attend [sport] matches in person”) adapted from Funk, Beaton, and Alexandris (2012).

All spectator motives and game attendance behavior were assessed with single-item measures. While the use of single-item measures has been discouraged (Churchill, 1979), the approach also has its advocates (e.g., Rossiter, 2002). Single-item measures provide benefits over a multi-item approach, especially when a large number of constructs are measured and respondents may become fatigued or unwilling to complete a lengthy survey (Kwon & Trail, 2005). By employing single-item measures, researchers can develop survey instruments that require less respondent time, are less monotonous, and can improve response rate (Gardner,

Cummings, Dunham, & Pierce, 1998; Pomeroy, Clark, & Philip, 2001). Multi-item and single-item measures have been found to offer comparable levels of reliability and validity (Jordan & Turner, 2008), which suggests a single-item approach may be efficient and effective. In research similar to the current study, Ridinger and Funk (2006) used single-item measures for SII dimensions in an investigation of spectator motives among fans of women's and men's college basketball. In consideration of these reasons, the use of single-item measures capturing the essence of each spectator motive in an efficient manner was deemed suitable in the current study.

All items were drawn from measures originally developed in English, and they required translation into Korean. Translation and evaluation of the translation followed the method suggested by Brislin (1970, 1986). The survey instrument was initially developed in English and translated into Korean by a researcher who is a native speaker of Korean and fluent in English. The Korean version was back-translated into English by a second bilingual researcher who was blind to the original form of the items. This process resulted in two

versions of the survey in English. A third researcher compared the original and the back-translated instruments. The result of this comparison indicated that the two instruments were conceptually equivalent.

Analysis

Analysis included both descriptive and inferential analysis. Since the goal of the current study was to examine similarities and differences in spectator motives between traditional sport and eSport spectators, comparisons were conducted across the three event contexts. Addressing hypothesis one, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to assess whether there were significant differences across the three event contexts with respect to spectator motives. Post-hoc comparisons were used to identify significant differences between context pairs. To assess hypothesis two, multiple linear regression was employed to examine the relationships between the 15 spectator motives and the game attendance frequency measure. Patterns of coefficients for each context were then compared to evaluate the hypothesis that spectator motives associated with game attendance frequency would be the same across all three event contexts.

Table 2. Sport Spectator Motives

Constructs	Item	Overall M (SD)
Interest in [sport]	First and foremost, I consider myself a fan of [sport].	4.40 (1.87)
Vicarious achievement	I feel a sense of accomplishment when my favorite player wins.	4.92 (1.63)
Excitement	I find [sport] matches very exciting.	4.61 (1.71)
Interest in player	The main reason I attend [sport] matches is to cheer for my favorite player.	4.25 (1.72)
Aesthetics	Successful plays and strategies performed by the players are an important component of [sport] being enjoyable.	4.59 (1.77)
Social opportunities	[Sport] matches give me a great opportunity to socialize with other people.	4.34 (1.70)
Drama	A close match is more enjoyable than a blowout.	4.70 (1.80)
Role model	[Sport] gamers inspire me.	3.88 (1.73)
Entertainment value	Watching [sport] is great entertainment for the price.	4.23 (1.83)
Wholesome environment	I value the wholesome environment evident at [sport] matches.	4.24 (1.66)
Family bonding	Attending [sport] matches gives me a chance to bond with my family.	3.73 (1.71)
Acquisition of knowledge	I can increase my understanding of strategy by watching [sport] matches.	4.46 (1.58)
Skill of the athletes	The superior skills are something I appreciate while watching [sport].	4.41 (1.76)
Physical attractiveness	I enjoy watching players who are physically attractive.	4.12 (1.70)
Enjoyment of aggression	I enjoy the aggressive behavior of the players.	4.07 (1.71)

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Results

The overall mean values and standard deviations for 15 motives are provided in Table 2.

In order to identify similarities between traditional and eSport spectators, a MANOVA was conducted on 15 motives across the spectator groups for K League Soccer, *FIFA Online 3*, and *StarCraft II*. The result of the MANOVA demonstrated that across all three contexts, 11 of 15 motives were statistically similar, $F(30, 1000) = 4.485, p = .000$; Wilk's $\Lambda = .777$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. Thus, the first hypothesis, which posited that traditional sport and eSport spectators have the same sport consumption motives patterns, was partially supported. Significant differences were present in vicarious achievement, $F(2, 514) = 8.318, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, excitement, $F(2, 514) = 3.496, p = .031$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$, family bonding, $F(2, 514) = 5.115, p = .006$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, and physical attractiveness, $F(2, 514) = 4.336, p = .014$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Tukey's HSD post hoc tests revealed that K League soccer spectators rated the motive of vicarious achievement significantly higher than other spectators in both of *FIFA Online 3* and *StarCraft II*. Physical attractiveness and family bonding were significantly higher for K League soccer spectators than *FIFA Online 3* spectators. However, the excitement motive for *FIFA Online 3* was significantly higher than for K League soccer. These results suggest that K League and eSport (i.e., *FIFA Online 3* and *StarCraft II*) spectators report similar levels of agreement on 11 of 15 motives while differing on four others (i.e., vicarious achievement, excitement, family bonding, and physical attractiveness). Similarities and differences between the traditional sport and the two eSports are presented in Table 3.

The multiple regression model from K League soccer spectators with 15 motivation predictors produced $R^2 = .540, F(15, 171) = 13.372, p = .000$. Interest in K League soccer ($\beta = .212, p = .014$), excitement ($\beta = -.286, p = .002$), interest in player ($\beta = .413, p = .000$), drama ($\beta = -.252, p = .000$), and wholesome environment ($\beta = .432, p = .000$) were significant predictors of game attendance frequency. The β coefficients revealed that spectator interest in K League soccer, interest in player, and wholesome environment positively influence their game attendance frequency. However, excitement and drama of the game negatively affected spectator game attendance frequency.

The multiple regression model from *FIFA Online 3* with 15 motivation predictors produced $R^2 = .545, F(15, 162) = 12.953, p = .000$. Interest in *FIFA Online 3* ($\beta = .288, p = .003$), vicarious achievement ($\beta = -.217, p = .023$), interest in player ($\beta = .343, p = .001$), aesthetics ($\beta = -.495, p = .000$), and role model ($\beta = .377, p =$

.000) were significant predictors of game attendance frequency. Results revealed that individual interest in *FIFA Online 3*, interest in the eSport player, and role model positively impacted their game attendance frequency. However, vicarious achievement and aesthetics negatively affected their game attendance frequency.

The multiple regression model from *StarCraft II* with 15 motivation predictors produced $R^2 = .589, F(15, 136) = 13.017, p = .000$. Vicarious achievement ($\beta = .207, p = .024$), social opportunities ($\beta = -.261, p = .031$), entertainment value ($\beta = .476, p = .001$), family bonding ($\beta = .210, p = .021$), and skill of the athletes ($\beta = .301, p = .010$) were significant predictors of game attendance frequency. Results revealed that spectator vicarious achievement, entertainment value, family bonding, and skill of the athletes positively influenced their game attendance frequency. However, the social opportunities negatively affected their game attendance frequency. Complete results of all multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 4.

Across contexts, β coefficients of several significant predictors were negatively related to game attendance frequency. The negative relationship between spectator sport motives and sport consumer consumption behaviors is consistent with the assessment of the predictive validity findings of the MSSC and SII (e.g., Funk et al., 2003; Trail & James, 2001).

Discussion

The current study utilizes the findings of existing sport consumer motivation research (e.g., Funk et al., 2002; Trail & James, 2001) in a traditional and eSport context. Holistically, the results demonstrate that traditional sport and eSport spectators have similar sport consumption motives, though spectators from each event context exhibited distinct motives predicting game attendance frequency. Motives influencing game attendance frequency between the sport-themed eSport and traditional sport were similar to one another than the relationship between any other context pair. This suggests sport-themed eSports are more closely related to sports than to other eSports from a consumer behavior perspective.

Testing the first hypothesis, 11 of the 15 motives were similar across the three contexts. Significant differences were found in vicarious achievement, excitement, physical attractiveness, and family bonding. Similar to past research on motives to spectate traditional soccer matches (Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, & Gladden, 2002), vicarious achievement was found to be salient in both soccer contexts. However traditional soccer fans rated this motive significantly

Table 3. Similarities and Differences of Spectator Motives by Sport

Motive	<i>K-League Soccer</i>	<i>FIFA Online 3</i>	<i>StarCraft II</i>	MANOVA		Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests	
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>p</i>
Interest in [sport]	4.31 (1.83)	4.63 (1.92)	4.24 (1.84)	2.159	.116	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.221 .943 .140
Vicarious achievement	5.28 (1.50)	4.84 (1.65)	4.58 (1.68)	8.318	.000	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.024 .000 .313
Excitement	4.41 (1.63)	4.87 (1.56)	4.56 (1.93)	3.496	.031	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.026 .689 .223
Interest in player	4.25 (1.61)	4.22 (1.77)	4.29 (1.81)	.059	.943	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.992 .971 .938
Aesthetics	4.53 (1.62)	4.58 (1.82)	4.68 (1.88)	.325	.723	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.953 .702 .866
Social opportunities	4.33 (1.71)	4.50 (1.65)	4.16 (1.76)	1.661	.191	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.593 .637 .164
Drama	4.81 (1.88)	4.51 (1.84)	4.80 (1.64)	1.620	.199	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.246 1.000 .294
Role model	3.74 (1.63)	3.80 (1.88)	4.14 (1.64)	2.550	.079	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.941 .085 .174
Entertainment value	4.16 (1.63)	4.15 (1.96)	4.39 (1.89)	.917	.401	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.999 .469 .451
Wholesome environment	4.30 (1.55)	4.22 (1.73)	4.18 (1.71)	.235	.791	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.890 .784 .974
Family bonding	4.03 (1.56)	3.46 (1.79)	3.69 (1.76)	5.115	.006	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.004 .168 .439
Acquisition of knowledge	4.43 (1.45)	4.38 (1.71)	4.59 (1.59)	.816	.443	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.948 .609 .434
Skill of the athletes	4.26 (1.55)	4.35 (1.88)	4.66 (1.83)	2.297	.102	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.885 .098 .247
Physical attractiveness	4.40 (1.52)	3.89 (1.78)	4.04 (1.78)	4.336	.014	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.012 .132 .695
Enjoyment of aggression	4.04 (1.75)	4.11 (1.66)	4.05 (1.73)	.101	.904	A vs B A vs C B vs C	.908 .999 .935

Note. A: K League soccer ($n = 187$), B: *FIFA Online 3* ($n = 178$), C: *StarCraft II* ($n = 152$).

Table 4. Motives Impacting Traditional Sport and eSports on Game Attendance Frequency

Constructs	Traditional Soccer (K League Soccer)				Sport-Themed eSports (FIFA Online 3)				Real-Time Strategy (StarCraft II)			
	B	SE B	β	p	B	SE B	β	p	B	SE B	β	p
Constant	.597	.444		.181	.925	.374		.014	-.163	.416		.696
Interest in [sport]	.212	.085	.212	.014	.287	.096	.288	.003	.010	.097	.009	.917
Vicarious achievement	.046	.080	.037	.572	-.252	.109	-.217	.023	.243	.107	.207	.024
Excitement	-.321	.103	-.286	.002	-.110	.117	-.089	.350	-.291	.161	-.284	.074
Interest in player	.469	.103	.413	.000	.371	.106	.343	.001	.199	.166	.182	.231
Aesthetics	-.057	.117	-.051	.628	-.519	.116	-.495	.000	.099	.127	.094	.437
Social opportunities	-.008	.106	-.007	.941	.016	.103	.014	.875	-.293	.134	-.261	.031
Drama	-.245	.060	-.252	.000	.092	.079	.089	.243	-.137	.086	-.114	.114
Role model	-.085	.107	-.076	.428	.383	.088	.377	.000	.138	.117	.115	.238
Entertainment value	.087	.093	.078	.352	.111	.102	.114	.278	.498	.141	.476	.001
Wholesome environment	.508	.124	.432	.000	.212	.113	.192	.064	-.113	.136	-.098	.406
Family bonding	.054	.089	.046	.544	.042	.082	.040	.605	.236	.101	.210	.021
Acquisition of knowledge	.112	.124	.089	.366	.106	.119	.094	.376	-.036	.138	-.029	.795
Skill of the athletes	.001	.110	.001	.990	-.080	.113	-.079	.481	.326	.124	.301	.010
Physical attractiveness	.014	.082	.012	.862	-.009	.086	-.009	.915	-.056	.122	-.051	.646
Enjoyment of aggression	-.008	.080	-.008	.915	.057	.095	.050	.547	.126	.108	.110	.248
F-statistic	13.372				12.953				13.017			
R2	.540				.545				.589			

Note. Significant values in bold.

higher than did spectators in both eSports contexts. This finding could result from eSports event emphasis on the digital display of in-game action, while traditional sport spectators benefit from direct sightlines to players and the field of play (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). Excitement, an established motive from traditional spectator sport (e.g., Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009), was significantly higher for the sport-themed game than in traditional sport, suggesting eSports may be more immersive and engaging than traditional sports. Consistent with prior research, physical attractiveness and family bonding were salient motives related to traditional sport consumption (e.g., Trail & James, 2001). These motives were significantly higher for traditional sport than *FIFA Online 3*. Physical attractiveness of traditional sport players is a significant motive for sport spectators (e.g., Trail & James, 2001). The physical attractiveness of eSports players has been shown to have an insignificant relationship with eSports spectatorship (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017), consistent with the current study's findings. Family bonding was significantly higher for traditional sport spectators than the virtual representation of sport.

This supports market research that identifies eSports spectators as younger than traditional sport spectators (PWC, 2016) and generally less likely to be parents (Souza, 2015).

Most notably, athlete skill, a significant motive identified in multiple traditional sport contexts (James & Ross, 2004), was rated higher for both eSports contexts than for the traditional sport, and was significantly higher for the RTS game than for the traditional sport. The lack of applied skills of eSports is one of the most commonly contested dimensions for excluding eSports as sport (see Jenny et al., 2017, for a more complete discussion). Yet the current study demonstrates that the appreciation of the skills needed to perform in competitive eSports competitions is a significant attendance motive at or beyond the level observed in traditional sport.

Results from the current study on eSports spectatorship converge with those of Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) who found that athlete aggressiveness is a salient motive for eSports spectatorship. Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) reported that eSports players' physical attractiveness was not a significant predictor of

eSport spectatorship. Results in the current study expanded on this conclusion and indicated that the physical attractiveness of traditional sport players is significantly higher than that of eSport players. Results of the current study diverge from Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) regarding vicarious achievement, drama, skill of the athletes, and social opportunities. Vicarious achievement, while statistically higher for traditional sport, was also a salient motive for both eSports. Drama and social opportunities, salient sport consumption motives (James & Ross, 2004), were also relevant motives and statistically equal across all three contexts in contrast to Hamari and Sjöblom (2017), who found these motives insignificant. The contrasting findings may be a result of the in-person eSport event experience (i.e., Nexon Arena) used in the current study, while Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) examined online eSport spectatorship. Results regarding drama are consistent with the qualitative findings of Cheung and Huang (2011), who identified the importance of drama in eSport consumption. Results confirm eSport event market research (e.g., Eventbrite, 2015) that event spectators are looking for a dramatic experience, consistent with prior spectator sport research (e.g., James & Ross, 2004).

The second hypothesis proposed that spectator attendance motives impact game attendance frequency similarly across the three event contexts. The explained variance in attendance frequency was similar across the three contexts of K League ($R^2=.54$), *FIFA Online 3* ($R^2=.55$), and *StarCraft II* ($R^2=.59$). Although the composition of motives differed in terms of what significantly explained variance, overall these numbers are very similar. Motives that have been previously used to measure and explain live attendance at sporting events explained similar amounts of variance in attendance at eSport events.

Prior research has not explicitly measured the relationship between the MSSC or SII and game attendance frequency. Yet Fink et al. (2002) found sport consumers' motives to be significant predictors of behavioral outcomes, including game attendance frequency. Results for traditional sport indicated that interest in sport, interest in player, drama, and wholesome environment were significant predictors of game attendance frequency. For sport-themed eSport, interest in sport, excitement, interest in player, role model, and enjoyment of aggression were significant predictors of game attendance frequency. For RTS eSport, vicarious achievement, entertainment value, family bonding, and physical skill of the athletes were found to be significant predictors of game attendance frequency.

Similar to the current study findings, Fink et al. (2002) found that environmental factors (e.g., family and social factors) positively affect game attendance intentions. Funk, Ridinger, and Moorman (2003) measured the relationship between the SII motives and consumer support, a composite variable that included behavioral items such as game attendance frequency, as well as interest in women's professional sport, television game watching frequency and level of commitment to a team. Funk et al. (2003) found that the significant SII motives influencing consumer support are interest in team, escape, aesthetics, drama, socialization, role model, interest in sport, vicarious achievement, support for women's opportunity, and interest in players. The findings of Funk et al. (2003) are in line with the current study's findings that sport spectators have distinct consumption behaviors that vary by context.

While no motive was found to be significant across all three contexts, traditional sport and sport-themed eSport shared more motives that influenced game attendance frequency than any other context pair. Interest in sport and interest in player were significant predictors of game attendance frequency for both traditional sport and sport-themed eSport. This highlights commonality between the two, suggesting that sport-themed eSport spectators may behave more similarly to traditional sport spectators than do spectators of other types of eSport. Given the distinct sets of motives influencing the patterns of spectators' game attendance frequency from each context, the second hypothesis was not supported.

Results address the divide between those who do or do not regard eSports as sport. Specifically, the use of skill by both eSport and traditional sport athletes is shown to be a salient motive for all spectators. In contrast, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) did not find athlete skill to be a significant spectator motive. Their study examined spectator motives for all eSports collectively, which may fail to capture nuances among different eSports. Furthermore, the current research adds to prior research that discussed eSport as sport (e.g., Hilvoorde & Pot 2016; Holt, 2016; Jenny et al., 2017; Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010; Witkowski, 2012), moving the discussion forward from a consumer behavior perspective. The shared motive patterns of traditional sport and eSport spectators demonstrates that these groups of spectators are motivated to spectate similarly.

Overall, results indicate a high degree of similarity between motives of traditional sport and eSport spectators, suggesting that eSport events can be viewed and marketed in a similar fashion to traditional sport events. Yet, distinct motives influence the behavioral

outcome of game attendance frequency for spectators of each sport event. The current study also advances the discussion on eSport as sport, highlighting how components of traditional sport typically considered missing from eSports (e.g., physical skill of athletes) still serve as motives for eSport consumption.

Theoretical Implications

Sport marketing scholars have established the importance of spectator motives on game and event attendance, with individuals attending for different reasons and desiring different aspects of the experience (e.g., Robinson et al., 2005; Trail, Robinson, et al., 2003). Research on sport consumer motives has provided valuable insight in understanding sport consumption behaviors (Trail & Kim, 2011) and identified that these motives are also a central predictor of sport consumption decisions (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003). Common motives include vicarious achievement, drama, excitement, entertainment value, and social opportunities (Funk et al., 2001; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001).

eSport represents a new area for study in sport consumer behavior (Funk, 2017). Understanding whether eSport operates similarly to traditional sport is key to developing appropriate marketing strategies for the eSport industry and can inform academic research in this rapidly-growing area (e.g., Funk et al., 2018; Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Heere, 2018). If eSports and traditional sports are consumed in order to satisfy the same spectator motives, existing theoretical and practical approaches to sport consumer behavior are likely applicable to both. The current study compared traditional sport spectator motives to eSport spectator motives to better understand the behavior of eSport consumers and explore the extent to which eSport consumer behavior operates similarly to traditional sport consumer behavior.

Results indicated a number of similarities and a few differences between eSport consumption motives and those found with a traditional sport. Most notably, athlete skill, a motive identified in multiple traditional sport contexts (James & Ross, 2004), was rated higher for both eSport contexts than for the traditional sport, and was significantly higher for the RTS game than for the traditional sport. The lack of applied skills of eSport players is one of the most common rationales for excluding eSports as sport (Jenny et al., 2017). Yet, the current study demonstrates that the appreciation of the skills needed to perform in competitive eSport competitions is a significant attendance motive, at or beyond the level observed in traditional sport.

The current study adds to the body of sport marketing literature, specifically on the role of spectator

motives in sport consumption. Results contribute to academic understanding of what motives play a role in eSport consumption compared to those of traditional sport. Guided by the study results, eSport researchers can draw from established theory from traditional sport, while remaining cognizant of distinct motives influencing eSport consumers.

Results of the current study are consistent with motivation as a guiding force on behavior (e.g., Hebb, 1955; Deci, 1971). Sport management research has emphasized that motivation is a central predictor of sport consumption (Trail et al., 2003). Moreover, the current study supports the proposition of Yoshida and Heere (2015), that motivation is a universally-applicable construct. The current study substantiates their proposition by examining the role of established motives in an international context (i.e., South Korea), finding established sport consumption motives significantly correlated with game attendance frequency for both eSport and a traditional sport.

Furthermore, the current study provides a foundation for future research on eSport by highlighting the similarities between eSport and traditional sport consumption. These similarities include motives of interest in sport, interest in player, aesthetics, social opportunities, drama, role model, entertainment value, wholesome environment, acquisition of knowledge, skill of the athletes, and enjoyment of aggression. Yet, while eSport and traditional sport spectators share many common motives, eSport and traditional sport spectators are not identically motivated. For instance, spectators of eSport find eSport events significantly more exciting, highlighting that eSport and traditional sport spectators are highly similar, but not identical.

Research on the motivation of eSport spectators to attend and consume eSports is emerging as a salient area of inquiry for sport management scholars. The current study expands upon the conceptual work of Funk et al. (2018), which emphasized that traditional sport management research can inform eSport related research. The current study informs eSport motivation research by demonstrating that eSport operates similarly to traditional sport and identifies the nuances of eSport consumer behavior, extending sport management research into eSport. This perspective is supported by conceptual work emphasizing that eSport shares many of the core managerial concerns present in traditional sport (Funk et al., 2018; Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Heere, 2018), with the current study empirically demonstrating similarities in their consumption.

Practical Implications

From a sport management perspective, this research provides a foundation and introduction of eSport into

the discipline. eSport is becoming more accepted as sport within the larger sport community, with many sport organizations purchasing eSport teams and leagues (PWC, 2016). The Philadelphia 76ers purchased two eSports teams, using existing staff to assist in their operations (Hietner, 2016). Investment group aXiomatic, which is led by the organization that owns the Golden State Warriors, Washington Capitals, and Los Angeles football club, recently purchased a controlling interest in a major eSports team, Team Liquid (Gu, 2016). The National Basketball Association (NBA) and Take-Two Interactive, the parent company of 2K Sports, recently announced the formation of the NBA 2K eLeague, which is reported to be the first official eSports league operated by a U.S. sports league (Nathan, 2017). The French Professional Football League, Ligue 1, recently created an equivalent league for eSports, e-Ligue 1, with 20 of its traditional football clubs each sponsoring two FIFA eSport players (SkySports, 2016). Sport organizations are leveraging their core competencies managing and marketing traditional sports to eSports.

The demographic characteristics of our survey participants are consistent with industry reports on eSport. Survey participant demographics highlight that eSports appeal to both young males and females. Males had greater representation at both eSports events—78% for *FIFA Online 3* and 72% for *StarCraft II*. However, the spectator demographics challenge prevailing stereotypes of eSports as a male-dominated activity. Females comprise one of the fastest growing market segments for eSports (Paaßen, Morgenroth, & Stratemeyer, 2016), and the motives of female spectators offer a salient area of inquiry for eSport event marketing and management.

The results of this study are particularly useful to those organizing the growing number of eSport events. Marketers of eSport events can apply the results of the current research to better understand what drives spectatorship for eSport events. Event marketers can build on the shared motives between traditional and eSport spectators, while acknowledging the nuances among different types of eSports. Marketing professionals can select the most applicable motives and develop targeted marketing messages to potential event spectators. The excitement of eSport events were rated higher than those of traditional sports, and marketing promotions should appeal to the enthusiasm of eSport spectators. Aesthetics, the successful plays and strategies executed by players, are also motivating to eSport spectators. Promoters can target spectators by emphasizing the skill of top eSport players. Furthermore, the drama of eSport events should also be

emphasized by event marketers. eSport spectators enjoy close matches rather than one-sided victories, similar to fans of traditional sport (Funk et al., 2001). Overall, the results show how eSport motives function similarly to a traditional sport.

While one traditional sport (i.e., soccer) does not exhaustively represent all sports, it is a popular global sport, used to identify the extent to which traditional sport and eSports are consumed in similar ways and are based on shared motives. This implication is important, as it suggests that existing sport marketing literature can be adapted and modified to examine eSport consumer behavior. However, cultural differences regarding perceptions towards video gaming must be considered. For South Koreans, gaming is viewed as a social activity, in contrast to Westerners, who view it as a solitary hobby (Li, 2016). Yet, increasing support for acceptance of gaming as a social activity is increasing in Western cultures (PWC, 2016), evident in traditional sport entities increasing alignment with the eSports industry (Funk et al., 2018).

The final implication of the current study is on eSport as sport. The current work addresses and narrows the divide between eSport and traditional sport. Past debates on eSport as sport have focused on the lack of applied skill in eSport as a distinction between the two. The current study shows that the skill of eSport players attracts spectators. Just as promotional advertisements marketing a big-name professional athlete coming to a local arena attracts fans (Lucifora & Simmons, 2003), results show that eSport spectators, too, enjoy seeing the best players in action with an appreciation for their talent.

Limitations and Future Directions

Six limitations to this research should be recognized. First, data collection was conducted solely in South Korea, among traditional sport and eSport spectators. Caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other settings, given that individual preferences, motivations, and behaviors are influenced by geographic and cultural context (Hofstede, 2001). South Korea has a well-established eSport culture that may influence how eSport is viewed in relation to traditional sport (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011). Replication in other countries is necessary to determine whether results of the current study are a byproduct of the South Korean context. Second, the current study predominantly focused on games related to a single sport (i.e., soccer). While a second eSport game, *StarCraft II*, was incorporated into the research design, eSports span a variety of different forms or genres, including sport-themed games (e.g., *FIFA Online 3*), RTS games (e.g., *StarCraft II*), multiplayer online battle

arena (MOBA) games (e.g., *League of Legends*, *Defense of the Ancients 2*), first-person shooters (e.g., *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*), and fighting games (e.g., *Super Smash Brothers*). Future research with other eSport genres is necessary to enhance external validity of the results.

Third, this study focused on a single psychological factor (i.e., spectator motivation) known to influence game attendance frequency. Incorporating additional variables, including sport involvement and identification with sport could be beneficial for future research. Motivation factors in the current study were drawn from two scales (SII and MSSC), both of which are broad and well-established in the sport management literature. However, spectators may be motivated by additional factors beyond the 15 measured in the current study. Furthermore, all items were drawn from scales developed in the context of traditional sport. eSports may involve additional context-specific motivational factors that are not present in traditional sport. Inclusion of such additional factors needs to be considered in future research to better explain game attendance frequency and additional consumption behaviors. Distinct factors, such as peer pressure and video game graphics could play a role in consumption (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011). Future research should consider what other motives are distinct to specific eSports.

Fourth, single-item measures were used to capture spectator motives. Single-item measures can be acceptable for accurately measuring a construct (Rossiter, 2002), but multiple items could provide increased validity. Multi-item measures could also permit advanced statistical techniques, such as structural equation modelling. The fifth limitation is the number of survey responses excluded from analysis due to respondent straight-lining (Herzog & Bachman, 1981). While the survey design was intended to minimize such behavior through the use of a relatively short survey instrument, the number of discarded responses requires acknowledgement.

The sixth limitation is the possibility of selection bias, specifically self-selection bias, existed between our survey respondents and non-respondents (i.e., those who refused to take the survey). Self-selection bias occurs when proper randomization is not achieved (Heckman, 1979). Self-selection bias is unavoidable in scientific research and is acknowledged as a limitation of the current study.

Future research should account for consumers level of involvement with particular eSport games, leagues, and marquee gamers. The current study examined the direct effects of spectator motivation on attendance

and game attendance frequency. Additionally, the current study used a survey-based research design. Qualitative or mixed-methods approaches could offer additional insight into the eSport spectator experience and identify additional motives that drive eSport consumption. Finally, media representations of eSports are positioning eSport as sport, applying sport terms, such as athlete, competition, team, and rivalry to describe eSports. The ESPN website includes a dedicated eSports section with the same level of menu bar prominence as well-accepted sports such as golf, tennis, boxing, MMA, NASCAR, the Olympic Games, and NCAA basketball. Future research should explore media representations of eSport and the influence on consumer perceptions of eSport as sport.

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