INSTITUTO UNIVERSITÁRIO DE LISBOA

Exploring Motivations for Attending E-sports Events: The Role of Visiting the Host city

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Master in Hospitality & Tourism Management

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Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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Resumo

O aumento exponencial dos eventos ao vivo inerentes a desportos eletrónicos despertou pesquisa da ligação do desporto ao turismo. A literatura explica as razões de se assistir a desportos eletrónicos online, mas é ainda escassa relativamente às motivações de se assistir a eventos ao vivo de desportos virtuais. Os eventos aumentam a atratividade turística das cidades anfitriãs. Esta dissertação visa responder a duas questões: Quais as motivações para um espetador de desportos eletrónicos a assistir a um evento ao vivo? Poderá o desejo de visitar a cidade anfitriã do evento de desportos eletrónicos motivar ir ao evento? O principal objetivo desta dissertação é analisar de que forma a atmosfera de entretenimento, o drama do jogo, a interação social, a aquisição de conhecimentos, o escapismo, a lealdade para com a equipa, a experiência de transmissão em direto e a intenção de visitar a cidade influenciam a participação em eventos de desportos eletrónicos.

Seguindo uma metodologia positivista, realizou-se um inquérito via online a 278 inquiridos, através de uma amostra por conveniência e posteriormente a validação das hipóteses através de uma análise de componentes principais e de regressão linear.

Os resultados mostraram que o drama do jogo é a motivação mais considerada, enquanto interação social a menor. Além disso, a atmosfera de entretenimento, a interação social, o escapismo e a experiência de transmissão em direto influenciam positivamente a participação em eventos de desportos eletrónicos, sendo a experiência de transmissão em direto apenas parcialmente validada. O escapismo mostrou estar positivamente associado à experiência de transmissão em direto.

Palavras-chave: Motivação, E-sports, Participação em eventos, Turismo, Jogo

JEL classificação: Z320 – Turismo e Desenvolvimento; L83 – Desportos, Jogo, Restaurantes, Recreação, Turismo

Abstract

The exponential increase in live e-sports events has sparked research into the link between sport and tourism. The literature explains the reasons for watching e-sports online, but there is still little on the motivations for watching live virtual sports events. Events increase the tourist attractiveness of host cities. This dissertation aims to answer two questions: What are the motivations for an e-sports fan to attend a live event? Can the desire to visit the host city of the e-sports event motivate going to the event? The main objective of this dissertation is to analyze how entertainment atmosphere, game drama, social interaction, knowledge acquisition, escapism, team loyalty, live broadcast experience and intention to visit the city influence participation in e-sports events.

Following a positivist methodology, an online survey was carried out with 278 respondents, using a convenience sample, and then the hypotheses were validated using principal component analysis and linear regression.

The results showed that the drama of the game is the most highly regarded motivation, while social interaction is the least. In addition, entertainment atmosphere, social interaction, escapism, and live streaming experience positively influence participation in e-sports events, with live streaming experience only being partially validated. Escapism has been shown to be positively associated with the live-streaming experience.

Keywords: Motivation, E-sports, Event attendance, Tourism, Gaming

JEL Classification: Z320 – Tourism and Development; L83 – Sports, Gambling, Restaurants, Recreation, Tourism

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I. Introduction

Electronic sports most known as E-sports, have received a lot of attention in the past few years from various stakeholders and audiences due to their explosive growth and increasing popularity. E-sports are the practice of competitive video gaming where professional and amateur gamers compete against each other in different multiplayer digital games (Hamari et al., 2016). According to the author this type of gaming has been growing into a multibillion-dollar industry, captivating millions of fans through internet streaming platforms, live events, and social media participation.

At the same time, the tourism industry has experienced considerable growth, powered by the pursuit of unique experiences, cultural immersion, and entertainment (Sheldon, 2020). Traditional tourist attractions, such as historical sites, attractive landscapes, and places of cultural interest, have long been acknowledged as the main factors influencing travel. However, the appearance of new and unusual kinds of tourism, such as sports tourism, has increased the variety of travel-related motivations (Gibson et al., 2021).

Given the rising popularity of e-sports and the evolving nature of tourism, understanding the relationship between both of these areas is important. E-sports events, tournaments, and competitions are now being invested in and held in major cities worldwide, motivating and attracting a young generation of players and spectators from diverse countries. We suggest that tourism could play an important role as a motivational factor in e-sports events attendance, i.e., the main objective of this research is to investigate the effect tourism has as a motivational factor in e-sports attendance where fans would go to an e-sports event with the intent of visiting, exploring, and staying in the city where the event takes place.

While there is existing research on e-sports and its audience (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Qian et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018), there is limited empirical research that specifically focuses on the motivations of spectators who attend physical e-sports events. By investigating this aspect, we aim to fill the gap in the literature by providing insights into what drives individuals to choose physical attendance over online viewing. Also, this investigation seeks to fill in the gaps in academic writing by analyzing the intersection of e-sports and the intention to take advantage of the city where the event is being held. By exploring the main motivations for individuals to participate in physical e-sports events and implementing a new variable, where we question if tourism could be a crucial motivator, our aim is to contribute to the little existing literature on e-sports and their relationship with the tourism industry.

This study attempts to answer two main questions:

1- What are the main motivations for a spectator of e-sports to attend a physical live event?
2- Could visiting the city where the e-sports event is being held be a motivational factor to go to the event?

This thesis will be organized as follows:

I – Introduction. This chapter presents the framework of the study, the objective to achieve, the research questions formulated and the structure of the thesis.

II – Literature review. In this chapter, we delve a little deeper into the topics of e-sport events, the motivations of an e-sport event spectator and the motivations behind sports tourism.

III – Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis. Regarding the theoretical framework, we discuss existing theories and concepts that are relevant to our study as well as establish the hypothesis that we are going to use in this study, where we also provide a conceptual model.

IV– Methodology. This chapter discusses the methodology used in the various stages of data collecting, including sampling procedures, questionnaire administration, data collection, and the selection of statistical methods and techniques for data analysis.

V– Data analysis. In this chapter all the data provided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program is presented and analyzed.

VI – Discussion and conclusion. This chapter attempts to answer the structured questions raised in Chapter I, supported by a review of the literature.

VII – Limitations and suggestions. Finally, this chapter presents possible limitations to the results obtained, as well as recommendations for future research.

For us to more fully understand the theme's context, the significance of the study, and the current gap in the literature review, we will first provide the literature review. The research questions and the methodology must then be fully clarified before presenting the results.

II. Literature review

In this chapter, we will review the literature that will serve as theoretical support for this dissertation. Perspectives of various authors and other important aspects will be discussed such as the concept of e-sports and e-sports events, as well as an in-depth analysis review of spectator motivations and sports tourism motivation.

2.1 E-sports events

E-sports, short for electronic sports, is a relatively new concept in the world of leisure and sports ecosystem (Thompson et al., 2022). Online gaming is no longer just a passive hobby, e-sports have become a professional activity immersed in a regulated, hierarchical, and competitive worldwide ecosystem. In order to understand e-sports, it is necessary to explain where video games originated and how they became a multi-billion-dollar industry. In 1948, Alan Turing created the Cathode Ray Tube Amusement Device, the first e-game ever created. Almost two decades later, Turing built a program that could play a few basic Chess moves (Kim et al., 2020). The computer game *Space Invaders* was the first commercial e-game in 1971, followed by the Magnavox Sport in Society 1863 Odyssey, the first at-home gaming machine. The most exciting game released in 1971, was *Pong*, which became extremely popular in arcade games and began to transform the gaming business. Video games are not all sports, even though all e-sports are video games. To qualify as a sport, video games must have competition (i.e., distinct victors and losers), organization (e.g., adherence to rules), and structure (e.g., standard rules) (Funk et al., 2018).

The earliest mention of an e-sports event came in late 1971. It was a Stanford University event in which students from many fields competed in a tournament of the classic Spacewar game. But, unlike today, there was no cash prize. The reward for this pioneering event was a one-year subscription to the popular Rolling Stone magazine. Even though this was not an official e-sports event, it was the beginning of something new in the gaming world. And the enthusiasm generated by this event fueled the first formal competitive gaming event in 1980 (See Fig. 1), hosted by Atari, the company that created the video game *Space Invaders* (The Sporting Blog, 2021). Regional events in 1980 in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fort Worth, Chicago, and New York attracted more than ten thousand attendees thanks to extensive news coverage (Macedo & Falcão, 2019). Pro-gaming developed prominently from the mid-1990s onwards, as a result of the implementation of technological and informational innovations developed in that period, such as network tools in games for PCs.

Figure 1. National Space Invaders Championship in 1980

(Source: Brian Carnell, 2020)

Efforts to define e-sports and understand their context have been documented for nearly twenty years. Some authors have made significant contributions to the scientific independence of e-sports (Witkowski, 2009, Taylor and Witkowski, 2010; Taylor, 2012). As Wagner (2006, p.3) claimed e-sports is "an area of sports activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies". Subsequently, believed by Hamari and Sjöblom (2017: p.213) e-sports could be defined as "a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams, as well as the output of the e-sports system, are mediated by human-computer interfaces". Most recently Nikas and Poulaki (2021) defined e-sports, or organized video game tournaments, as a form of competition using video games, sometimes also referred to as cybersport, virtual sport, and competitive gaming.

Specific types of games attract today's e-sport audiences and players (Kokkinakis et al., 2020). These being divided in genres include first-person shooters (FPS) (e.g., Counter-Strike and Call of Duty), fighting games, real-time strategy games (RTS) (e.g., Starcraft 2 or Age of Empires), battle royale games (BR) (e.g., Fortnite and PUBG), massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) (e.g., World of Warcraft), multiplayer online battle arena games (MOBA) (e.g., League of Legends and Dota 2), and sports games that resemble traditional competitive sports such as football, basketball, racing, and so on (Pu et al., 2021). According to Hamari and Sjöblom (2017), based on information gathered by e-sports clubs and streaming platforms,

the game style, known as MOBA, has certain characteristics that can attract more viewers to watch the game. The authors also mention that because of the growing emphasis on participants' ability and competency, MOBA has become the most popular game genre for the e-sports category and the way they are designed, winning the game can be a difficult task. According to Nuyens et al. (2016), as a result of the variability in the gameplay, the game is more entertaining for audiences to watch, and more beginners will be drawn in by the gameplay of MOBA games. Both the gaming methods and the aspects of MOBA games are regarded as integral components that contribute to MOBA games' excellent status in the eyes of viewers.

Game genres play a significant role in the development of successful markets (Cook, 2005). According to research, certain game genres are preferred according to personality and gender. As a result, being male and younger may be associated with a preference for specific game genres, which are intrinsically more time-consuming and difficult, which could account for the greater gaming time (Rehbein et al., 2016). There are various personality types, and everyone is inclined to choose a particular genre (Peever et al., 2012). Nowadays amateur gamers who developed significant skills can build a 'career' out of participating in e-sports since they can develop, fulfil goals, and have lifetime highlights (Thompson et al., 2022). A great example would be the 2019 Fortnite World Champion, Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf, who won the trophy at the age of 16 and earned 3 million dollars (Masłowski, 2021).

Millions of fans watch major e-sports events on TV or the Internet, and fandom accounts for fans' involvement and commitment to the source of their passion by capturing their behavioral, attitudinal, and experiential loyalty (Obiegbu et al., 2019). E-sports events are typically held in venues that include players, coaches, officials, sponsors, fans, and media. As reported by the marketing research firm Newzoo (2018), 737 significant e-sports events were held in 2018, and 380 million e-sports viewers watched e-sports events around the world, for example, 40,000 people attended the sold-out final of the *League of Legends World Championship* in Seoul's World Cup Stadium in 2018 (Pu et al., 2021). To date, e-sports events have grown into an essential element of the e-sports ecosystem by not only attracting lucrative sponsorship deals or large viewership via TV and PC but also by motivating spectators to queue up to attend live events where they will enjoy an exciting and entertaining atmosphere (See Fig. 2). The success of e-sports also leads to the expansion of numerous enterprises, among these companies are streaming networks, e-sport hosting platforms, gaming organizations, and game development entities (Block et al., 2018).

Figure 2. League of Legends World Championship at the Staples Center 2016

(Source: Redbull.com)

As stated by Marchenko and Suschevskiy (2018) betting companies are another type of business that benefits from the expansion of e-sports. The outcomes of e-sports competitions are important not only for professional athletes but also for betting companies. The predictions of winning teams in e-sport tournament events provide betting organizations with numerous economic potentials. The betting organizations will utilize information technologies to extract meaningful information from an acceptable volume of data, and the processed data will be displayed to the odds makers who are interested in betting on e-sport events. By providing such services, betting companies will earn commissions (Marchenko & Suschevskiy, 2018).

The growth of e-sports benefits game development companies greatly (Kasurinen et al., 2013). Because of the success of e-sports, game developers have more funding to improve game design, game balance and generate new game processes to create better experiences. Hamari and Lehdonvirta (2010) mentioned that the heat of e-sport allows game development businesses to devote more attention to game content, resulting in an increase in client renewal. Cai et al. (2019) believe that in this data-driven era, game-generating firms are becoming increasingly interested in building games that are ideal for e-sport events since the application of data-analyzing techniques enables game creators to capture the most successful game genres. The authors state that certain types and categories of games have seen explosive growth in recent years as a result of both the use of data analysis tools and the popularity of e-sports.

A key factor in the history of e-sports was the introduction of live streaming in 2007, on a website known as Twitch (https://www.twitch.tv/). This enabled professional players and competitions to be aired online rather than on television (Leon et al., 2022). The growing availability of internet streaming media platforms contributes to the global promotion of e-sports. The literature provided by Freeman and Wohn (2017) expands on this topic by showing that streaming platforms may attract viewers and transform them into participants by giving them a taste of the game. According to their research, e-sports fans actively participate in the games themselves, implying that these viewers are not only following the gaming event for pure entertainment but are also learning gaming strategies from the competitions to better their game abilities. Twitch attracts more than 2.5 million viewers per day who follow and comment on various computer games through a real-time communication via chatting (Masłowski, 2021; Gros et al., 2017) (See Fig. 3). Twitch users spent 355 billion minutes viewing e-sports events on the streaming site in 2017 which is a substantial growth compared to 2012 when users spent up to 72 billion minutes. (Lee et al., 2018). In 2019, e-sports events had a profit of $56 million in ticket sales, a small portion of the $1 billion overall income generated by the e-sports sector, indicating that fans are enjoying the experience online, in the comfort of their own homes rather than in-person (Thompson et al., 2022). The worldwide e-sports industry was valued at slightly over 1.38 billion US dollars in 2022 (Gough, 2022).

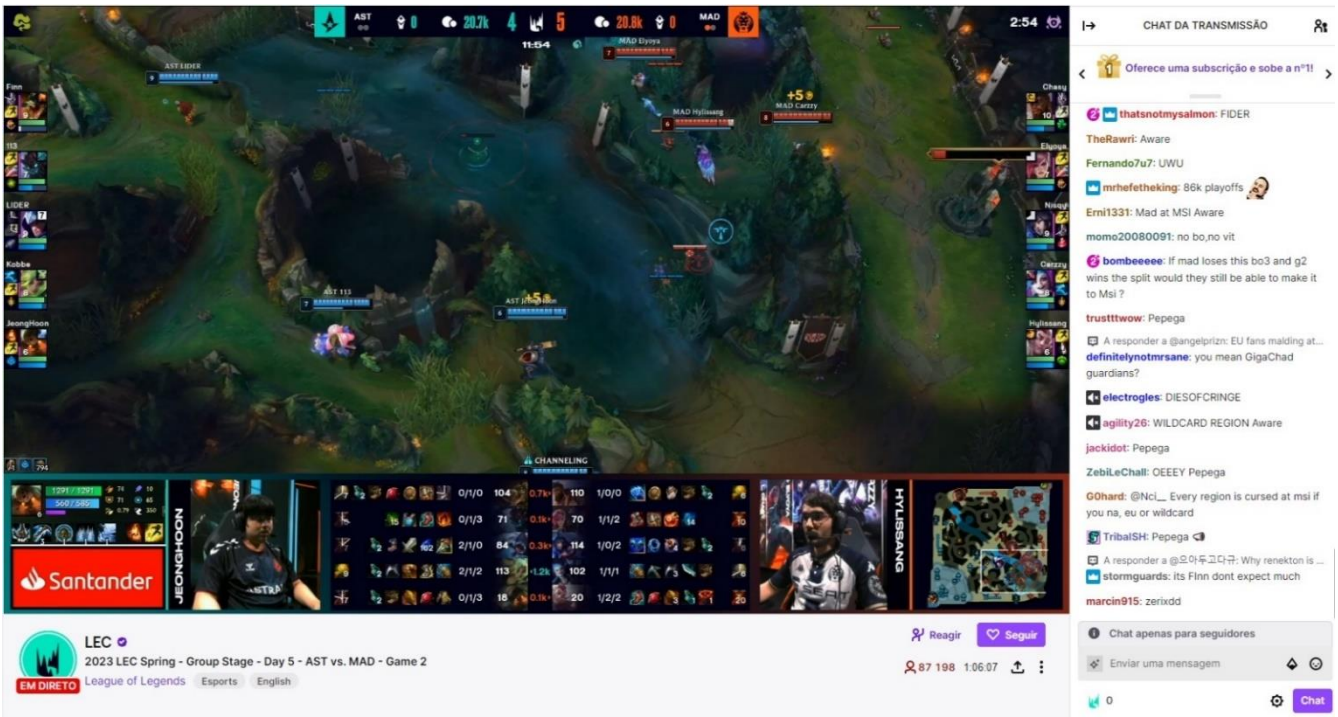

Figure 3 - League of Legends European Championship 2023 Stream

(Source: http://www.twitch.tv.lec)

One of the most controversial issues surrounding e-sports is whether competitive video gaming can be classified as a sport. Sport has been defined several times, but no general definition has been established. People resort to the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) definition, "An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment," rather than a formal academic definition (Kane & Spradley, 2017). According to some academics, e-sports lacks the athleticism necessary to be called a sport (Jenny et al., 2016). Nonetheless, defenders of e-sports as sport argue that it shares several of the fundamental characteristics of conventional sport. According to these believers, e-sports feature interpersonal competitiveness, skill training and growth, rule adherence, goal accomplishment, cooperation, and agility. The argument regarding e-sports as a sport provides a starting point for further study, since many of the requirements for sport, such as structured, competitive, institutionalized, are met by e-sports. (Pizzo et al., 2018)

2.2 E-sports spectator motivation

The driving factors that trigger or energize goal-oriented behavior are referred to as motivation (Simpson & Balsam, 2015; Pu et al., 2021). Motivation has long been a key subject in sport consumer behavior study since it helps us comprehend event design, gaming experience, and consumer decision-making (Deery et al., 2004). Sports consumption study, like any other media and media content research, focuses on the reasons why people consume it, how they consume it, and what sorts of demands the kind of media may satisfy (Pu et al., 2021). Live events are important in the sports sector because they generate the necessary properties for media attention, sponsorship, and event attendance. Furthermore, studies show that event attendance is crucial to fan engagement and loyalty (Hill & Green, 2000). This type of sports consumption research has primarily been undertaken in the academic field of sports management; but, with the growth of e-sports, sports are rapidly being viewed as a computer-mediated form of media (Dwyer & Kim 2011). This is particularly the case since not only is sports media content transmitted by computerized transmissions, such as streaming on the internet, but the whole sporting activity is also computer mediated (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). As reported by Bloom (2019), there is still a lack of understanding of the psychological and sociological factors that influence participation in live e-sports events.

According to Pu et al. (2021) a motivational study in event attendance has been well established to date, and numerous motivational constructs about participation at music festivals, Expos, wine, and food festivals have been developed. Sports-specific research has also discovered numerous motivating elements across diverse event settings based on the degree of competition, sport type, demographic type, and geographical location. For example, cultural learning is a unique motive

for Olympic spectators (Chen & Funk, 2010), who listed appreciation/worship and violence/cruelty as two different reasons specific to Mixed Martial Arts events (Kim et al., 2008). The various motivations discovered for divergent events in both sports and non-sport environments suggest that e-sports events should be investigated further (Pu et al., 2021).

Many models served as the framework for in-depth investigations into the social and psychological aspects influencing consumption in a variety of sport contexts, including fantasy sports (Dwyer & Kim 2011), which involves a group of individuals selecting a set of individual athletes from a specific sport for a fantasy team, adding up these athletes' statistical statistics, and then competing to determine whose team scores the most points (Tacon & Vainker, 2017), daily fantasy sports (Kota et al. 2019), and sport video games (Kim & Ross, 2006; Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011). Sports motivation metrics have also been explored in recent years to analyze both involvement and spectatorship in e-sports. For instance, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) used the Motivational Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) to investigate the motivations of 888 e-sport viewers and conducted a survey to learn more about how and why e-sport consumers used this form of media to meet their needs. The authors discovered escapism, expertise, novelty, and hostility to be determinants of e-sports viewing frequency. Sjöblom et al. (2019) discovered that the MSSC only could explain a small percentage of variance (ie 16.3%) in respondents' desire to attend live events, implying that relying simply on existing metrics may be insufficient to describe the complexities of e-sports event attendance. Pizzo et al. (2018), used single-item measures from MSSC and Sports Interest Inventory (SII) (Funk et al., 2002) to compare motives (i.e. vicarious achievement, excitement, family bonding and physical attractiveness) in attending e-sports and traditional sports events; On the other hand Macey et al. (2020) compared motivational factors between e-sports online spectating and event attendance with the MSSC and discovered social interaction and physical attractiveness were rated higher by event attendees. The recognition of certain similar spectating reasons emphasizes the similarities and interactions between traditional sports and e-sports (Macey et al., 2020).

Escapism is sometimes seen as a means of avoiding the "real", in all of its different forms: real jobs, real relationships, real facts, or just the actual world. However, dealing with reality can be difficult. As opposed to being a distinct entity in and of itself, it frequently appears as the opposite of other immaterial concepts. In the digital era, reality is most frequently seen in binary opposition to the virtual. Like the relationship between escapism and reality, the relationship that exists between the virtual and reality is rarely questioned (Calleja, 2010). Sport fans search for interaction, team loyalty is a significant spectatorship factor, which may result from socialization (such as the gradual influence of family and peers), historical team performance, successful team/stadium marketing, as well as a sustained involvement in the sport (Bloch & Richins, 1993). In this context, the term "team loyalty" refers to an allegiance or commitment to a specific team

that is based on a fan's enduring interest in that team. When a team's win-loss record is unattractive, a devoted fan does not turn against them (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995).

Although e-sports and traditional sports share similar aspects of consumer behavior, the relevance of these motivation scales remains uncertain because there may be motivational factors that are unique to e-sports due to its computerized form of competition and the distinct nature of human-computer interaction (Qian et al., 2019). The fictional experience provided by e-sports' visual and auditory technology was linked to the vicarious sensation as a unique motivating element for e-sports online spectatorship. Also, the authors mention that studies on e-sports fans have disproportionately concentrated on the online environment, with limited awareness about their offline behaviors such as attendance.

2.3 Sports Tourism motivation

The idea of sport-related tourism has gained significant attention in recent years, both as a subject of academic study and as a growingly popular tourism option (Gibson, 1998). Is sport only defined as competitive activities with established regulations dictating the type of play, the playing surface, and what the participants may wear? Or do sports also encompass less regimented, non-competitive physical activities?

Nogawa et al. (1996) contend that there is a distinction between sports excursionists, who go for a single day, and sports tourists, who spend at least 24 hours in a location. How far from home must day trippers travel to qualify as excursionists? The reason for travel is another issue with the definition of tourism and tourist (Gibson, 1998). One of the first to realize that spectators only represent one kind of sport tourist was Redmond (1991) who defined sports tourists as those who actively participate in sports and go to sporting venues like halls of fame and renowned stadiums. However, the majority of American research on sports tourism has concentrated on major sporting events that draw viewers from abroad (Gibson, 1998). For instance, Turco and Eisenhardt (1998, p.207) mention active sport tourism in passing while focusing on the positive economic effects hosting a sporting event can have for a community and the "heavy rivalry between cities for the right to host lucrative sporting events."

As stated by Crompton and McKay (1997) tourists develop motives based on their psychological wants and needs within the context of internal and external factors, and then attempt to make decisions based on these. As a result, motivation is the foundation of decision-making. Naturally, motivation has been an important topic in tourism studies for decades to understand tourist behavior.

Sports tourism deals with areas of pretended and deliberate decisions, sometimes, athletes and/or fans choose their sports destinations without fully understanding the subtle or unseen forces influencing or luring them (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005). Outside pressures including family, friends, social circles, and/or commercial media advertising actively influence people's decisions to travel and take part in or attend sporting events. Here, one's motivation for travelling to a sporting destination is directly impacted by and dependent upon others, rather than necessarily oneself, the Pseudo choice. The intentional choice of a sports tourist is different in that the person decides to travel with an awareness of the deeper significance of their involvement in sports, whether as participants or spectators. Regardless of whether it was a deliberate or unintentional choice, the tourist in question has a fundamental affinity for the game in the issue. The desire to travel and the displacement of one's destination would not be constant for someone who has no affection for any particular or unique sport (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005).

According to Kurtzman and Zauhar (2005), without a doubt, business owners, operators, and managers in the sports tourism sector value knowing what drives their customers. Unfortunately, a lot of consumers lack a clear understanding of their motivations. The subconscious mind frequently reduces or covers a person's instincts, drives, sensations, and emotions. Motives and aspirations may therefore be challenging to pin down. Sports provide a link between people, whether they are participants, spectators, or members of an organization. For a variety of reasons, sports fans travel. Events, excursions, resorts, attractions, and cruises are the five main activity types in sports tourism that satisfy needs. Decisions to travel are made for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, such as rewards, recognition, and prestige, in addition to extrinsic factors like feelings, involvement desires, and brief escapism. The underlying motivational interplay that may be observed within the dynamics of sports travel is influenced by the "weight" given to each or combination motive, whether positive or negative. Furthermore, variable, and incidental factors like as a person's health, available income, age demographics, geographic location and so on may have a natural influence on how decisions are made.

III. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

This study focuses on exploring the main motives for spectators to attend e-sports events and finding out/confirming whether visiting the host city could be another relevant motivational factor. When considering the studies introduced in the previous chapter of the literature review, several variables were found to be relevant determinants for e-sports events attendance, since they were tested to have a positive influence on e-sports events participation.

According to studies sport motivation studies can be based in a broad theoretical framework to understand consumer behavior because motivational factors differ in complexity across different situations. Instead of looking at the current research through a singular perspective we utilized Pu et al. (2021) measuring instrument, e-sports events attendance motivation scale (EEAMS), which analyses and identifies motivational factors that are most salient in event attendance within an e-sports context. The assessment is composed of components that were extracted and revised from prior motivation scales, as well as new items produced from interviews that represent unique factors to e-sports event participation. The analysis of general sports consumption motives resulted in the inclusion of elements about characteristics such as knowledge, sociability, drama, escapism, and aesthetics. The evaluation of motivational research in event attendance produced additional elements on environment, novelty, and fandom. Several components with comparable meanings (for example, diversion and escapism) were merged and changed to suit inside the e-sports event environment. In addition to these, in order to continue understanding e-sports as both a widespread leisure activity and a major worldwide cultural phenomenon, it is essential to investigate in-depth other reasons why people attend e-sports events.

The hypotheses will be established and provided with a brief explanation of the literature review supporting them, as well as a conceptual map illustrating the several interactions between variables.

The enjoyment of the surrounding environment. The degree to which a welcoming, family-oriented environment improves the enjoyment of an event (Funk et al., 2004). An entertaining atmosphere can stimulate spectator attendance, and in a tourism setting, it has been proven to positively influence purchasing behavior from the source of the flow (Thompson et al., 2022). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Entertaining atmosphere is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

In media content such as sports, the drama construct refers to the pleasure of uncertainty and unexpected turns of events. Drama has been found to be a significant influence on overall sports viewing (Peterson & Raney, 2008). Drama is a crucial component of the viewing experience in e-sports since the same sense of uncertainty exists as in traditional sports. Many e-sports games include aspects of randomness and information imbalance incorporated into them, adding to the sense of uncertainty (Cheung & Huang, 2011). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Game Drama is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

E-sports is the gathering of people who share an interest in online gaming (Qian et al., 2019). Social interaction concept refers to the gratifications associated with socializing with other media users, it can provide opportunities to form strong social bonds, friendships, and interactive teamwork. Socializing with friends is essential in e-sports and video games play (Hamilton et al., 2014). Since so much e-sports consumption occurs online, it is easy to presume that connections were established between people through computer-mediated ways. Sports marketers have emphasized the importance of socializing during sporting events, so that fans' social life become linked with their participation in related activities (McLeay et al., 2019). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Social interaction is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

As specified by Wenner and Gantz (1998) the extent to which media consumption facilitates knowledge acquisition is referred to as the acquisition of knowledge construct. Learning about the teams and players has always been one of the primary cognitive incentives for watching traditional sports, as well as gathering knowledge to discuss the sport with others (Melnick, 1993). Knowledge acquisition has been demonstrated to be a key component of media use and media consumption in studies on streaming video games (Hamilton et al., 2014). Since e-sports do not require as many pre-requisite skills as traditional sports, the methods and tactics used in e-sports video games are easily imitated by fans and reproduced (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Acquiring knowledge is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

Tourism is frequently viewed as a type of temporary escape, a method to do something different and temporarily forget about one's everyday life (Ponsignon et al., 2020). Previous study backs up the significance of escapism in describing and comprehending the travel experience (Sheng &

Chen 2012). Escape has been proven to have a substantial impact on sports viewership, and unlike other forms of emotional drive, escape motivation is less dependent on the game's actual outcome (Wann et al., 2008). When compared to traditional sports, e-sports may give a more distinct kind of escapism. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Escapism is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

In June 2011, the first *League of Legends World Championship* Tournament was held at the *DreamHack* gathering in Jönköping, Sweden. There were 20,984 attendees for the entire *DreamHack* event, but only about 200 witnessed the championship match. However, 1.69 million unique viewers witnessed the World Championship online. Because the viewers are already interested in viewing e-sports, live-streaming platforms like Twitch or YouTube may provide a highly effective environment through which to broadcast e-sports events/tournaments. The *Overwatch League e-sports* events aired gathered 3.2 million extra hours of viewing in a single week on Twitch as evidence (Fragen, 2018). Many amateur players said that in addition to digital gaming or online streaming, live events give fans another way to actually experience the game (Pu et al., 2021). Accordingly, we hypothesized that:

H6: Live streaming experience is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

Fans' attitudes regarding their preferred team, according to Cunningham and Kwon (2003), have a significant impact on whether they plan to attend sporting events. In fact, according to Matsuoka et al. (2003), the most important element in predicting future desire to attend games is team identification. Accordingly, we hypothesized that:

H7: Loyalty to the team is positively associated with e-sports events attendance.

Escapism is an impulse to divert attention from major problems in one's life. It can also be thought of as temporarily releasing oneself from self-awareness and closing meanings out of the mind (Baumeister, 1991). Escapism has been found as a major motivator of both healthy and destructive online behavior (Jouhki et al., 2022). People may watch online gaming content as well as play videogames themself, for instance, to commemorate friendship or to form social bonds with a community (Reer & Krämer, 2019). Positive effects like wellbeing and relaxation may result from this. Accordingly, we hypothesized that:

H8: Escapism is positively associated with online streaming experience.

One of the main reasons people do tourism is to escape their daily lives or immerse themselves in novel experiences and realities (Ponsignon et al., 2020). When participating in tourism-related activities, people get away from their regular routines (Uriely, 2005). Visitors can escape to high immersion environments, such as natural parks or amusement parks (Hosany & Witham, 2009). Tourists can escape from the stresses of the outside world when they immerse themselves. Accordingly, we hypothesized that:

H9: Escapism is positively associated with the intention to do tourism.

According to Dilek (2019) the appeal of e-sports games comes from a variety of sources. Fans have the opportunity to observe the best athletes in the world compete, interact with their favorite athletes, and bond with other passionate e-sports fans. Consequently, e-sports tourism has the ability to become a growing sector of the tourism industry. In reality, Agius (2015) emphasized that the idea of e-sports as a niche tourism attraction is in fact viable and has the potential to be extremely profitable given the substantial interest this industry has already attracted. Also, online gaming communities, according to Lee and Hyun (2015), create trust and friendship, which can influence travel intentions. Over the years, a significant growth in visitors willing to travel to other cities or countries to watch e-sports events has been observed (DiLek, 2019). Travel is done by tourists to share social encounters with others who share their interests and to share their passion for sports (McLeay et al., 2019). According to Bloom (2019) e-sports fans are willing to travel to attend e-sports events and explore the city where the event is taking place which pose an untapped tourism opportunity to practitioners. Thus, we formulate this last hypothesis:

H10: Intention to visit the city has a potential influence on e-sports events attendance.

After having summarized all hypotheses, the conceptual model can be constructed.

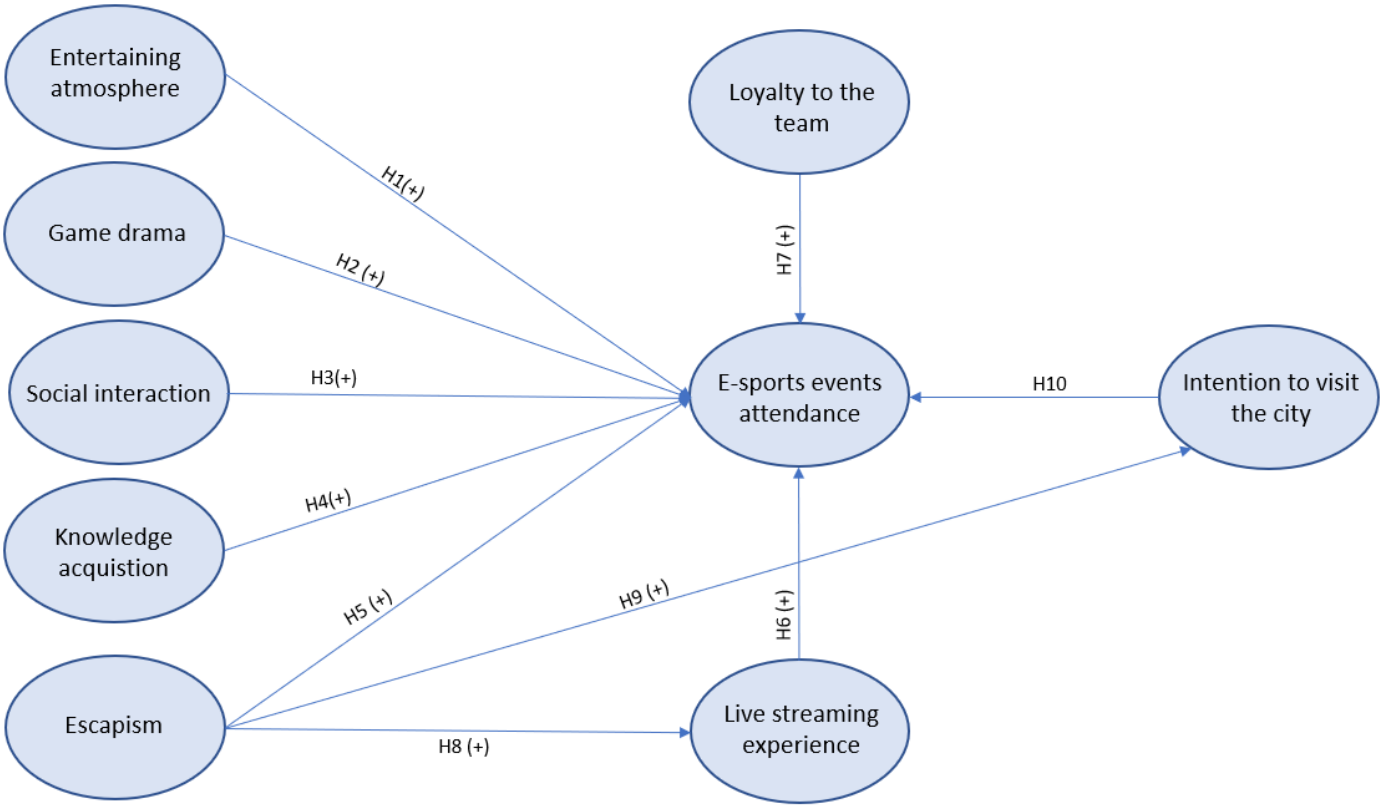

Figure 3. Conceptual Model

IV. Methodology

The methodology of this research will be provided in the following chapter to demonstrate the relevance of the research and detect limits. First, decisions regarding the type of the data, the research approach, and data collection will be established. The questionnaire design, and eventually construct operationalization will be conducted.

4.1 Methods and Data collection

Questionnaires are a typical tool used in quantitative research for gathering data. Because it can be transformed into numerical data and analyzed using statistics, the information gathered through self-administered questionnaires is easily measurable and this method enables the collection of data from a large sample. Additionally, since the researcher does not need to be present, quantitative questionnaires can be produced quickly and given online. (Veal, 2018).

A target population is created to determine who is eligible to take part in this study. Target population is defined as "the collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are made" (Malhotra & Birks, 2017, p. 140). Consequently, the target population of this study includes active amateur players and e-sports fans. Data were collected using an online survey, which was distributed via e-sports subreddit forums like "r/Fnatic", "r/lolesports" and "r/teamliquid, Twitter, and the online social platform Discord. Posts on these platforms were made at varied intervals throughout the day in order to attract the largest possible audience of viewers. The posts explained the purpose of the study and provided contact information for anybody who wanted to learn more about the survey. The survey had a three-month data collection window which started in May and ended in August.

Before releasing the survey to the public, a pretest survey was made in order to identify and evaluate the clarity, potential issues, and comprehensibility of the questions. The pretest was carried out on a small number of 12 respondents before sending it out to your entire sample. According to the information collected, there were slight doubts regarding the interpretation of some questions, so minor changes were made, as well as the correction of two spelling errors present in one of the questions.

4.2 Questionnaire structure

For a brief summary of the current e-sports awareness we asked if the respondents play video games and if so, how many years have they been playing (i.e. 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 160 or more years and "I do not play video games"), how much money do they spend monthly on

virtual items in e-sports games, enhancing gameplay experience, status and progression are some of the main reasons a lot of players choose to buy virtual items in games (i.e. 0 € (0$), 5-20€ (5-22$), 21-35€ (23-38), 36-50€ (39-55), 50€+ (55$+)), if they ever gone to an e-sports event (i.e. "Yes, in my country of residence", "Yes, but in another country", "Yes, in both, my country and other" and "No"), how likely are the respondents in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future, the frequency of which they watch live games on streaming services weekly (i.e., 0 hours, less than 1 hour, 1-4 hours, 5-8 hours, 9-12 hours, more than 12 hours), the maximum distance they would be willing to travel to attend an e-sports event (i.e., 0km-100km (0 - 62 Miles), 101km-750km (62 - 466 Miles), 751-1400km (466 - 870 Miles), 1401+km (870+ Miles)). In order to have an insight into several aspects of the person's life, in the last part of the questionnaire, regarding the demographic variables, the questionnaire enquired about the respondents' gender (allowing them to refuse to answer the question if they were not comfortable with it). Age was measured, and six groups were created (i.e., under 18, between 18-22, 23-26, 27-30, 31-40, and over 40 years old, respectively). Responses were classified into six categories (less than a high school diploma, high school degree or equivalent, bachelor's degree, master's degree, PhD, and others, respectively) based on the highest degree or level of education obtained. Measurement of current employment was made, and seven groups were created (i.e., student employed part-time, employed full-time, unemployed, self-employed, retired, and unable to work, respectively), and lastly, we asked to compare the annual personal income of each respondent with the average income of their country (i.e., below average, average, above average and high, respectively).

4.3 Construct Measurement

To ensure validity, the scales of the variables were primarily borrowed from existing literature, these variables are presented in table 4.2. In order to fit the theme of this work, some of the scale elements were slightly modified. Information was collected through a Likert scale of 5 levels, being 1 strongly disagree, 2 partially disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 partially agree, and 5 strongly agree. We measured Entertaining atmosphere, Escapism, Game drama, social interaction, live streaming experience, and intention to visit the city where the event takes place. The measurement of entertaining atmosphere, escapism, and knowledge acquisition were be based and adapted on the scale of Pu et al. (2021), since the scale is especially suitable for measuring e-sports attendance motivation, as well as game drama and social interaction where all items showed high degrees of reliability and validity. To measure live streaming experience, we used a scale developed by Gros et al. (2017) which was already used in the gaming entertainment environment, hence the scale was also applied in this work. We used Thompson et al. (2022)

scale, developed by Heere and Dickson (2008), to measure loyalty to the team. Lastly, a scale for the intention to visit the city, was identified. The scale was adapted from Papadimitriou et al. (2018) because it was a dominant scale applied in the intention to visit the city during an event.

Constructs	The author's measurement
Entertaining atmosphere Pu et al. (2021)	I find attending esports events very exciting I enjoy the excitement surrounding an esports match I enjoy the high level of excitement during the esports competition. I enjoy the novelty of watching esports in a stadium. The opportunity to watch esports in a stadium is fun even if it is unconventional. I attend the esports event because it is fun. I attend the esports event because it is a fun way to spend my time. I attend the esports event because of its entertainment value.
Social Interaction Pu et al. (2021)	I attend the e-sports event as a way to get together with others. An important reason for me to attend the e-sports event is spending time with others. I attend the e-sports event because it provides opportunities for me to meet with others. I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the game with other e-sports fans. Attending the e-sports event gives me a chance to bond with other esports fans. An important reason why I attend the e-sports event is to spend time with other fans.
Game Drama (Pu et al, 2021)	I enjoy the drama of close e-sports games. I enjoy the uncertainty of close e-sports games. I like e-sports games where the outcome is uncertain.

Escapism Pu et al. (2021)	Attending e-sports events to gives me a break from my routine. Attending e-sports events provides me with a change of pace from what I regularly do. Attending e-sports events provides a distraction from my everyday activities.
Knowledge acquisition Pu et al. (2021)	I attend e-sports events to increase my knowledge about the e-sports game. I attend e-sports events to increase my understanding of the strategy by watching the e-sports competition. I attend e-sports events to learn about the technical aspects by watching the e-sports game.
Loyalty to the team Thompson et al. (2022) Pu et al. (2021)	I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players. I could never switch my loyalty from [team] even if my close friends were fans of another team. It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team]. I attend the e-sports event to cheer for my favorite player/team. The main reason I attend the e-sports event is to support my favorite player/team. I attend the e-sports event to see the star players/teams.
Live streaming experience Based on some Constructs and variables of (Gros et al., 2017)	I watch live streams to be entertained. I watch live streams to follow tournaments and events. I watch live streams to be part of a community. I get the desire to go to live e-sports events after watching live streams of them. I watch live streams to get in touch with a streamer. I watch live streams to learn new gaming strategies and techniques.
Intention to visit the city during the event Based on variables of (Papadimitriou et al., 2015)	I organize my trip in order to stay more days to visit the city. I will visit the city during the e-sports event. I'll arrive earlier in the city to go visit it. I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the city.

4.4 Statistical Techniques of Quantitative Analysis of Collected Data

4.4.1 Principal component analysis

In the present study, we used the Principal Components analysis in SPSS to reduce the complexity of the information and therefore be able to perform each of the hypothesis tests, as well as estimate the models of linear regression. One of the main advantages of PCA (Principal component analysis) is the summary of information on variables that are strongly correlated into independent linear combinations (the principal components) that represent most of the information contained in the original variables, and which can be used in other statistical analyzes such as multiple linear regressions (Maroco, 2007).

This type of analysis requires a check of assumptions. Firstly, the variables must be evaluated or treated as such, that is, they can be ordinal qualitative as long as they are treated in a quantitative way. In this case, this situation is verified since a scale was used, Likert from 1 to 5.

Regarding the size of the sample, there are many criteria, but for carrying out a PCA, it is suggested that the number of cases is at least five times greater than the number of variables (Hill and Hill, 2000). This assumption is also true for all constructs, as there are 278 valid cases in the sample.

Variables	Variables number	Variables number x5
Entertaining atmosphere	8	40
Social interaction	6	30
Game drama	3	15
Escapism	3	15
Knowledge acquisition	3	15
Loyalty	6	30
Live stream experience	6	30
Intention to visit the city	4	20

Table 1 – Validation of the second assumption for PCA development

(Source: Author)

It is important to know that the original variables under study must be correlated, using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistics and the Bartlett Test. The KMO stat varies between 0 and 1 and for the performance of a PCA, values above 0.6 must be considered, which if verified for all constructs (see table 1). Bartlett's test is a test that intends to test whether the correlation matrix is a matrix identity, that is, whether the original variables are uncorrelated. So, to do a PCA is important to reject the null hypothesis of this test (verified when sig=0.00 < α=0.05) or which indicates that the variables are correlated (see table 1).

Variables	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett's test
Entertaining atmosphere	0,921	< 0,001
Social interaction	0,897	< 0,001
Game drama	0,749	< 0,001
Escapism	0,884	< 0,001
Knowledge acquisition	0,729	< 0,001
Loyalty to the team	0,826	< 0,001
Live stream experience	0,739	< 0,001
Intention to visit the city	0,660	< 0,001

Table 2 – Validation of the third assumption for PCA development

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Considering the components obtained in the Rotated Component Matrix using SPSS the variable "Loyalty" ended up being divided into two components, being the first one named "Team support" and the second "Commitment to the team" and the variable "Live stream experience" was also divided into three components whose given name were "Esports following", "Online social experience" and "Learning experience".

4.4.2 Linear Regression

It is advisable to perform an exploratory analysis to determine whether there are any correlations between the variables being studied before performing any regression. The Coefficient of Pearson Correlation is used for this purpose since it allows analysis of both the strength and the direction of the existing correlation between the variables. This coefficient can range between -1 (indicates a strong negative linear relationship), 0 (weak linear relationship), and 1 (strong positive linear relationship).

The difference between simple linear regression and multiple linear regression lies in the fact that in a simple linear regression model, there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable, and in a multiple linear regression model there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the various independent or explanatory variables.

The application of a multiple or simple linear regression model presupposes the verification of some assumptions. Incidentally, the multiple linear regression must also verify the assumption of the absence of correlation between independent variables – multicollinearity. The assumptions for the application of a linear regression model, whether simple or multiple, are:

1. The regression is linear on the coefficients, is correctly specified, and has a

   residual component.

2. The expected value of residuals is zero.

3. The independent variable(s) are not correlated with the residuals.

4. Absence of correlation between residuals.

5. Homoscedasticity, that is, the variance of the residuals is constant.

6. Normality of residuals.

The current study considers two different single linear regression models in addition to a multiple linear regression model, as illustrated below:

M1 - Live streaming experience $= B_{01} + B_{11} * \text{Escapism} + \varepsilon_1$

M2 - Intention to visit the city $= B_{01} + B_{11} * \text{Escapism} + \varepsilon_1$

M3 - Esports events attendance $= B_{08} + B_{18} * \text{Escapism} + B_{28} * \text{Entertaining atmosphere} + B_{38} * \text{Game drama} + B_{48} * \text{Social interaction} + B_{58} * \text{Knowledge acquisition} + B_{68} * \text{Loyalty to the team} + B_{78} * \text{Live streaming experience} + B_{88} * \text{Intention to visit the city} + \varepsilon_8$

V. Data analysis

In order to not have misleading results, a missing values analysis was made in SPSS to address some concerns caused by incomplete data.

5.1 Sample characterization

As already mentioned, the last part of the survey consists of a set of questions related to the sociodemographic characterization of respondents, as shown in Table 2.

From a total of 429 respondents, 345 were valid with few missing data. The sample is composed predominantly of 270 men (84.1%), people between 23 and 26 years old (37.9%) and between 27 and 30 years old (26.7%) . The questionnaire sample registered a high number of respondents with high academic education, just over 30% of people have finished high school, about 44% have completed a bachelor's degree and approximately 18% have a master's degree. In terms of their daily occupation, the vast majority work full time for others (56.3%) or study (27.9%), registering few unemployed (3.4%). Regarding the salary compared to the annual average personal income of their country, 48.3% stated that they receive an average salary and 24.5% receive a salary below average, which can be justified by the number of student respondents.

Variables		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	270	84.1%
	Female	44	13.7%
	Prefer not to say	7	2.2%
Age	Under 18 years old	13	4%
	18-22 years old	61	18.9%
	23-26 years old	122	37.9%
	27-30 years old	86	26.7%
	31-40 years old	32	9.9%
	40+ years old	8	2.5%
Education Level	Less than high school	7	2.2%
	High school degree	98	30.3%
	Bachelor's degree	144	44.6%
	Master's degree	59	18.3%
	PhD	11	3.4%
	Other	4	1.2%
Employment Status	Student	90	27.9%
	Employed part-time	25	7.7%
	Employed full-time	182	56.3%
	Unemployed	11	3.4%
	Self-employed	12	3.7%
	Retired	1	0.3%
	Unable to work	2	0.6%
Annual Average Personal Income	Below average	78	24.5%
	Average	154	48.3%
	Above average	75	23.5%
	High	12	3.8%

Table 3 - Distribution of Respondents by demographic characterization

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

5.2 Current e-sports awareness

In this section, 278 participants served as the target research respondents. As seen in Table 3, several questions in the survey are meant to provide a general overview of the respondents' perspectives on the subject.

According to the results for how long participants have been playing video games, a majority of respondents with a total number of 189 (nearly 50%) have been playing for 16 years or more. Furthermore, a total of 110 (26.1%) participants have been playing between 11 to 15 years. 72 (17.1%) of the participants between 6 to 10 years and 30 (7.1%) for just 1 to 5 years. Also 20 (4.8%) responded that they do not play video games.

Regarding the money spend on average monthly on virtual items in e-sport games, a majority of participants with a total number of 185 (43.9%) spends 0€. A total of 168 (39.9%) participants spends between 5-20€ (5-22$), 43 (10.2%) participants spend between 21-35€ (23-38) and 14 (3.3%) spend between 36-50€ (39-55). However only 11 (2.6%) participants spend 50€+ (55$+) monthly on virtual items.

We asked if the participants ever attended in person an e-sports event, whether it was in their country of residence or elsewhere. The results reveal that participants who said yes and participants who said no, displayed remarkably similar percentages. It is possible to see that 218 (51.9%) said no and 202 (48.1%) said yes to attending in person an e-sports event, being 140 (33.3%) people who went to these events in their country, 23 (5.5%) people who went but, in another country, and 39 (9.3%) respondents who went, in both, their country and other.

As for the time participants spend watching online e-sports games events weekly (including but not limited to e-sports events, live games, videos, etc.) a large number of respondents with a total number of 123 (44.2%) watches more than 12 hours of gaming content. Furthermore, a total of 66 (23.7%) participants watches between 9 to 12 hours each week, 48 (17.3%) watched between 5 to 8 hours, 34 (12.2%) watches between 1 to 4 hours, only 3 (1.1%) watches less than 1 hour each week and 4 (1.4%) don’t watch any online content.

Considering our contribution to the subject, we also asked an important question regarding the maximum distance participants would be willing to travel to attend an e-sport event. The majority of respondents, 118 (42.4%), would travel more than 1401km (871 miles) to attend an e-sport event, which shows that a lot of people are inclined to leave their country of residence to attend this type of event. 62 (22.3%) would travel between 751-1400km (467-870 miles), 66 (23.7%) of

the participants would travel between 101-750km (63-466 miles) and 32 (11.5%) would only travel as far as 100km (0-62 miles).

Variables		Frequency	Percent (%)
Do you play video games? If so, how many years have you been playing	1-5 years	30	7.1%
	6-10 years	72	17.1%
	11-15 years	110	26.1%
	16 or more years	189	44.9%
	I do not play video games.	20	4.8%
How much do you spend on average monthly on virtual items in e-sport games?	0€ (0$)	185	43.9%
	5-20€ (5-22)	168	39.9%
	21-35€ (23-38)	43	10.2%
	36-50€ (39-55)	14	3.3%
	50€+ (55$+)	11	2.6%
Have you ever attended in person an e-sports event in your country or another country? If so, was the event in your country of residence?	Yes, in my country of residence.	140	33.3%
	Yes, but in another country.	23	5.5%
	Yes, in both, my country and other.	39	9.3%
	No.	218	51.9%
How much time do you spend watching online e-sports games events weekly (including but not limited to e-sports events, live games, videos, etc.)?	0 hours	4	1.4%
	Less than 1 hour	3	1.1%
	1-4 hours	34	12.2%
	5-8 hours	48	17.3%
	9-12 hours	66	23.7%
	More than 12 hours	123	44.2%
What is the maximum distance you would be willing to travel to attend an e-sports event?	0-100km (0 – 62 miles)	32	11.5%
	101 - 750km (63 – 466 miles)	66	23.7%
	751km - 1400km (467 – 870 miles)	62	22.3%
	1401km+ (871 miles+)	118	42.4%

Table 4 – E-sports awareness

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Regarding the question number 4 of the questionnaire, “How likely would you be interested in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future (up to 3 years)”, an analysis of table 4 was carried out. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being "Not at all likely" and 10 "Very likely", the average found was 6.69 (Mean value = 6.69 and Sd = 2.73). The results are satisfactory as they show that, on average, respondents are interested in going to an event of this type.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
How likely would you be interested in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future (up to 3 years)	6.69	2.73

Table 5 – Interest in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

5.3 Motivations analysis

Entertaining Atmosphere

According to the Entertaining atmosphere of the main motivations, i.e. why spectators attend e-sports events, the value that respondents perceived about the entertaining atmosphere was as follows (Table 6), there were two variables where they perceived more value, "I find attending e-sports events very exciting" and " I enjoy the high level of excitement during the e-sports competition" since it presents the best mean ($\bar{X}$ = 4.30), with this second variable having a lower standard deviation (Sd= 0.776), the worst variable was "I enjoy the novelty of watching e-sports in a stadium" as it presents the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation compared to the average value ($\bar{X}$ = 4.15 and Sd= 0.842).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Entertaining atmosphere	I find attending e-sports events very exciting	4.30	.812
	I enjoy the excitement surrounding and e-sports match	4.27	.763
	I enjoy the high level of excitement during the e-sports competition	4.30	.776
	I enjoy the novelty of watching e-sports in a stadium	4.15	.842
	The opportunity to watch e-sports in a stadium is fun even if it is unconventional.	4.27	.786
	I attend the e-sports event because it is fun.	4.21	.768
	I attend the e-sports event because it is a fun way to spend my time.	4.15	.792
	I attend the e-sports event because of its entertainment value.	4.19	.781

Table 6 – Entertaining atmosphere

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Social Interaction

Regarding the importance that respondents attribute to social interaction, they identified the variable (Table 7) "I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the game with other e-sports fans" as having the highest perceived value, since it presents the best mean ($\bar{X}$ = 4.08) and the lowest standard deviation compared to the mean value (Sd= 0.861). The worst evaluated variable evaluated was "I attend the e-sports event as a way to get together with others" as it presents the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation compared to the mean value ($\bar{X}$ = 3.38 and Sd=1.037).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Social interaction	I attend the e-sports event as a way to get together with others.	3.38	1.037
	An important reason for me to attend the e-sports event is spending time with others.	3.73	1.057
	I attend the e-sports event because it provides opportunities for me to meet with others.	3.79	1.112
	I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the game with other e-sports fans.	4.08	.861
	Attending the e-sports event gives me a chance to bond with other e-sports fans.	3.95	.960
	An important reason why I attend the e-sports event is to spend time with other fans.	3.63	1.053

Table 7 – Social interaction

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Game Drama

Regarding respondents' perceptions of the game drama's value (Table 8) were quite similar to one another. However, the variable "I enjoy the uncertainty of close e-sports games" was more highly valued than the others since it presents the best mean ($\bar{X}$= 4.53) and the lowest standard deviation (Sd= 0.724). The worst evaluated variable was "I like how intense e-sports matches can be" as it presents the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation compared to the mean value ($\bar{X}$= 4.45 and Sd= 1.037).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Game Drama	I like how intense e-sports matches can be.	4.45	0.808
	I enjoy the uncertainty of close e-sports games.	4.53	0.724
	I like e-sports games where the outcome is uncertain.	4.46	0.758

Table 8 – Game Drama

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Escapism

As for the value of Escapism (Table 9), the response "Attending e-sports events gives me a break from my routine" received the highest perceived value because it has the best mean ($\bar{X}$= 4.05) and the lowest standard deviation (Sd= 0.912) in comparison to the mean value. The worst evaluated variable was "Attending e-sports events provides a distraction from my everyday activities" as it presents the lowest mean and a high standard deviation compared to the mean value ($\bar{X}$= 3.93 and Sd= 0.922).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Escapism	Attending e-sports events gives me a break from my routine.	4.05	.912
	Attending e-sports events provides me with a change of pace from what I regularly do.	4.02	.849
	Attending e-sports events provides a distraction from my everyday activities.	3.93	.922

Table 9 – Escapism

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Knowledge acquisition

Concerning the analysis of the value respondents place on knowledge acquisition (Table 10), the variable with the highest perceived value was "I attend e-sports events to increase my understanding of the strategy by watching the e-sports competition," which had the best mean ($\bar{X}$= 4.03).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge acquisition	I attend e-sports events to increase my knowledge about the e-sports game.	3.79	1.216
	I attend e-sports events to increase my understanding of the strategy by watching the e-sports competition.	4.03	1.232
	I attend e-sports events to learn about the technical aspects by watching the e-sports game.	3.86	1.209

Table 10 – Knowledge acquisition

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Loyalty to the team

Regarding the loyalty to the team (Table 11), the variable with the highest perceived value was "I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players" because it has the best mean ($\bar{X}$= 3.98) and the lowest standard deviation (Sd= 1.011) in comparison to the mean value. The variable with the lowest perceived value was "It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team]" because it had the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation compared to the mean value ($\bar{X}$= 3.41 and Sd= 1.106).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Loyalty to the team	I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players.	3.98	1.011
	I could never switch my loyalty from [team] even if my close friends were fans of another team.	3.74	1.173
	It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team].	3.41	1.106
	I attend the e-sports event to see the star players/teams.	3.94	.872
	The main reason I attend the e-sports event is to support my favorite player/team.	3.68	1.009
	I attend the e-sports event to cheer for my favorite player/team.	3.86	.876

Table 11 – Loyalty to the team

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Live streaming experience

As for Live streaming experience (Table 12), the variable with the highest value was "I watch live streams to be entertained" because it had the best mean ($\bar{X}$=4.51) and the lowest standard deviation (Sd=0.814) in comparison to the mean value. The variable with the lowest value was "I watch live streams to get in touch with the streamer" because it had the lowest mean and the highest standard deviation ($\bar{X}$= 3.72 and Sd= 1.401).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Live streaming experience	I watch live streams to be entertained.	4.51	.814
	I watch live streams to follow tournaments and events.	4.38	.840
	I watch live streams to be part of a community.	3.92	1.282
	I get the desire to go to live e-sports events after watching live streams of them.	4.23	.957
	I watch live streams to get in touch with a streamer.	3.72	1.401
	I watch live streams to learn new gaming strategies and techniques.	4.09	1.026

Table 12 – Live streaming experience

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Intention to visit the city during the event

Lastly, we ask respondents to evaluate their likelihood of visiting the city during the event (Table 13), the response "I will visit the city during the e-sports event" received the highest ratings since it had the best mean ($\bar{X}$= 4.38) and the lowest standard deviation (Sd= 0.845) compared to the mean value. The worst evaluated variable was “I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the city” as it presents the lowest mean ($\bar{X}$= 1.79) but presented the lowest standard variation (Sd= 0.841). The variable “I’ll arrive earlier in the city to go visit it” presented the highest value of standard deviation (Sd= 1.022).

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation
Intention to visit the city during the event	I organize my trip in order to stay more days to visit the city.	3,91	,994
	I will visit the city during the e-sports event.	4,38	,845
	I'll arrive earlier in the city to go visit it.	3,41	1,022
	I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the citv.	1,79	,841

Table 13 – Intention to visit the city during the event

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

5.4 Information reduction

In order to estimate the different linear regression models, it was necessary to simplify the data structure, that is, the reduction of the number of existing items to measure each construct. For this, a principal component analysis was carried out and an analysis of the internal consistency measured using Cronbach's alpha. Since this measure must be greater than 0.7, in order to guarantee internal consistency between the variables of each construct, we proceed to exclude the component "I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the city" from the variable "Intention to visit the city" since it presented an alpha of 0.380, after it was removed, we got an alpha of 0.766 (see table 14).

The principal component analysis aims to describe the information contained in a set of items in a smaller one. Since each construct is one-dimensional, the objective was the extraction of a component for each one, which was possible given that the explained variance criterion was verified (see table 14). This criterion suggests the principal components retention with more than 70 to 80% of explained variance. However, since this is a study in the area of social sciences this percentage can be around 60%. So, for each construct, a component was obtained.

Variables	% explained variance	Cronbach's alpha
Entertaining atmosphere	74.49%	0.935
Social interaction	76.140%	0.918
Game drama	84.35%	0.905
Escapism	67.61%	0.893
Knowledge acquisition	85.77%	0.917
Loyalty to the team	76.02%	0.856
Live stream experience	73.45%	0.833
Intention to visit the city	68.81%	0.766

Table 14 – Verification of Internal Consistency and Extraction Criteria for Principal Components

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Additionally, the communalities, that is, the proportion of variance of each item that is explained by the retained component, were also good, since observing the annex 2, it is possible to conclude that the reduction in the number of components forced by the principal component analysis, does not entail a great loss of information, since the communalities of all variables are high, or at least greater than 0.4 (taking into account the exclusion of the component "I just go because of the

event, so I do not intend to visit the city" from the variable "Intention to visit the city"). The lowest communality verified for the variable "Entertaining atmosphere" is 0.684; the lowest communality for the variable "Social interaction" is 0,612; the lowest communality for the variable "Game drama" is 0,810; the lowest communality for the variable "Escapism" is 0,832; the lowest communality for the variable "Knowledge acquisition" is 0,793; the lowest communality for the variable "Loyalty to the team" is 0,678; the lowest communality for the variable "Live stream experience" is 0,693; and finally the lowest communality for the variable "Intention to visit the city" is 0,571.

Also, annex 2 contains the *loading* values, that is, the values contained in the Component Matrix. This matrix allows us to see how related the initial variables are with each component, and the goal is to create a simplified structure or a solution in which for each component the correlations of the initial variables are maximized. The highest *loading* was registered in a component of the variable Knowledge acquisition= 0.949; lowest *loading* registered Live streaming experience= 0.272).

It is important to keep in mind that the components obtained in the Rotated Component Matrix, using the *varimax method*, the variable "Loyalty" was divided into two components, being the first one "Team support" and the second "Commitment to the team" and the variable "Live stream experience" was divided into three components, "Esports following", "Online social experience" and "Learning experience" (see table 15 and 16).

Variables	Rotated component matrix	
Loyalty – Commitment to the team	1	2
I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players.	0.242	0.817
I could never switch my loyalty from [team] even if my close friends were fans of another team.	0.211	0.870
It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team].	0.276	0.776
Loyalty – Team Support	1	2
I attend the e-sports event to cheer for my favorite player/team.	0.827	0.353
The main reason I attend the e-sports event is to support my favorite player/team.	0.817	0.285
I attend the e-sports event to see the star players/teams.	0.881	0.154

Table 15 – Rotated component matrix - Loyalty

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

Variables	Rotated component matrix		
Live stream experience – E-sports following	1	2	3
I watch live streams to be entertained.	0.875		
I watch live streams to follow tournaments and events.	0.768	0.400	
I watch live streams to be part of a community.	0.742		0.343
Live stream experience – Online social experience	1	2	3
I get the desire to go to live e-sports events after watching live streams of them.	0.287	0.899	
I watch live streams to get in touch with a streamer.		0.883	0.318
Live stream experience – Learning experience	1	2	3
I watch live streams to learn new gaming strategies and	0.272	0.278	0.905

Table 16 – Rotated component matrix – Live stream experience

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

5.5 Regression analysis

To carry out this type of analysis, a set of assumptions must be validated. It should be noted that since these are principal components, the assumption of normality is initially verified.

Another assumption that was confirmed was the lack of correlation between the residuals measured by the Durbin-Watson test, which concludes the absence of autocorrelation and, consequently, the independence of the errors whenever the value of this statistic is close to 2. This test has the null hypothesis that the errors are independent, and its statistic ranges from 0 (extremely positive autocorrelation) to 4 (extremely negative autocorrelation). Annexe 3 confirms that this assumption is true. It should be emphasized that the significance level for each test in the previously mentioned annexes is α=0.05. Additionally, for multiple linear regressions, the assumption of multicollinearity—the absence of correlation between the independent variables—was validated for all models. Therefore, the Tolerance measure (TOL) and Variance inflator factor (VIF) measures must have values of more than 0.1 and less than 10, respectively, for this assumption to be confirmed (see annexe 3). It can already be said that in all the models studied, the constant was not significant (see annexe 3 in the tables of tests for coefficients where sig > 0.05).

In summary, all MLR assumptions are verified except for the error normality. The graphs made for assessing the normality of the residuals show that there are some deviations, however, it can be stated that the residuals look approximately Normal distribution (see annexe 3). It is important, nevertheless, that the regression coefficients are carefully analyzed.

5.5.1 Results obtained regarding the Live streaming experience (M1)

- E-sports following (M1.1)

In the first model, we tried to understand the extent to which escapism determines the e-sports following, estimating for this a Simple Linear Regression Model. The percentage of the explained variable was low, as escapism only contributes 16.7% to explain the variability of the e-sports following. The impact of this variable is positive and significant (B= 0.409).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,108E-16	,055	1,000		
	Escapism	,409	,055	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Esports following

- Online social experience (M1.2)

As for the second component obtained from the live streaming experience, we tried to understand how much escapism drives the online social experience by estimating a simple linear regression model. The explained variable's percentage was poor, as escapism only contributes 10.1% to explain the variability of the online social experience. The impact of this variable ended up being positive and significant (B= 0.317).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,785E-16	,057	1,000		
	Escapism	,317	,057	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Online social experience

- Learning experience (M1.3)

And finally for the third component, obtained from the live streaming experience, we attempted to comprehend how escapism determines the learning experience by estimating another simple linear regression model. The explained variable's percentage turned out to be low, as escapism only contributes 2.5% to explain the variability of the online social experience and the impact of this variable registered a positive and significant value (B= 0.159).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-2,922E-16	,059	1,000		
	Escapism	,159	,059	,008	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Learning experience

Looking at these three components and the results obtained via SPSS, it is possible to say that Escapism does contribute to explain the variability and has a major impact on the variable Live streaming experience.

5.5.2 Results obtained regarding the Intention to visit the city

Concerning the second simple linear regression,we tried to understand the extent to which Escapism determines the Intention to visit the city. The quality of adjustment (Adjusted R^2) was low, as escapism only contributes to 20.7%. The impact of this variable was negative, and although the absolute value was high (B= -0.455), it does not allow the validation of hypothesis H9 represented in the conceptual research model.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,412E-16	,053	1,000		
	Escapism	-,455	,054	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to vist the city

5.5.3 Results obtained regarding Esports events attendance

The last model to be studied, and also the most complex, measures how the perceptions of the entertaining atmosphere, social interaction, game drama, escapism, knowledge acquisition, loyalty to the team, live streaming experience and the intention to visit the city determine esports events attendance. The last model under analysis was also the one with the best quality of adjustment because of the variables contribution. 86.9% of the variation in esports events attendance can be positively and significantly explained (coefficients test: sig <0.05) by Escapism, Entertaining atmosphere, Learning experience (live streaming experience) and Social interaction. However, the variable with the least impact on e-sports events attendance is Learning experience (β= +0.057), and on the contrary Escapism is the dimension with the greatest impact on e-sports events attendance (β= +0.885). Finally, this justifies the research hypotheses (H1, H3 and H5) of the conceptual model (summarized in Figure 3).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4,047	,020		200,155	,000		
	Escapism	,807	,029	,885	28,189	,000	,501	1,996
	Entertaining atmosphere	,097	,037	,106	2,613	,009	,298	3,353
	Esports following	-,017	,027	-,019	-,617	,538	,544	1,837
	Online social experience	,034	,028	,038	1,206	,229	,510	1,960
	Learning experience	,052	,024	,057	2,163	,031	,713	1,402
	Social interaction	-,073	,031	-,080	-2,329	,021	,417	2,401
	Knowledge acquisition	-,006	,029	-,006	-,193	,847	,497	2,010
	Intention to visit the city	-,029	,026	-,032	-1,135	,257	,621	1,611
	Game drama	,005	,033	,005	,150	,881	,372	2,689
	Commitment to the team (loyalty)	-,015	,022	-,017	-,696	,487	,867	1,154
	Team support (loyalty)	,006	,025	,007	,241	,810	,670	1,493

Table 17 – Coefficients matrix

(Source: SPSS output)

Hypothesis	Results
H1: Entertaining atmosphere is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Validated
H2: Game Drama is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Not validated
H3: Social interaction is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Validated
H4: Knowledge acquisition is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Not validated
H5: Escapism is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Validated
H6: Live streaming experience is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Partially validated
H7: Loyalty to the team is positively associated with e-sports events attendance	Not validated
H8: Escapism is positively associated with online streaming experience	Validated
H9: Escapism is positively associated with the intention to do tourism	Not validated
H10: Intention to visit the city has a potential influence on e-sports events attendance	Not validated

Table 18 – Summary of the hypothesis results

(Source: Own elaboration using SPSS outputs)

VI. Conclusion

E-sport events have the potential to significantly boost tourism in host cities due to their unique combination of factors that attract a broad spectrum of visitors. Recognizing and utilize these factors can not only enhance the economic prospects of host cities but also provide an enriching experience for tourists seeking a diverse range of activities and cultural engagement during their travels. As such, understanding the influence of these factors on e-sport event attendance can provide valuable insights for both event organizers and tourism authorities looking to capitalize on this growing phenomenon.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the entertaining atmosphere, game drama, social interaction, knowledge acquisition, escapism, team loyalty, live streaming experience, and the intention to visit the city where the event is held influence e-sport events attendance. It is important to keep in mind that we used Pu et al.'s (2021) measuring instrument, the e-sports events attendance motivation scale (EEAMS), which analyzes and determines the most important motivators in event attendance in an e-sports environment.

Overall, the research objectives were addressed, several were the conclusions we reached with this investigation.

Firstly, and in regard to spectators' evaluations of the Entertaining atmosphere, it is concluded that, while all items were satisfactory (average value greater than 4.15 on a scale of 1 to 5), the excitement during participation in e-sport events was better evaluated by respondents. However, attending e-sports events because it is a fun way for spectators to spend their time, despite being high, was the lowest, which indicates that some spectators prefer to do other activities to spend their free time. According to the findings of this study, the entertaining atmosphere influences e-sports event attendance, which is consistent with the findings of Pu et al. (2021).

The presence of an actual venue not only enhances the spectating experience of spectators, but it also creates a platform for esports enthusiasts to find and support their community. While most esports games take place in a virtual environment enabled by informational technology such as the internet and media, the offline world cannot be ignored. Esports events' physical settings help generate an engaging and enjoyable atmosphere that is unique to offline events (Pu et al., 2021).

Social interaction has been extensively researched as a primary motivator for sports consumption. Attending e-sports events in person, on the other hand, provides different options for participants, particularly in terms of securing their online community and connecting with gamers with whom they generally interact virtually and remotely. Having said that the second construct to be investigated was the Social interaction during participation in physical e-sport events. In this way,

and even though the assessment of perceived value was the lowest (average value above 3.38 on a scale of 1 to 5), the item where respondents perceive more value is sharing the experience with other fans of e-sports. On the contrary, respondents perceive less value in participating in e-sport events with the aim of getting together with others. We concluded that social interaction influences e-sports event attendance, which is consistent with the findings of Pu et al. (2021).

With regard to Game drama, this proved to be the construct with the highest average rating (average value above 4.45 on a scale of 1 to 5). The item where respondents perceive more value is in the uncertainty of close e-sports games. These results were interesting because, according to Hamari and Sjöblom (2017), game drama does not seem to be significantly associated with e-sports watching frequency, which is similar to the results obtained in our research. Dramatic events have been suggested to improve viewership in the field of video game streaming (Karhulahti, 2016). Many popular e-sports games use information asymmetry to generate strategic tension between players as well as dramatic stress for the players and viewers.

As for Escapism it was concluded that, while all items were satisfactory (average value greater than 3.93 on a scale of 1 to 5), attending an e-sports event allows the spectator to take a break from their daily routine was the item better evaluated by the respondents and using e-sports events as a distraction from the spectators everyday activities was the item worst evaluated by the respondents. Once again, some spectators opt to have other distractions from their everyday activities since e-sports don't play a center role in their life. It was remarkable to discover that escapism also influences e-sports events attendance, considering the fact that Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) demonstrated, using the MSSC (Motivational Scale for Sport Consumption), how escapism encourages people to watch e-sports on the internet.

Regarding knowledge acquisition, all items were satisfactory (average value greater than 3.79 on a scale of 1 to 5), attending an e-sports event to increase the spectator understanding of the strategy by watching professional players compete with each other was the item better evaluated by the respondents, and going to the event to learn more about a determined game was the item worst evaluated. Generally, e-sports spectators and amateur players have been playing for years and already know the game they are going to watch, however, learning new tactics and watching their favourite players play gives them motivation to improve and be better. However we concluded that knowledge acquisiton does not influences e-sports event attendance, which is not consistent with the findings of Pu et al. (2021).

Traditional sports studies have studied the crucial role of team identification in both building psychological connections to the team and predicting sports fan consumption behavior (Wann & James 2019). The growing popularity of esports has resulted in a long list of popular teams as well as celebrity players with large global followings therefore we studied the Loyalty to the team

from the perspective of the spectator. All the items were satisfactory (average value greater than 3.41 on a scale of 1 to 5), and on the better-evaluated item we concluded that the respondents don't mind if their favourite team doesn't have any star players and the worst evaluated item showed that some respondents could easily change their beliefs regarding a certain team. According to Thompson et al. (2022) loyalty to a certain team has a significant positive relationship with visit intentions, this contradicts our findings that loyalty does not appear to be strongly connected with e-sports event attendance.

As for live streaming experience, all items were satisfactory (average value greater than 3.72 on a scale of 1 to 5) being the entertainment the item better evaluated and wanting to watch livestreams with the purpose to get in touch with the streamer the item worst evaluated. Even though there was not find any significance between live streaming experience and e-sports events attendance, the results were similar to Gros et al. (2017).

Lastly the Intention of visiting the city, and to answer our second research question, this variable showed promising results as all items were satisfactory (average value greater than 1.79 on a scale of 1 to 5), the item that respondents perceived more value was the one expressing their desire to visit the city during the event, also the majority of respondents disagreed with the affirmation "I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the city". This led us to assume that many fans will not only attend the event but will also tour the city which proves to be a strong motivational factor to attend e-sports events. It is also worth noting that 42.4% of respondents said they would be willing to travel more than 1401km (871 miles) to attend an e-sports event (see table 4).

However, despite the initial expectation that intention to visit the city might impact e-sports events attendance, the data does not provide sufficient evidence to support this hypothesis (H10). It is worth noting that the means and standard deviations alone might not fully capture the complexities of the relationship, emphasizing the importance of the statistical analysis conducted. The SPSS analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant link between the variables "intention to visit the city" and "e-sports events attendance". This shows that changes in people's intentions to visit the city are not connected with significant changes in their participation at e-sports events.

VII. Practical and theoretical implications

Practical implications

For managers and professionals working in the e-sports and tourism industries, this study offers intriguing and crucial insights. A single League of Legends tournament could generate over 100 million viewing hours, and e-sports has a 500 million strong virtual audience worldwide. As a result, attracting e-sport fans to events may be an appealing strategy for host cities in order to develop their service offering and aid in the post-pandemic recovery (Zenker & Kock, 2020). The e-sports industry is a significant, developing, and potentially lucrative target for tourism. Because event attendees also act as tourists by shopping, seeing the local sites, and dining out, this substantial fan base has the potential to make considerable contributions to both the economy and society (Gibson et al., 2003).

Theoretical implications

By offering subtle insights into the motivations of attendees and their potential influence on host cities, this thesis contributes to the increasing body of research on e-sports events. The results highlight the necessity for event planners and tourist authorities to take a variety of elements into account when organizing and publicizing e-sports events. Additionally, they challenge some previously held assumptions regarding the connection between variables like knowledge acquisition, team loyalty, and attendance, emphasizing the complexity of e-sports event attendance motives. To better understand these dynamics and their ramifications for both the e-sports business and the tourist sector, more study in this developing subject is necessary.

VIII. Limitations and further research suggestions

The data used in this research were self-reported, as is usual for online questionnaire research. The survey was released online mostly on platforms related to e-sports, but also on Twitter. The use of self-reported data may have an impact on the analysis results since those who replied may be more willing to participate in service activities and be more actively involved with the service overall. At the same time, human behaviour is uncontrollable; some participants may not even play e-games or watch e-sports and might struggle to understand certain survey questions. As a result, it is likely that the findings disregard the veracity of the less involved and active persons' perspectives. Although the majority of the answers were collected from people who play and watch e-sports, some of the answers to the questionnaire came from respondents who didn't play video games, which could lead to flaws in the data collection . A lot of Future research could address these challenges by combining polling data with data on actual usage and an appropriate target group to reinforce the topic's research more thoroughly.

The current study used one of the numerous research directions to investigate the motivations behind attending physical e-sports events. However, it is probable that it is not just the personal psychological background that makes it meaningful; also, the measurements and survey used here may not fully capture the spectrum of factors that can be relevant to the participation intention in e-sports activities. The idea that other variables are still at work in explaining why spectators may wish to attend e-sports events means that more research on the set of motivations could be conducted in the future, for example, collecting memorabilia, fans often attend live events to collect memorabilia such as autographs, merchandise, and event-specific items. These physical mementos hold sentimental value and serve as reminders of the event.

Additionally, other important aspect to keep in mind, it is the fact that our survey only questioned participants' intentions to attend; it did not inquire about their capacity to do so. Future studies on e-sports and event attendance may take into account the findings of our quantitative study, which showed that restrictions like geographic proximity play a role in the visit intentions of e-sport fans.

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Annexes

Annex 1 – Questionnaire

Questionário e-sports

Início do bloco: Bloco 1

Q19 Hello, my name is Diogo Silva, and I am currently getting my master's degree in hospitality & Tourism Management at ISCTE Business School in Lisbon. I appreciate your collaboration in responding to this questionnaire, which is crucial to conclude my degree.

This procedure takes approximately less than 10 minutes.

In addition to being voluntary, participation is anonymous and confidential. The data obtained is intended for statistical treatment only and no response will be analyzed or reported individually.

Thank you!

Fim do bloco: Bloco 1

Início do bloco: E-sports awareness

Q1 Do you play video games? If so, how many years have you been gaming?

- ○ 1-5 years (1)
- ○ 6-10 years (2)
- ○ 11-15 years (3)
- ○ 16 or more years (4)
- ○ I do not play video games (5)

Q2 How much do you spend on average monthly on virtual items in e-sports games?

- ○ 0€ (0$) (1)
- ○ 5-20€ (5-22$) (2)
- ○ 21-35€ (23-38) (3)
- ○ 36-50€ (39-55) (4)
- ○ 50€+ (55$+) (5)

Q3 Have you ever attended in person an e-sports event in your country or another country? If so, was the event in your country of residence?

- ○ Yes, in my country of residence. (1)
- ○ Yes, but in another country. (2)
- ○ Yes, in both, my country and other. (3)
- ○ No. (4)

Q4 How likely would you be interested in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future (up to 3 years)?

	Not at all likely									Very likely
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Click here ()											

Avançar para: Fim do inquérito Se How likely would you be interested in attending in person an e-sports event in the near future (u... [Click here] =

Q5 Nowadays, how much time do you spend watching online e-sports game events weekly (including but not limited to e-sports events, live games, videos, etc.)?

- ○ 0 hours (1)
- ○ Less than 1 hour (2)
- ○ 1-4 hours (3)
- ○ 5-8 hours (4)
- ○ 9-12 hours (5)
- ○ More than 12 hours (6)

Q6 What is the maximum distance you would be willing to travel to attend an e-sports event?

- ○ 0 - 100km (0 – 62 miles) (1)
- ○ 101 - 750km (63 – 466 miles) (2)
- ○ 751km - 1400km (467 – 870 miles) (3)
- ○ 1401km+ (871 miles+) (4)

Fim do bloco: E-sports awareness

Início do bloco: Motivations

Q24 The following information regarding motivations will be collected through a Likert scale of 5 levels, being 1 strongly disagree, 2 partially disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 partially agree, and 5 strongly agree.

Q1 Entertaining atmosphere

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I find attending e-sports events very exciting (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy the excitement surrounding an e-sports match (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy the high level of excitement during the e-sports competition. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy the novelty of watching e-sports in a stadium (4)	○	○	○	○	○
The opportunity to watch e-sports in a stadium is fun even if it is unconventional. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event because it is fun. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event because it is a fun way to spend my time. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event because of its entertainment value. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Q2 Social Interaction

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I attend the e-sports event as a way to get together with others. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
An important reason for me to attend the e-sports event is spending time with others. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event because it provides opportunities for me to meet with others. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the game with other e-sports fans. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Attending the e-sports event gives me a chance to bond with other e-sports fans. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
An important reason why I attend the e-sports event is to spend time with other fans. (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Q3 Game drama

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I like how intense e-sports matches can be. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy the uncertainty of close e-sports games. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I like e-sports games where the outcome is uncertain. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q4 Escapism

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
Attending e-sports events gives me a break from my routine. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Attending e-sports events provides me with a change of pace from what I regularly do. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Attending e-sports events provides a distraction from my everyday activities. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
c (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Following e-sports is one of the most satisfying things I do. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Compared to other sports, following e-sports is very interesting. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I find a lot of my life organized around following e-sports. (7)	○	○	○	○	○

Folowing e-sports has a central role in my life. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy discussing e-sports with friends. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
A lot of my time is organized around following e-sports. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Following e-sports says a lot about who I am. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
You can tell a lot about a person by seeing them follow e-sports. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
When I follow e-sports I can really be myself. (13)	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 Knowledge acquisition

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I attend e-sports events to increase my knowledge about the e-sports game. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend e-sports events to increase my understanding of the strategy by watching the e-sports competition. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend e-sports events to learn about the technical aspects by watching the e-sports game. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q6 Loyalty to the team

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I could never switch my loyalty from [team] even if my close friends were fans of another team. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team]. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event to cheer for my favorite player/team. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
The main reason I attend the e-sports event is to support my favorite player/team. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I attend the e-sports event to see the star players/teams. (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 Live streaming experience

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I watch live streams to be entertained. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I watch live streams to follow tournaments and events. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I watch live streams to be part of a community. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I get the desire to go to live e-sports events after watching live streams of them. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I watch live streams to get in touch with a streamer. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I watch live streams to learn new gaming strategies and techniques. (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 Intention to visit the city during the event

	1- strongly disagree (1)	2- partially disagree (2)	3- neither agree nor disagree (3)	4- partially agree (4)	5- strongly agree (5)
I organize my trip in order to stay more days to visit the city. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I will visit the city during the e-sports event. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I'll arrive earlier in the city to go visit it. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I just go because of the event, so I do not intend to visit the city. (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Fim do bloco: Motivations

Início do bloco: Personal information

Q1 What is your gender

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Prefer not to say (3)

Q2 How old are you

- ○ Under 18 years old (1)
- ○ 18-22 years old (2)
- ○ 23-26 years old (3)
- ○ 27-30 years old (4)
- ○ 31-40 years old (5)
- ○ 40+ years old (6)

Q3 Which of the following best describes your education level?

- ○ Less than high school diploma (1)
- ○ High school degree (or equivalent) (2)
- ○ Bachelor's degree (3)
- ○ Master's degree (4)
- ○ PhD (5)
- ○ Other (6)

Q4 Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- ○ Student (1)
- ○ Employed part-time (2)
- ○ Employed full-time (3)
- ○ Unemployed (4)
- ○ Self-employed (5)
- ○ Retired (6)
- ○ Unable to work (7)

Q5 Annual personal income: Please compare to the annual average personal income in your country.

- ○ Below average (1)
- ○ Average (2)
- ○ Above average (3)
- ○ High (4)

Annex 2 – Communalities and *loadings* of the principal components

Entertaining atmosphere

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Entertaining atmosphere - I find attending e-sports events very exciting	1,000	,812	,901
Entertaining atmosphere - I enjoy the excitement surrounding an e-sports match	1,000	,741	,861
Entertaining atmosphere - I enjoy the high level of excitement during the e-sports competition.	1,000	,757	,870
Entertaining atmosphere - I enjoy the novelty of watching e-sports in a stadium	1,000	,706	,840
Entertaining atmosphere - The opportunity to watch e-sports in a stadium is fun even if it is unconventional.	1,000	,684	,827
Entertaining atmosphere - I attend the e-sports event because it is fun.	1,000	,782	,885
Entertaining atmosphere - I attend the e-sports event because it is a fun way to spend my time.	1,000	,704	,839
Entertaining atmosphere - I attend the e-sports event because of its entertainment value.	1,000	,773	,879

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Social interaction

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Social Interaction - I attend the e-sports event as a way to get together with others.	1,000	,828	,910
Social Interaction - An important reason for me to attend the e-sports event is spending time with others.	1,000	,809	,900
Social Interaction - I attend the e-sports event because it provides opportunities for me to meet with others.	1,000	,801	,895
Social Interaction - I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the game with other e-sports fans.	1,000	,612	,782
Social Interaction - Attending the e-sports event gives me a chance to bond with other e-sports fans.	1,000	,729	,854
Social Interaction - An important reason why I attend the e-sports event is to spend time with other fans.	1,000	,789	,888

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Game drama

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Game drama - I like how intense e-sports matches can be.	1,000	,810	,900
Game drama - I enjoy the uncertainty of close e-sports games.	1,000	,854	,924
Game drama - I like e-sports games where the outcome is uncertain.	1,000	,867	,931

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Escapism

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Escapism - Attending e-sports events gives me a break from my routine.	1,000	,859	,927
Escapism - Attending e-sports events provides me with a change of pace from what I regularly do.	1,000	,832	,914
Escapism - Attending e-sports events provides a distraction from my everyday activities.	1,000	,835	,912

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Knowledge acquisition

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Knowledge acquisition - I attend e-sports events to increase my knowledge about the e-sports game.	1,000	,793	,890
Knowledge acquisition - I attend e-sports events to increase my understanding of the strategy by watching the e-sports competition.	1,000	,900	,949
Knowledge acquisition - I attend e-sports events to learn about the technical aspects by watching the e-sports game.	1,000	,880	,938

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Loyalty

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1	Component 2
Loyalty to the team - I would still be committed to [team] regardless of the lack of any star players.	1,000	,726	,242	,817
Loyalty to the team - I could never switch my loyalty from [team] even if my close friends were fans of another team.	1,000	,801	,211	,870
Loyalty to the team - It would be difficult to change my beliefs about [team].	1,000	,678	,276	,776
Loyalty to the team - I attend the e-sports event to cheer for my favorite player/team.	1,000	,808	,827	,353
Loyalty to the team - The main reason I attend the e-sports event is to support my favorite player/team.	1,000	,748	,817	,285
Loyalty to the team - I attend the e-sports event to see the star players/teams.	1,000	,799	,881	,154

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Live stream experience

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Live streaming experience - I watch live streams to be entertained.	1,000	,693	,875		
Live streaming experience - I watch live streams to follow tournaments and events.	1,000	,783	,768	,400	
Live streaming experience - I watch live streams to be part of a community.	1,000	,900	,742		,343
Live streaming experience - I get the desire to go to live e-sports events after watching live streams of them.	1,000	,764	,287	,899	
Live streaming experience - I watch live streams to get in touch with a streamer.	1,000	,891		,883	,318
Live streaming experience - I watch live streams to learn new gaming strategies and techniques.	1,000	,970	,272	,278	,905

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Intention to visit the city

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction	Component 1
Intention to visit the city during the event - I organize my trip in order to stay more days to visit the city.	1,000	,773	,879
Intention to visit the city during the event - I will visit the city during the e-sports event.	1,000	,720	,848
Intention to visit the city during the event - I'll arrive earlier in the city to go visit it.	1,000	,571	,756

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Annex 3 – Regressions results

M1.1

Dependent Variable: Esports following (Live stream experience).
Independent Variables: Escapism

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,409[a]	,167	,164	,91411698	1,862

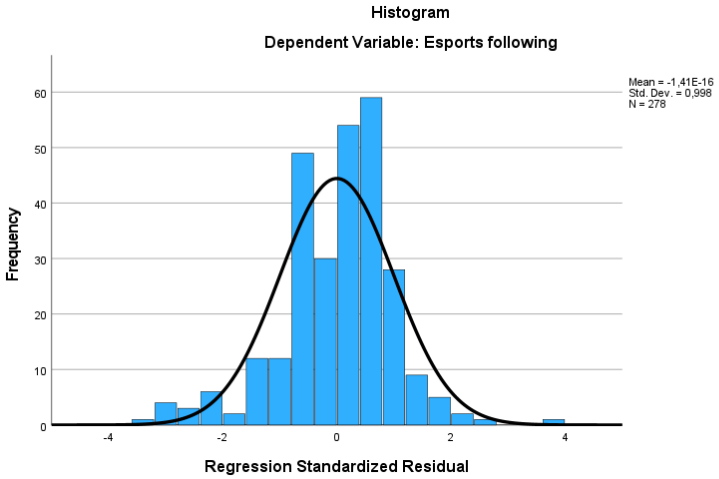
a. Predictors: (Constant), Escapism

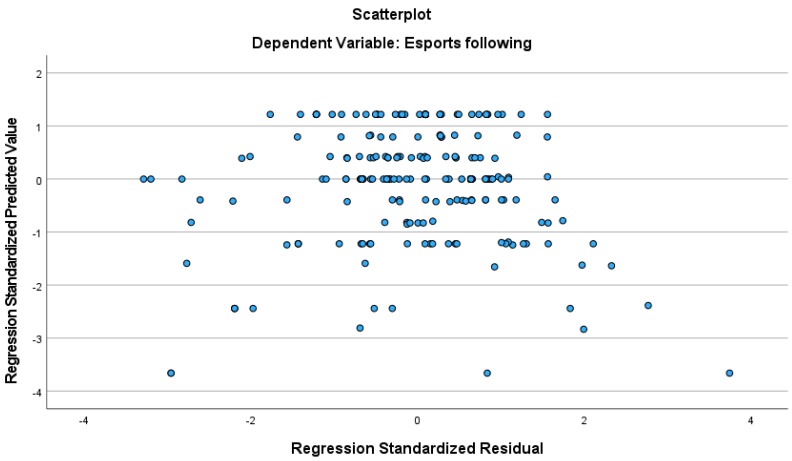
b. Dependent Variable: Esports following

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,108E-16	,055	1,000		
	Escapism	,409	,055	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Esports following





M1.2

Dependent Variable: Online social experience (Live stream experience)
Independent Variables: Escapism

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,317[a]	,101	,097	,95000319	1,122

a. Predictors: (Constant), Escapism

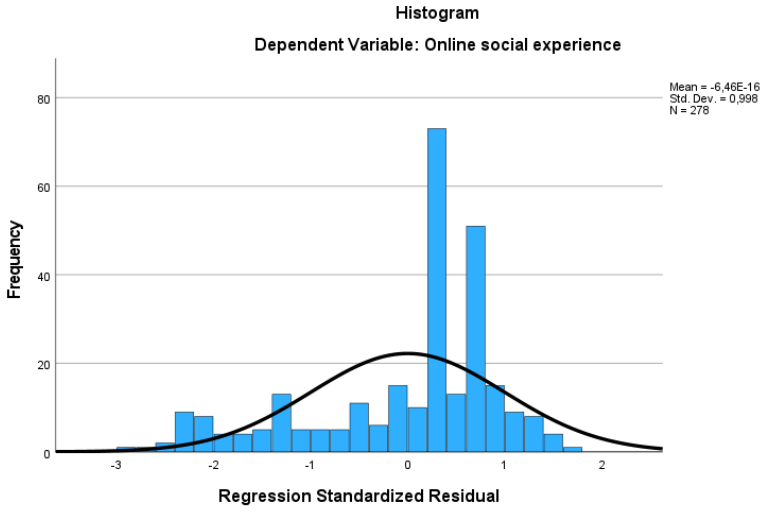
b. Dependent Variable: Online social experience

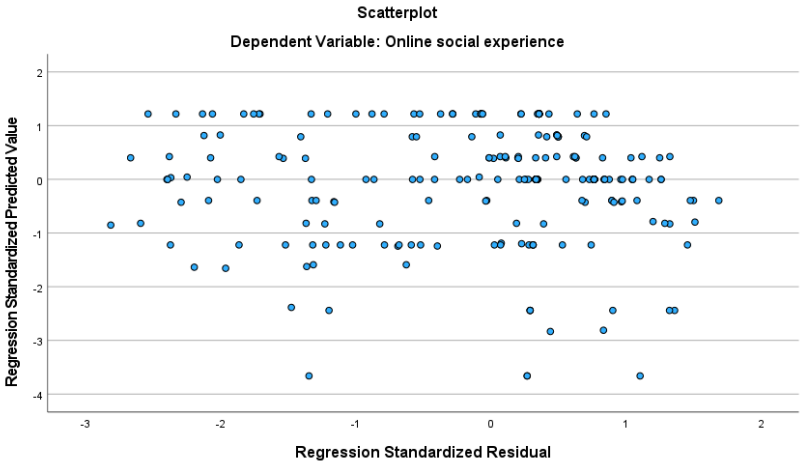
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,785E-16	,057	1,000		
	Escapism	,317	,057	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Online social experience

Charts





M1.3

Dependent Variable: Learning experience (Live stream experience)
Independent Variables: Escapism

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,159[a]	,025	,022	,98908695	2,038

a. Predictors: (Constant), Escapism

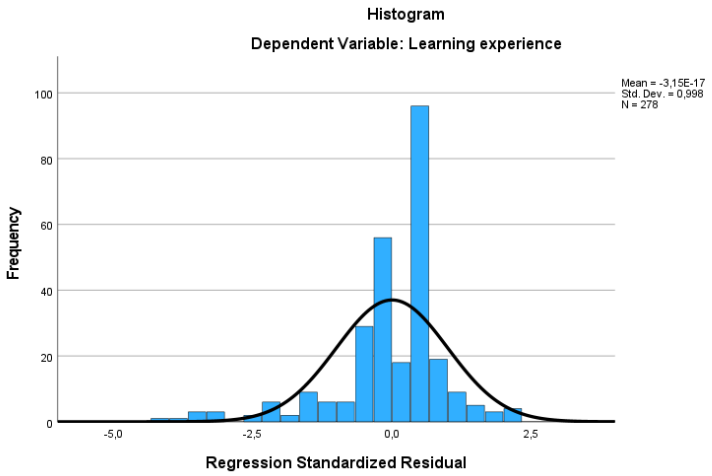
b. Dependent Variable: Learning experience

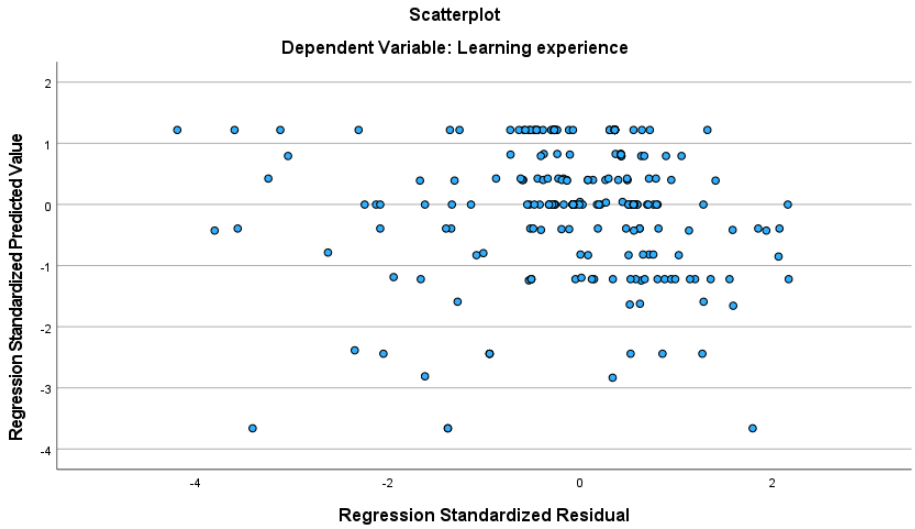
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-2,922E-16	,059	1,000		
	Escapism	,159	,059	,008	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Learning experience

Charts





M2

Dependent Variable: Intention to vist the city
Independent Variables: Escapism

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,455[a]	,207	,204	,89193409	1,777

a. Predictors: (Constant), Escapism

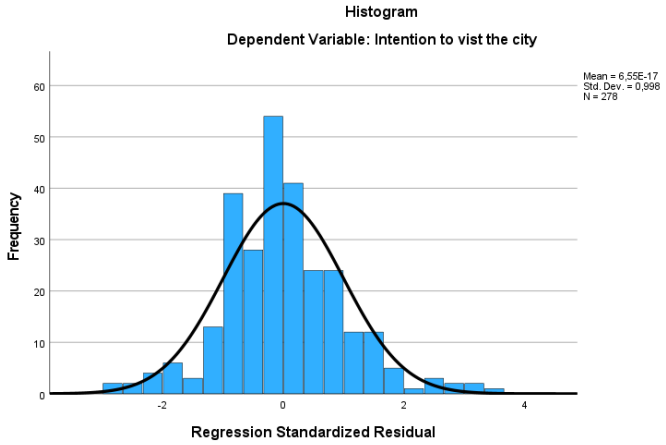
b. Dependent Variable: Intention to vist the city

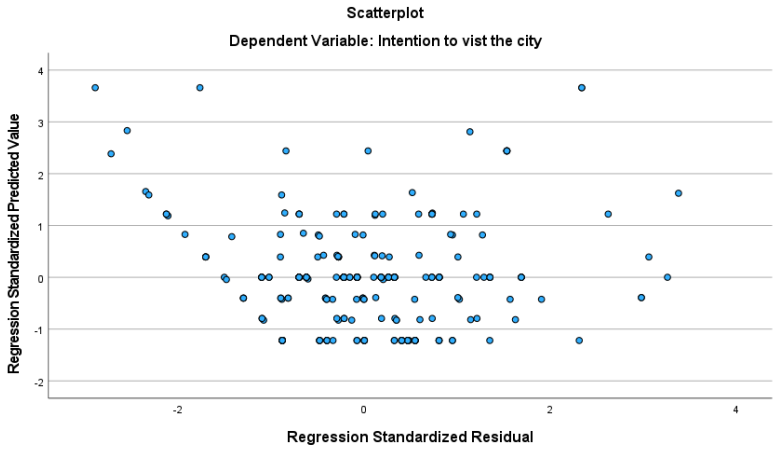
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,412E-16	,053	1,000		
	Escapism	-,455	,054	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to vist the city

Charts





M3

Independent Variables: Team support (loyalty), Commitment to the team (loyalty), Online social experience, Learning experience, Intention to visit the city, Esports following, Escapism, Game drama, Knowledge acquisition, social interaction, Entertaining atmosphere.
Dependent Variable: Esports events attendance

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,932[a]	,869	,863	,337	2,191

a. Predictors: (Constant), Team support (loyalty), Commitment to the team (loyalty), Online social experience, Learning experience, Intention to visit the city, Esports following, Escapism, Game drama, Knowledge acquisition, social interaction, Entertaining atmosphere

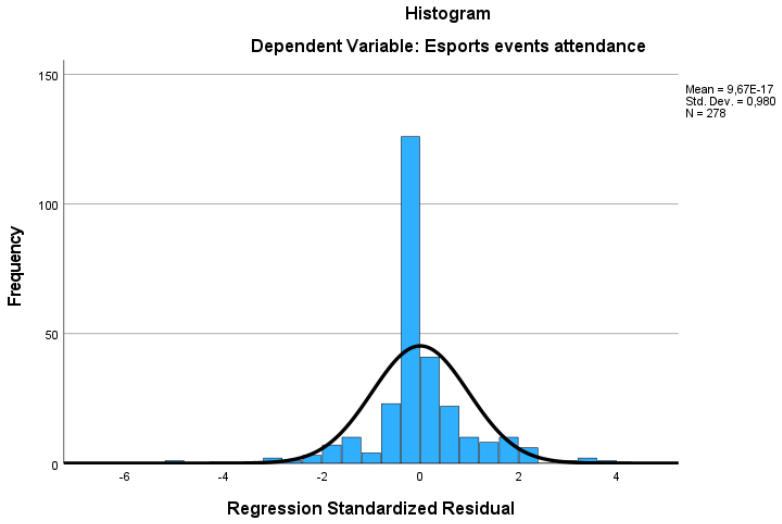
b. Dependent Variable: Esports events attendance

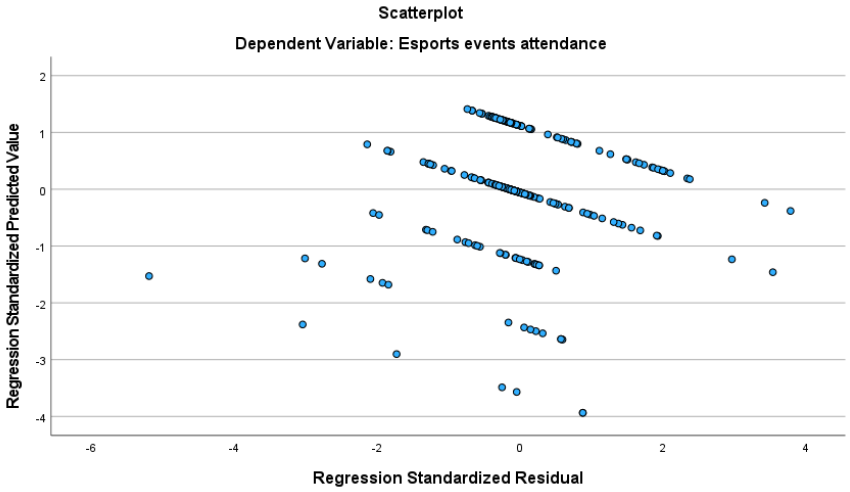
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4,047	,020		200,155	,000		
	Escapism	,807	,029	,885	28,189	,000	,501	1,996
	Entertaining atmosphere	,097	,037	,106	2,613	,009	,298	3,353
	Esports following	-,017	,027	-,019	-,617	,538	,544	1,837
	Online social experience	,034	,028	,038	1,206	,229	,510	1,960
	Learning experience	,052	,024	,057	2,163	,031	,713	1,402
	Social interaction	-,073	,031	-,080	-2,329	,021	,417	2,401
	Knowledge acquisition	-,006	,029	-,006	-,193	,847	,497	2,010
	Intention to visit the city	-,029	,026	-,032	-1,135	,257	,621	1,611
	Game drama	,005	,033	,005	,150	,881	,372	2,689
	Commitment to the team (loyalty)	-,015	,022	-,017	-,696	,487	,867	1,154
	Team support (loyalty)	,006	,025	,007	,241	,810	,670	1,493

a. Dependent Variable: Esports events attendance

Charts


Histogram
Dependent Variable: Esports events attendance
Mean = 9,67E-17
Std. Dev. = 0,980
N = 278
Frequency
150
100
50
0
-6
-4
-2
0
2
4
Regression Standardized Residual


Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: Esports events attendance
Regression Standardized Predicted Value
2
1
0
-1
-2
-3
-4
-6
-4
-2
0
2
4
Regression Standardized Residual