Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

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Introduction

At least 39 articles can be identified across the pre-selected journals for the sport marketing and sponsorship section (some articles are included here to avoid duplication of presentation) for the first half of 2023. These publications come from 5 different journals, and IJSMS is the journal with the most publications (17) followed by ESMQ (8 articles). Additionally, both JSM and JGSM have five publications, and SMR has four.

Advances in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Table 1 captures the variety of topics and themes addressed by the 39 articles and it can be seen that the majority of these publications (31) are about sport marketing related topics, and the rest about sport sponsorship. In line with previous issues, consumer and fan behaviour remain the most focused topics in sport marketing research with new context such as Esports and environment continuing to grow. With respect to sport sponsorship, articles continued to be published on topic areas related to sponsorship mechanisms, sponsorship effectiveness, sponsorship evaluation, ambush marketing, corporate social responsibility (CSR), etc.

Table 1. Selected Publication in Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Areas	Topics	Author(s)	Quantity
Sport marketing (31)	Athlete branding	Liu, Baker III & Leopkey (2003)	1
	Brand communication	Sears, Cianfrone & Kellison (2003)	1
	Consumer behavior	Aicher, Heere, Odio & Ferguson (2003) Kim, Lopez & Drayer (2003) Sveinson & Toffoletti (2003) Sveinson & Hoeber (2003) Glaveli, Papadimitriou, Karagiorgos & Alexandris (2003)	10

	Jones, Byon, Williams & Pedersen (2003)	
	Wang & Chiu (2003)	
	Kim, Park & Yoon (2003)	
	Dart (2003)	
	Park & Lee (2003)	
Environment protection and fan behavior	Kellison & Cianfrone (2003)	2
	Cayolla, Escadas, Biscaia, Kellison, Quintela & Santos (2003)	
Esports (consumer behavior)	Lefebvre, Djaballah & Chanavat (2003)*	3
	Rietz & Hallmann (2003)*	
	Chou, Jang, Ma, Chang & Byon (2003)*	
Fan behavior	Qian, Matz, Luo & Zvosec (2003)	10
	Asada & Kob (2003)	
	Schellenberg & Gaudreau (2003)	
	Tinson, Sinclair & Gordon (2003)	
	Sun, Chien & Weeks (2003)	
	Uhrich, Behrens, Kang, Matsuoka & Uhlendorf (2003)	
	Kim & Manoli (2003)	
	Latypova & Matsuoka (2003)	
	White, Williams, Dwyer & White (2003)	
	Kinoshita & Matsuoka (2003)	
Service quality review	Biscaia, Yoshida & Kim (2003)	1
Sport advertisements	Brison, Baker III, Byon & Evans (2003)	1
Sporting event giveaway items	Asada & Arai (2003)	1

	Sports betting	Dwyer, Shapiro & Drayer (2003)	1
Sport sponsorship (8)	Ambush marketing	Lin, Chen, Chou & Yeh (2003)	1
	CSR	Herold, Harrison & Bukstein (2003)	1
	Sponsorship mechanism（Esport）	Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo & Stallone (2003)*	
		Hwang, Watanabe & Nagel (2003)*	3
		Schönberner & Woratschek (2003)	
	Sponsorship effectiveness	Dos Santos, Sánchez-Franco, Torres-Moraga & Moreno (2003)	1
	Sponsorship evaluation	Jensen, Wakefield & Walkup (2003)	1
	Value co-creation	Cook, Biscaia, Papadas, Simkin & Carter (2003)	1
Total			39

Note: * refers to articles reviewed in detail.

With the rise of Esports and its growing economic and social influence, academic research around it has also seen steady growth in recent years. This issue will focus on this emerging sport and five studies related to marketing and sponsorship of Esports will be reviewed in detail.

In the first paper, Rietz and Hallmann (2023) conducted a systematic review on Esports to evaluate motivation and intention in online and on-site spectatorship. Based on an in-depth analysis of 25 empirical studies examining Esports spectatorship, the review showed significant antecedents for motivation to watch Esports online and on-site, and the detected motives may differ between motivation to spectate traditional sports or Esports and within Esports, but not all studies concluded similarities.

While the first article examines Esports from a spectatior's perspective, the second one focuses on players behaviour. Based on a online survey study with data collected from adult Esports players from China's Taiwan, Chou, et al (2023) seek to

explore flow and clutch together to measure psychological states and the impact on the purchase intention of in-game items, as well as the interacting effects of playing frequency, duration, and skill level with technical platforms (i.e. PC and mobile). The results show that, across PC and mobile participants, casual gamers with low playing frequency and duration have firm purchase intention when they have a clutch experience, but flow experience hinders their purchasing intention. In addition, hardcore gamers' (with high playing frequency and duration) psychological states are clearly distinguished according to technological platforms, as flow experience is the most effective on PC for their purchase intention, while both flow and clutch states are important on mobile devices.

In the third article, Lefebvre et al. (2023) conducted a thematic analysis to analyse how Esports divisions of professional clubs can be deployed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for Esports activities with 28 professional clubs from 24 countries. They identified the specific dynamic capabilities DCs, internal (i.e. microfoundations) and external factors which enable the deployment of Esports strategies. They also describe the outcomes for each step of the deployment process, which leads to the building of a preliminary model of professional football clubs' involvement in Esports.

The final two articles studied Esports under sponsorship context. In their article published in IJSMS, Hwang et al.(2023) aim to examine the impacts of brand congruity of in-game brand placement on Esports consumers' implicit and explicit memory. Using an experimental design (N =224) with an automobile racing game, NASCAR Heat 5. the study revealed that ads on virtual billboards in the video game primed participants to create an implicit memory. In addition, in-congruent brands that were not very familiar to gamers provided greater impact than congruent brands.

In the final article, Huettermann et al. (2023) seek to evaluate Esports consumers' perceptions of non-endemic sponsorship by adapting a well established sport sponsorship model to the context of Esports to test key relationships' salience to sponsors. They find that nonendemic sponsors can benefit from Esports team sponsorship through enhanced attitudes, perceived goodwill, and product purchase intentions. In addition, the study shows that there is only a small effect of Esports brand attitude on attitude toward the sponsor, yet a larger effect on perceived goodwill and product purchase intentions.

Despite growing scholarly work devoted to Esports, there are still fundamental questions about how the field is unfolding (Reitman et al., 2020), and it remains an area with great research opportunities. Future studies around marketing and sponsorship of Esports should continue to explore the differences between Esports and traditional sports and advance our understanding of the uniqueness of this emerging sport (if it can be called a sport).

Reference

Reitman,J., Anderson-Coto,M., Wu,M., Lee,J. and Steinkuehler,C. (2020). Esports Research: A Literature Review. Games and Culture 15 (1): 32-50.

Annotated bibliography

Lefebvre, F., Djaballah, M., & Chanavat, N. (2023). The deployment of professional football clubs' Esports strategies: a dynamic capabilities approach. European Sport Management Quarterly, 1– 19. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1856165

In this study, Lefebvre, Djaballah, and Chanavat (2023) investigate the deployment of Esports strategies by professional football clubs through the lens of the dynamic capabilities (DC) framework. The researchers address the gap in understanding how football brands can effectively leverage Esports activities. Employing a qualitative approach, the study involves a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for Esports activities across 28 professional clubs from 24 countries. The findings highlight the essential internal and external factors that facilitate the deployment of Esports strategies. The study also outlines the strategic objectives emerging from the sensing phase, the strategic choices clubs made to

seize Esports opportunities, and the creation of new value sources. The implications emphasize the need for Esports managers to precisely define their strategic objectives, optimize resource allocation (including Esports players), and integrate Esports more cohesively into the core value chain of football clubs. This study contributes to a preliminary model for professional football clubs' engagement in the Esports domain.

Huettermann, M., Trail, G. T., Pizzo, A. D., & Stallone, V. (2023). Esports sponsorship: An empirical examination of Esports consumers' perceptions of non-endemic sponsors. Journal of Global Sport Management, 8(2), 524–549. https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2020.1846906

Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo, and Stallone (2023) explore the effectiveness of sponsorships by non-endemic organizations within the Esports domain. By adopting a sports sponsorship model developed by Biscaia et al. to the context of Esports, the researchers aim to evaluate the relationships between Motivation for Sport Consumption and Purchase Intention to Sponsor Products. Through empirical examination of 382 participants, the study reveals that non-endemic sponsors stand to gain from sponsoring Esports teams, leading to improved Esports brand attitudes, perceived goodwill, and intentions for product purchase. Notably, the study identifies a limited effect of Esports brand attitude on sponsor attitude but a more substantial influence on purchase intentions. This finding suggests that firms with restricted marketing budgets can harness increased goodwill and purchase intentions by engaging in low-cost sponsorship opportunities with emerging Esports teams. Overall, the study contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of Esports sponsorships and highlights potential benefits for non-endemic sponsors in the rapidly evolving Esports landscape.

Rietz, J., & Hallmann, K. (2023). A systematic review on spectator behavior in Esports: why do people watch? International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 24(1), 38–55. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-12-2021-0241

Rietz and Hallmann (2023) present a comprehensive systematic review for investigating spectator behavior, offering insights into the psychology of consumer behavior in both Esports live streaming and event attendance and providing a clear understanding of the factors influencing consumer behavior in both online and on-

site engagement in the rapidly growing field of Esports. Employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (PRISMA), the researchers chose SCOPUS and Google Scholar as the social science databases for data collection. Twenty-five papers met the inclusion criteria, the majority taking quantitative approaches, establishing theoretical frameworks to examine online Esports spectatorship. The findings reveal significant motivators for engaging with Esports content, including fanship, tension release, entertainment, escapism, and unique features like chat and direct communication. Despite the extensive analysis, no conclusive consensus emerges regarding the distinctions between online, on-site Esports and traditional sports spectatorship. The authors suggest the potential for a comparative approach to explore contextual, structural, and demographic cues that may result in an improved grasp of the motivation behind Esports spectatorship.

Hwang, Y., Watanabe, N. M., & Nagel, M. (2023). Effects of in-game brand congruity on Esports consumers' implicit and explicit memory. International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 24(1), 108–128. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-03-2022-0085

Hwang, Watanabe, and Nagel (2023) explore the impact of in-game brand congruity on implicit and explicit memory among Esports consumers. Employing a 2x2x2 experimental design with NASCAR Heat 5, an automobile racing game, the research engages 224 participants in assessing the effects of brand congruity on memory. The authors utilize the statistical analyses of MANOVA and logistic regressions to test hypotheses. The findings reveal that advertisements on virtual billboards in video games prime participants to develop implicit memory. Surprisingly, incongruent brands unfamiliar to gamers demonstrate a more pronounced impact than congruent brands. This study contributes novel insights by being the first to examine implicit and explicit memory in the Esports domain. Furthermore, the research addresses previous inconsistencies by investigating the role of brand congruity. However, future research should further consider the effects of time duration, ethnicity, gender, and the generalization of findings on causal inference.

Chou, S., Jang, W., Chun, S., Chang, C., & Byon, K. K. (2023). Is mobile gaming a new pillar of Esports? Exploring players' in-game purchases in PC and mobile platforms by using flow and clutch. International Journal of Sports

Chou, Jang, Chun, Chang, and Byon (2023) utilize flow theory to examine the interaction effects of playing frequency, playing duration, and players' skill levels on both PC (League of Legends - LOL) and mobile (League of Legends: Wild Rift - LOLWR) versions of the same Esports title. Based on data collected from 930 valid responses, the researchers employ confirmatory factor analysis and multiple regression (PROCESS macro, Model 3) for analysis. The study yields two significant findings. First, for both PC and mobile participants, casual gamers with low playing frequency and duration demonstrate a high intention to make in-game purchases when they experience a clutch scenario. However, the flow experience impedes their purchase intention. Second, hardcore gamers with high playing frequency and duration display distinct psychological states across platforms. For the PC platform, flow experience significantly influences purchase intention, while both flow and clutch states have a pronounced influence on purchase intention in the mobile platform. It is worth noting that further studies should distinguish the concepts of flow and clutch through more refined and precise measurements.