

How to Measure the Intention of Watching Offline eSports Games: From the eSports Fan-centric Perspective

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ABSTRACT

As an emerging competition, eSports is currently receiving a growing amount of attention, but relatively little research has been conducted on the likelihood of offline watching. Using the push-pull theory, we propose and test a research model of fans' perception-centered offline game-watching of eSports matches. Half of the 399 eSports fans we surveyed were from Korea ($n = 200$) and the other half were from China ($n = 199$). The results indicate that the entertainment atmosphere has the greatest impact on the intention to watch a match offline, followed by the intention to consume beforehand. There is no direct relationship between offline escapism and offline match-watching. In addition, the diverse personalities of fans affected the entertainment atmosphere and the intention to consume beforehand. This research has theoretical and practical implications for the growth of the eSports offline viewing and eSports tourism industries.

Keywords: eSports, Sports, Fan identification, Push-Pull Theory, Sports Mega Events, eSports Tourism, eSports Industry

I . Introduction

Many scholars have defined what eSports. According to the foundational definition of sport proposed by Guttmann (1978), modern sport is physical, competitive, and organized play rather than spontaneous games, non-competitive games, and in-

tellectual competitions. Suits (1988) used the nature of games to generate the definition of sport. In his view, eSports is a sport that pursues inauthentic goals in an inauthentic way. The game requires a large following and stability. Hemphill (2005)'s article endorsed this idea and added that the characteristics of a sport are related to its institutionalization as

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a sporting practice. Hollist (2015) argued that “eSports” is a professional video game competition. The competition must be watched by an audience on site. Funk et al. (2018) and Jenny et al. (2017) defined eSports as organized competitions in their studies. The European Sport Charter of the Council of Europe defines sport legally as all forms of physical activity, whether through casual or organized participation. The purpose is to express or improve physical and mental health, establish social connections, or achieve competitive success.

The eSports industry has grown so rapidly over the past few years that there are now hundreds of professional league regimes for a wide variety of different games. There are profound normative implications to the recognition of gamers as elite athletes. Professional gamers are employed by clubs, where they undergo training under the supervision of managers and coaches and are paid for their labor (Rosell Llorens, 2017). Top professional leagues tend to attract more attention from eSports enthusiasts. According to a report by Newzoo (2021), the global eSports market generated \$1,084 million in revenue in 2021, an increase of 14.5% from 2020. As of 2021, the average revenue contributed by eSports enthusiasts (fans who watch eSports more than once a month) amounted to \$4.63.¹⁾

It is difficult to fully compare eSports viewing offline to traditional sports in terms of acceptance by all ages (due to limitations based on age or game content limitations). eSports is a counterculture or alternative to mainstream sports. For now, the status of eSports as a sport has not been recognized by world class sports organizations such as the Olympic Committee (Nikas and Poulaki, 2021). A break-

through point for traditional sports would be the inclusion of eSports as a sport to expand its acceptance. The first step toward recognizing eSports at some major integrated sports events has already been taken. The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) officially announced in 2020 that eSports would be a medal sport at the 2022 Asian Games in China (Graham, 2017). Eight games have become official events, including FIFA, PUBG, Mobile and Arena of Valor, Dota 2, League of Legends, Dream Three Kingdoms 2, HearthStone, and Street Fighter V (Olympics, 2021). Scholars have also become increasingly interested in offline eSports tournaments and eSports tourism in recent years.

Sports tourism is the act of people leaving their primary place of residence to participate in sports activities as participants or spectators, either casually or in an organized manner for non-commercial or commercial reasons (Gibson, 1998). Weed and Bull (2004) classified sports tourism at the level of travel purpose, motivation, and consumption level. They identified five types of sports tourism: sports with tourism content, sports for tourism, sports training, sports events, and luxury sports tourism. The format and the unique nature of eSports competitions are similar to traditional sports competitions. Both are in line with the “sporting event,” i.e., the event is the main motivation for travel for people, either as spectators or as participants (DİLEK, 2019). The eSports tourism is centered on watching (eSports fans) or participating in (professional eSports players) tournaments as a tourism event. Hinch and Higham (2011) proposed to simplify sports tourism activities into active and passive sports tourism. Active sports tourism refers to participation in sports activities, while passive sports tourism is about the attendance (of professional players and staff) and the watching (of all spectators involved) towards sports events.

1) <https://newzoo.com/insights/trend-reports/newzoo-global-games-market-report-2021-free-version>

Thus, eSports tourism emphasizes not participation in the sport itself, but the eSports enthusiast who comes to the site as an active spectator to enjoy the game and related activities and to be a creator of the atmosphere (Lee et al., 2017; Oh et al., 2007; Uhrich and Koenigstorfer, 2009; Yoshida et al., 2021).

Many studies of tourism and sports tourism literature made reference to the push and pull theory, which reflects the demand and supply aspects of travel decisions (Formica and Uysal, 2006). The push and pull theory captures the division of travel decisions into demand (source for consumers) and supply (attractiveness of the destination) aspects with a focus on sightseeing destinations (Formica and Uysal, 2006). In their study, Burkart and Medlik (1981) considered travel as a desire and demand, while the scenery and services offered by the destination fulfill the consumer's psychological expectations. Therefore, it is important to understand which attributes of a destination attract consumers (Pearce, 1982; You et al., 2000). To further refine the purpose of travel, Burkart and Medlik (1981) divided travelers' intentions into two categories. One group of travelers consisted of those who traveled to enjoy the unknown, to have an adventure, or to experience a different culture. The other group had a specific purpose for traveling and they often traveled with the greatest goal of enjoying better tourist facilities and specific services. Dann (1977) proposed a two-tier scheme of factors that motivate travelers, namely "push factors" and "pull factors." He argued that these two factors could describe two different stages of travel or dichotomize the key factors in the travel decision process of tourists. In Dann's subsequent studies on travel destination impressions, it was mentioned that the pull and push motivations associated with destination attractiveness and potential travelers come into play as potential tourists approach their final destination of choice

(Dann, 1981; Dann, 1996). Jamrozny and Uysal (1994) conducted an empirical study using the Push-Pull theory proposed by Dann (1977) on the motivations of German tourists traveling abroad. The results of the study show that both motivations stimulate tourists to make destination choices and the push motivation (tourists' intrinsic needs and desires) is more important than the pull motivation (attributes and attractiveness of the destination).

The factors that attract eSports fans to watch online and offline matches are not strictly separated (some factors differ only in degree), and previous research on the application of traditional sports measures to investigate eSports game viewing has yielded unsatisfactory results. For example, in Sjöblom et al. (2020), the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) was found to provide a limited indication of respondents' willingness to attend live eSports events. The study by Pu et al. (2022) measured eight motivations for participating in live events. However, since the images and content of eSports matches can be delivered indiscriminately on TV broadcasts or live-streaming platforms, we believe that the importance of Knowledge Acquisition (acquiring knowledge and skills for eSports), Game Drama (emotions due to the uncertainty of the match outcome), and other factors that often appear in the motivation for online eSports viewing should be revisited. As we have emphasized, some of the influences that can be multiplied through the scene should be given higher priority for discussion.

While eSports consumption relies heavily on the internet, an increasing number of offline events are enabling it to become more physical (Leon et al., 2020). As a result, eSports has evolved into a multi-faceted industry with intra-industry competition (i.e., leagues of different games and even regions within games), event tourism (within leagues, world-class

tournaments, and integrated games of eSports) and a comprehensive cultural and creative industry (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Xiao, 2020). Associations between host cities, organizing companies, and sponsors can turn face-to-face events into tourist attractions depending on their size and location. It is important to note that major eSports events serve not only professional athletes and eSports enthusiasts, but also key members or stakeholders in the industry (Lokhman et al., 2018). The motivation to participate in offline eSports competitions helps tournament organizers and tourism organizers to have a more detailed insight into the needs of eSports enthusiasts. Thus, synthesizing what has been previously described, there are three objectives of this study: (1) Applying the push and pull theory to test eSports destination visitation intentions. (2) Developing and validating a model incorporating visitation intentions and related consumption intentions for watching eSports offline. (3) Analyzing whether differences in fan identification affect the model's route.

II. Research Background

2.1. Offline eSports Games and Consumption by Fans

In general, researchers believed eSports revenue consists of five components: (1) Sponsorship; (2) Advertising; (3) Media rights; (4) The fees of game publishing and (5) ticket and merchandise revenue. Based on these five components and the number of spectators, the revenue generated by eSports is growing year by year (DİLEK, 2019; Pizzo et al., 2018). The current percentage of sponsorship revenue is significantly ahead of other types of revenue. However, due to the development of the global

eSports organizing committee and the continuous improvement of the eSports league system in each global region, the number of fans exposed to eSports competitions is increasing every year, especially in Asia. While sponsorship revenue will decline slightly over the next few years as epidemic restrictions are lifted and eSports organizations and clubs continue to diversify (one of the most significant signs of a healthy eSports market).

From the perspective of the individual fan, according to Funk et al. (2009) and Wang et al. (2020), the motivations of sport consumers could be conceptualized as push (i.e., internal) and pull (i.e., external) factors. The push factor is the driving force that comes from the desire to satisfy personal needs and wishes. Pull factors, on the other hand, tend to represent attributes of products or services offered to consumers by the external environment (Braunstein et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2003). Qian et al. (2020) explicitly categorized thirteen factors into push and pull in a study related to online eSports viewing. The findings suggest that while most of the current research focuses on eSports enthusiasts' demand (push factors) on eSports content consumption, pull factors also have a significant positive impact on eSports consumption outcomes (commitment and gaming behavior).

Sports fans have powerful emotional reactions to sports events, especially those who identify with a particular team. The success or failure of a high-value team can have dramatic effects on emotional states such as joy, happiness, satisfaction, and anxiety for those who have strong psychological attachments to their team (Melnick and Wann, 2011). More and more eSports enthusiasts choose to attend "real" eSports games in order to escape everyday life and experience emotions different from those of everyday life.

2.2. eSports Fan Identification

Fans are often considered to be people who are obsessed with one team, person, show, or brand, etc. It is common for fans to actively seek cultural interactions with a particular society (Pease and Zhang, 2001). The identification of sports fans with teams and players may lead to new forms of social interaction (Melnick and Wann, 2011). Athletic identity can strengthen social bonds and reduce depression and alienation while increasing self-esteem, contributing to mental health (Keaton and Gearhart, 2014). To assess the driving factors that influence attendance at professional sporting events, Pease and Zhang (2001) developed the Spectator Motivation Scale. In a rigorous measurement process that included qualitative research, content validity tests, dependent analysis, internal consistency, reliability, and predictive validity tests, four key enablers (fan identity, team image, health appeal, and entertainment value) were identified as key enablers.

Experts in marketing have recognized the significance of motivation in sports and related events. Fans of eSports are motivated by different aspects of the experience and have unique reasons for watching live games. The majority of sports consumption research concurs that consumer behavior is driven by their intentions and motivations (Paek et al., 2021). Wann et al. (1995) regarded the introduction of the Sports Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) as a method for measuring the motivation of traditional sports fans. Wann et al. (2001) measured sports fan consumption motivations in a follow-up study by comparing male to female, individual to team, aggressive to non-aggressive, and intrinsic fan to extrinsic fan. The results of the three studies differ to varying degrees. Trail and James (2001) created the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) scale, which consists

of nine important factors. In a subsequent comparison of the variables, co-occurring variables (fans of the team, number of games attended, and team identification) and expected variables (fans of the team, loyalty to the team, increase in related merchandise purchases, and increase in media consumption) were measured in relation to these variables. These four variables (team identification, loyalty, merchandise purchases, and fan status) were highly correlated with the majority of the dependent variables.

2.3. Venues as Tourist Destinations

Many tourism research publications mention the Push-Pull theory. Scholars characterize push factors as those that affect innate desires (Kim and Lee, 2002). The psychosocial motivations of consumers drive them to engage in specific goal-oriented behaviors and represent their innate desires. Pull factors, on the other hand, are attributes of a destination-related factor. Consumers are typically attracted to objective and tangible things (e.g., architecture, cuisine, tourist attractions) or intangible things (e.g., upcoming events, culture, atmosphere) (Al Emadi et al., 2021; Dwyer and Kim, 2011; Wang et al., 2020). This study analyzes push and pull factors in relation to tournament venues (and local atmosphere), i.e. eSports tourism destinations. Currently, competitions are held at various scales and by various decision-making bodies. The majority of the time, top level eSports tournaments are held at locations selected by the gaming companies. The organizing committee of the national or regional league determines the locations of regular games in each region (Nikas and Poulaki, 2021).

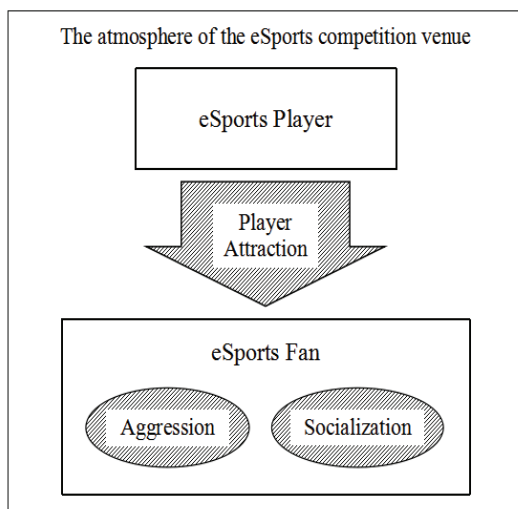
By analyzing retail store cases, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) demonstrated that individual tendencies can affect people's emotional states, behavioral

responses, and evaluations of their surroundings. Additionally, consumers can be guided by the storage of these stimuli. Numerous studies have demonstrated that spectators are motivated to engage in related activities by the emotionally engaging atmosphere of sporting events (Chen et al., 2013). Therefore, people can actively choose positive/negative emotions and perceive themselves to be dominant/subordinate in various situations (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Urich and Koenigstorfer, 2009). The ambience experience of a stadium is frequently regarded as its primary offering (Kotler, 1973). Urich and Koenigstorfer (2009) argued that the ambience of a stadium results from the emotional responses of sports fans to all environmental stimuli. A variety of stimuli, some of which are not completely predictable and uncontrollable, are thought to contribute to the atmosphere in stadiums. As part of their participation in group behaviors, active spectators cheer loudly and wave cheer banners at sporting events. The actions themselves are often closely linked to key events like victory moments, goals, or tension

as the score closes (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003). As shown in <Figure 1>, players and spectators interact more effectively in a live setting than when they view a gaming match online.

Sports tourism attractiveness factors are often related to destination attractiveness and imagery studies (Byon and Zhang, 2010). It is important to analyze the characteristics and attractiveness of destination imagery. With the attributes of a place and its overall impression in consumers' minds, destination images describe how consumers perceive a particular place based on its social, historical, psychological, and functional characteristics (Teodorescu et al., 2012). Research on eSports game watching has increased dramatically since 2016. Most scholars have explored the multiple reasons why eSports fans watch the games, which include both online viewing of eSports matches (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Macey and Hamari, 2018; Qian et al., 2020; Xiao, 2020) and offline viewing (Scholz, 2020; Sjöblom et al., 2020). There are also studies of eSports tournament marketing strategies and practices (Hollist, 2015; Scholz, 2020). There is no clear distinction between what attracts eSports fans to watch online or offline matches, and some factors differ only in degree.

Previous research has measured the motivation to watch eSports games online, as shown in <Table 1> (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Pizzo et al., 2018; Pu et al., 2022; Xiao, 2020). Pizzo et al. (2018) selected three sports/eSports as subjects of investigation: K League Soccer (Traditional Soccer), FIFA Online 3 (Sport-Themed eSports), and StarCraft (Real-Time Strategy). In the similarity comparison study (15 elements × 3 groups), only five groups (11.1%) revealed valid differences between the two items within the same element. As a result, there isn't much of a distinction between the reasons people watch traditional sports and eSports on the same point. In reality,



<Figure 1> The Atmosphere of the eSports Competition Venue

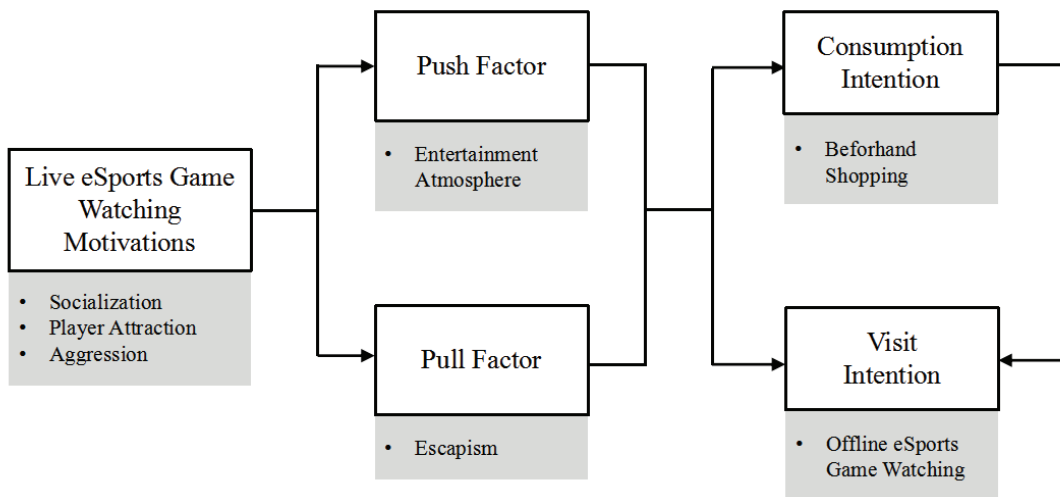
<Table 1> Online eSports Game Watching Motivation Factor Items

	Hamari and Sjöblom (2017)	Pizzo et al. (2018)	Xiao (2020)	Pu et al. (2022)
Achievement	Vicarious achievement	Vicarious achievement	Achievement	
Aesthetics	Aesthetics	Aesthetics		
Aggression	Enjoyment of aggression	Enjoyment of aggression		
Community support				Community support
Drama	Drama	Drama	Drama	Drama
Embody				Embodied fantasy
Entertainment		Entertainment value		Entertainment atmosphere
Environment		Wholesome environment		
Escapism	Escape		Escapism	Escape
Excitement		Excitement		
Fandom				Team/Player fandom
Family		Family bonding		
Interested in eSports		Interested in eSports		
Interested in player		Interested in player		
Knowledge	Acquisition of knowledge	Acquisition of knowledge	Knowledge	Knowledge acquisition
Novelty	Novelty			
Physical attraction	Physical attractiveness	Physical attractiveness		
Role model		Role model		
Skill	Skill of the Players/ athletes	Skill of the athletes		
Socialization	Social interaction	Social opportunities	Social	Social Interaction

the effective factors for each of the three items differed depending on the sport. To understand offline eSports viewing motivation in a targeted manner, it is necessary to identify the factor that best represents the activity's characteristics.

As a result of the aforementioned logic, we tested whether the Push-Pull theory, widely used in tourism, can be applied to eSports game destination visits based on the aforementioned logic. In order to determine whether the Push-Pull theory can play a significant mediating role between eSports content

consumption and tournament site visits, we placed it in between these two phenomena. Additionally, we found that scholars have not paid much attention to the offline consumption of eSports games. Traditional sports activities as an instrumental part of event tourism have now received extensive scholarly attention (Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008; Guttman, 1985), and we argue that with eSports as an emerging sport, the eSports industry will innovate in the future by mimicking the traditional sports model (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Hollist,



<Figure 2> Conceptual Model

2015; Jenny et al., 2017). Therefore, we believe that eSports fans need to be studied in terms of their willingness to consume. According to studies on the entertainment atmosphere, retailers and event destination stayed at traditional sporting events are important factors to consider (Uhrich and Koenigstorfer, 2009; Wilhelm, 2020), but few studies have examined actual consumption at eSports destinations. Additionally, offline eSports viewing is currently experiencing rapid growth and expansion. Brandes et al. (2008) identified the local sports star effect, in which local sports stars can drive increased home attendance, and sports superstars can attract large crowds to the venue for any game (home or away).

III. Hypothesis Development and Research Model

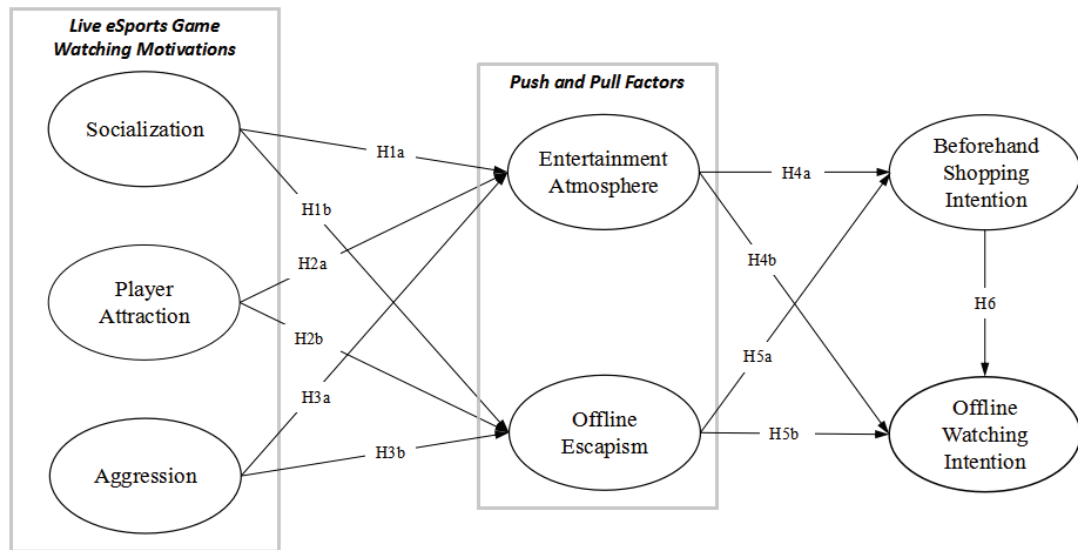
3.1. Research Model

<Figure 3> demonstrates the research model proposed in this study. The model consists of seven

main hypotheses derived from the literature discussed in the previous section. According to the model, the venue’s Push-Pull factors, prior consumption intentions, and intentions to watch offline eSports matches are related to motivation to watch eSports matches. Previous studies have confirmed that socialization and aggression have a positive effect on watching online eSports tournaments (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Pizzo et al., 2018; Xiao, 2020). However, the influence of mediating effects from venues and hosting locations was added to our study (Lee and Schoenstedt, 2011).

3.2. eSports Consumption Factors

The social sustainability of eSports events can be attributed to the satisfaction of the needs of the individual fans who participate in the events. Offline eSports tournaments are perceived as unique and memorable from a subjective perspective. Involvement in this activity satisfies some psychological needs of vanity and snobbery (Uhrich and Koenigstorfer, 2009). Based on the study by Hall et al. (2010), specta-



<Figure 3> Research Model

tors of sporting events need to be social and enjoy activities that are both fun and comfortable. Fans may be in the company of friends they already know, or they may share their passion with other fans at the venue, or even make new friends (Nyström et al., 2022).

Also contributing to the atmosphere of a competition is the presence of a star player (Gladden and Funk, 2002). Athletes who compete at a high level are more attractive to fans. “Power of star” heightens fans’ concentration and interest in the game. A high level of public familiarity influences attendance at sporting events positively (Bjelac and Radovanovic, 2003; Hall et al., 2010). Although spectators supporting different teams or players share the same identity as those unfamiliar with the activity (they are collectively referred to as eSports fans), they can behave differently, for example by engaging in competitive psychology or provocation. As Turner et al. (1987) argued, individuals activate their social identities based on their immediate surroundings. They will identify themselves as a group rather than as

individuals. While performing highly uniform behaviors, they will closely associate their behavior with that of the group, and others will perceive its members as a collection of individuals rather than a single entity (Asada and Ko, 2019). In their study of the hosting of eSports tournaments in cities and visitor perceptions, Leon et al. It was discovered that meeting people with common interests and activities had a substantial positive effect on event perception.

3.2.1. The Influence of the Consumption Motive of eSport Contents on the Entertainment Atmosphere

The identity of fan is unavoidable when it involves interpersonal relationships in sports. Despite the fact that the majority of social psychologists concur that a group is a collection of individuals who are interdependent and share a common identity, groups can also be conceptualized differently. According to Moreland (1987), every group of people possessed a certain degree of “groupness” or social integration.

Consequently, symbolic interactionists view socialization as a two-way exchange (Guttmann, 1985; Zhou et al., 2021). As social integration increases, individuals think and act more as a group than as individuals (Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008). According to Wann et al. (2003), the identity of a sports fan contributed to psychological health and social integration. It has been demonstrated that team identity correlates with social well-being indices and increases both a sense of belonging and alternative fulfillment in individuals. Moreover, well-being is positively associated with it (Wann et al., 2003). Wann and Grieve (2005) found that team identity has an additional positive effect on psychosocial well-being. Live eSports viewing affords numerous opportunities for social interaction to develop rapidly. Through fan identity, the act of socialization enhances eSports entertainment beyond the competition.

Buss (1961) defined aggression as any behavior that is normally directed at another person with the direct intent to harm the target individual. Due to different motivations for aggressive behavior, he also proposed two forms of aggression. One is the act of attacking the victim with the ultimate goal of attacking them. That is instrumental aggression. Another form is the behavior of attacking the victim in order to achieve other ends, which is called hostile aggression. Numerous studies have examined the behavior of sports fans using these two classifications of aggressive traits (Allen and Anderson, 2017; Wann and Schrader, 1997; Wann et al., 2005). It was also argued by Wann and Schrader (1997) that sports fans believe that the aggressive behaviors they engage in (e.g., yelling, chanting slogans, and verbal aggression) have a positive emotional effect on their support for their team or player and therefore have an impact on the game's outcome subjectively. Consequently, sports fans who harm their opponents'

supporters or their opponents' opponents for the benefit of their team should be classified as committing instrumental aggression (Allen and Anderson, 2017; Wann et al., 1994). Thus, the following three hypotheses were suggested:

H1a: Socialization of eSports fans has a positive effect on the entertainment atmosphere.

H2a: Player attraction from eSports professional players has a positive effect on the entertainment atmosphere.

H3a: Aggression between fans who take different positions has a positive effect on the entertainment atmosphere.

3.2.2. The Influence of The Motive for Consuming eSports Contents on Offline Escapism

Escapism is one of the most commonly used terms when discussing games. Many studies have also suggested that it may be a way to relieve daily stress by 'detaching from reality and relationships' (Hastall, 2017). Tosca (2003) argued that the overblown negative connotation of "reality escapism" has made many people, especially the people older than the Y Generation (people who grew up without video games), feel as if the attention and time people put on digital games are meaningless, and that they cause children to become irritable and depressed as a result (Kou and Gui, 2020). In reality, however, gamers can also communicate, compete, and collaborate with other players or friends through games.

In sport management literature, sport socialization refers to the process in which sports team fans acquire values, symbols, and behaviors that are shared among fans while watching games (Wann et al., 2001). According to the social interaction approach, social

participants created value by actively interpreting and negotiating social norms. They also choose how much energy and money to invest in maintaining their identity, rather than being passive recipients of social roles. Likewise, scholars have examined how people are attracted to sports teams and the underlying mechanisms. Researchers have tested such mechanisms by using a social identity theory known as self-categorization theory (Hornsey, 2008) or social identity theory.

There is a growing body of research in the literature that demonstrates that prominent and well-known players entice more fans to participate in sports (see e.g., Hausman and Leonard, 1997). According to Dimmock et al. (2005), sports team identification could be conceptualized by incorporating cognitive (the information of group members) and evaluative aspects (the value of group members). Jacobson (2003) recommended that sports fandom researchers consider fan-fan or fan-team relationship networks (interpersonal) and alternative achievement pairs (symbolic), including the fan's identification with the team. He argued that these two factors have the same impact on fans. Sports fans who identify strongly with their teams tend to have more extreme feelings and emotional spikes than those who do not identify with their teams, a phenomenon known as the affective consequence of fan identification. There are many emotional consequences resulting from video games, including arousal levels, empathy, postgame emotions, and enjoyment (Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008; Melnick and Wann, 2011).

In the study of DeWall et al. (2012), aggression was defined as behavior that is intentionally committed and causes harm to another person (who is in denial about the impending harm). This behavior needs to possess three characteristics: (1) Aggression cannot be limited to feelings and intentions, but rather

includes actual actions. (2) It must be an intentional and active behavior and (3) the victim intends to avoid harm. Besides proactive behaviors initiated by individual sports fans' perceptions and decisions, team identification is also an important factor that leads to aggressive behavior (Allen and Anderson, 2017). Identifying with a team implies a psychological connection between a fan and their favorite team. When sports teams win, the fan groups that support those sports teams also gain a sense of identity within those groups. As a result, a portion of fans will try to help the team win through instrumental aggression (Wann, 1997). Anderson and Bushman (2002) proposed a General Aggression Model (GAM). This model suggests that behaviors leading to aggression can be divided into two processes: input (individual or situational) and output (generating action through evaluation and decision-making). Thus, the following three hypotheses were suggested:

H1b: Socialization of eSports fans has a positive effect on offline escapism.

H2b: Player attraction from eSports professional players has a positive effect on offline escapism.

H3b: Aggression between fans who take different positions has a positive effect on offline escapism.

3.3. The Push and Pull Factor in eSports Live Game Watching

According to scholars, the factors associated with intrinsic desires were defined as push factors (Kim and Lee, 2002). They are characterized as a set of psychosocial motives that represent consumers' intrinsic desires and drive them toward specific goal-driven behaviors. In contrast, factors associated with destination attributes are defined as pull factors. These are either tangible things (e.g., architecture,

gastronomy, tourist attractions...) that exist objectively or intangible things (e.g., events, culture, atmosphere...) (Dwyer and Kim, 2011; Wang et al., 2020). In Qian et al. (2020)'s study, push factors were consumer-centric factors (personal or interpersonal) that influence people to consume eSports-related content in response to content relating to the sport. The pull factor implies the characteristics and quality of the content and the information consumers want to obtain by watching live streaming content online (Qian et al., 2020). According to previous studies on offline viewing of eSports, many scales were based on the assumption that the actual consumption and offline viewing of eSports matches by eSports enthusiasts is the result of their own individual needs. That is, all behaviors are fully caused by push factors (e.g., Pizzo et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020; Scholz, 2020; Sjöblom and Hamari, 2017; Xiao, 2020). As a result, we argue that the dual influence of the Push-Pull theory on consumption decisions for eSports enthusiasts can fill in the gaps of previous research. Therefore, it is necessary to apply this theory to the framework of exploring offline viewing of eSports matches. There is no doubt that hosting major sporting events could increase eSports fans' interest in live games and boost tourism in the area (Nikas and Poulaki, 2021).

The importance of physical and social environments in the consumption of live sporting events is widely recognized (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Wilhelm, 2020). It has been shown in the literature on sports marketing that the atmosphere of a stadium contributes greatly to the attendance at events. According to Hasse (2002), the atmosphere could be defined as a feeling that a person experiences. Stadium atmosphere is not determined by the physical characteristics of the building itself, but by the psychology of the people who attend the event.

Atmosphere refers to the idea that an environment or place has an induced effect. Therefore, it is closely related to the environmental psychological construct of place emotional quality (Darden and Babin, 1994; Lee et al., 2017). People who watch sports as spectators benefit from a stadium's atmosphere not only in terms of additional value, but also in terms of entertainment value. As a result, spectators themselves may become dominant parts of the overall service (Kotler, 1973). According to these studies, the excitement generated by sports spectators about stadium atmosphere affects both the willingness to sponsor and the willingness to recommend the stadium to others, as well as customer satisfaction (Hasse, 2002; Wakefield, 2016).

Mehrabian and Russell proposed an SOR (Stimulus - Organism - Response) model in 1974 to measure the stimulation of individuals by their environment. In the environment, people are exposed to a variety of information that elicits an emotional response. As a result of this response, they may exhibit a variety of behaviors that reflect their emotions. In other words, spectators watching eSports matches receive stimuli from tangible or intangible factors throughout an eSports arena, and they respond by exhibiting behaviors that approach or avoid the atmosphere (Uhrich and Koenigstorfer, 2009). For example, the emotions and behaviors of others (including fans who support the same or different teams as individual spectators), as well as aspects related to video games that take place in real time (Madrigal, 2003). Uhrich and Koenigstorfer (2009) provided a more detailed description of the results of people's stimulation in response to the environment in their paper on the atmosphere of entertainment venues. Performance can be divided into short-term and long-term responses to stimuli. Short-term manifestations are active participation, prolonged stays after the event,

and increased consumption behaviors. Long-term performance is reflected in revisiting behavior, increased product purchases, and positive word-of-mouth effects. Therefore, we believe eSports fans' desire to experience the emotional stimulation of the entertainment atmosphere on site as well as their willingness to watch offline eSports matches by initiating escape behaviors will ultimately impact consumption intentions and offline match viewing intentions. Thus, the following two hypotheses were suggested:

H4a: The entertainment atmosphere of live sports games has a positive effect on beforehand shopping behavior.

H4b: The entertainment atmosphere of live sports games has a positive effect on offline eSports game watching intention.

Due to its addictive nature, escapism has become an inevitable research direction in studies related to video games (Beranuy et al., 2013). As Seo (2013) suggested, the actual consumption environment has a more profound impact on the overall experience related to eSports consumption. Fans may not perceive eSports as an effective escape in a familiar, everyday environment, but an unknown experience in an unfamiliar environment can provide new environmental stimuli. As a result, we believe that setting the location of eSports viewing in an unfamiliar arena will maximize elements of eSports fans' motivation to consume.

During eSports events, visitors can truly participate and participate in the performance or phenomenon, which provides escapism. In order to achieve this immersion, consumers must view computer games as a form of sport (Wagner, 2007). A central aspect of eSports and computer game consumption is escapism, where viewers are distracted from their daily

lives by playing computer games (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Seo, 2016). Many studies exist on sports fans' willingness to consume traditional sporting events (Bouchet et al., 2011; Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2012). In a study by Aiken et al. (2018), it was noted that owing to intrinsic psychological factors, sports fans' perceptions of values and identity are influenced by their preferred sporting activities. Influence of this nature is divided into self-initiated behavior and passive behavior influenced by the objective environment. Sports fans are perceived as enthusiastic and dedicated when they enhance their sense of self-esteem and loyalty through the act of defining an identity for themselves through sports consumption (Aiken et al., 2018; Wann et al., 2001). However, when they are stimulated to consume by external social forces such as social cohesion, they often engage in irrational, impulsive consumption behaviors. In Uhrich and Koenigstorfer (2009)'s study of live sports events, it was found that purchasing food, beverages, season tickets, souvenirs, etc. during the game had the potential to enhance the enjoyment of sports fans: "I'm really enjoying the live game."

In the case of eSports, visitors are able to make a significant impact on a performance through active engagement and immersion. Immersion like this is based on the assumption that consumers view computer games as sports (Wagner, 2007). Computer game consumption and eSports in general are characterized by escapism in which audiences are able to escape daily life by playing games (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Seo, 2016). According to Buchanan-Oliver and Seo (2012), most games had their own worldview and backstory. It is a fascinating way for gamers to experience a game in its entirety when they play and listen to a story at the same time. As the focus of eSports is on competition and winning, the importance of narrative in the game

and in the process of watching is largely diminished for eSports consumers (Seo, 2013). The attractiveness of the game makes it popular with players (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017). As well as the inner workings of the game, the culture of eSports is also a form of escapism (consisting of the game, the players, and the gaming fans). Thus, the following two hypotheses were suggested:

H5a: The offline escapism of live sports games has a positive effect on beforehand shopping behavior.

H5b: The offline escapism of live sports games has a positive effect on offline eSports game watching intention.

3.4. Consumption and Visit Intention

People may develop psychological connections to teams during the process of sport socialization. They may exhibit different consumption behaviors, including watching television, participating in games, purchasing goods, and joining fan groups, as well as developing psychological connections to teams (Katz and Heere, 2015; Lee et al., 2022). According to the theory of reasoned action, behavioral intentions were a function of attitudes and subjective norms that lead to actual behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975; Al Emadi et al., 2021). Previous research has found attitudes to have a greater explanatory power than subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in explaining behavioral intention (Koo et al., 2016; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Sports market research suggests that positive attitudes of sports consumers may drive visitation and even revisitation (Braunstein et al., 2005).

It is common for fans to develop strong emotional attachments to the consumption object. Traditionally, fans have been distinguished from regular consumers

based on their emotional affiliation. Jenkins (1992) argued that the distinction between fans and non-fans (in the case of TV series viewing) focuses on the degree of emotional or intellectual involvement. According to Hedlund (2014), fans represented a unified view and identity of viewers. Generally, fans are more connected to the intensity or impact of a particular format. They are more likely to consume if they feel that they are part of the team. Moreover, the collective identity that the team provides to fans can lead to strong psychological commitment and loyalty, for example, by repurchasing or maintaining their relationship with a favorite brand or product (Wakefield, 2016). Loyalty or repurchase behavior is a combination of brands, attitudes, and behaviors with indices measuring how often consumers purchase brands (Hedlund, 2014).

Sports fans have been poorly portrayed as consumers of events, whether they are involved in traditional sports events or in offline competitions in eSports. In fact, consumers of sports events are responsible for livening up the event (Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2012). With the growth of sports leagues and clubs, watching live sporting events has become a way for many people to fill their leisure time. The attendance of sporting events is not the only factor that determines the revenue generated by the events for the organizers (Uhrich and Benkenstein, 2012). Increased prices and revenue from other products have contributed to an increase in club revenues, as well as the diversification of games into new competitions and products. According to Dale et al. (2005)'s research on fan spending around rugby match venues, combined club image with community culture is an effective way to attract young people to become fans. Individuals and collectives involved in sporting events can be considered interdependent (spectators, players, commentators, organizers, spon-

sors, etc.) and consume in accordance with a specific lifestyle (Grohs et al., 2020). Vargo and Lusch (2004) proposed the theory of Service Dominant Logic (SDL), where value co-creation implies that multiple participants unconsciously behave in ways that may contribute to each other's well-being. According to an extension of this theory, the environments in which this occurs can also be described as service ecosystems (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Despite this, Grohs et al. (2020) contend that sporting events can provide sports, athletes, and sponsors with a variety of benefits. In terms of urban development, both the "sporting legacy" of sporting events and the venues that can be used for regular sporting events can contribute to the prosperity of the surrounding community (Otowicz et al., 2022). Based on these previous findings, the current research established the following hypotheses concerning the relationship between consumption and visiting intention:

H6: Beforehand shopping intention has a positive effect on offline eSports game watching intention.

IV. Research Method and Analysis

4.1. Survey Measures

In order to prevent inaccurate measurement, the majority of questions in the questionnaire were adapted from previously validated multiple measures (Churchill Jr, 1979). Initially, the survey questions consisted of 28 items across seven constructs (each containing four questions). Three of the factors: Socialization, Player attraction and Aggression, used items from the Motivation Scale of Sport Consumption (MSSC) by Trail and James (2001) and the items representing "Push" draw on entertain-

ment atmosphere adapted from the study of Pizzo et al. (2018). In the "Pull" study, another part of the offline escapism questions were incorporated from Hamari and Sjöblom (2017)'s paper on motivation to watch eSports. The items representing "Push" about entertainment atmosphere research were drawn from Pu et al. (2022) and Pizzo et al. (2018). Another part of the study on pulling offline escapism questions was extracted from Hamari and Sjöblom (2017)'s paper on motivation to watch eSports competitions. Beforehand shopping behavior was determined by referring to the questionnaire of Jiang et al. (2018) and Lee and Schoenstedt (2011) as no exact equivalent was found in the eSports-related literature. In order to assess visit intention, items from the studies of Xiao (2020) and Paek et al. (2021) were used.

4.2. Data Collection

In order to better measure the model proposed in this study, we chose the League of Legends (LOL) game, which has a wide range of fans and audiences in eSports games, since there are several types of eSports games, including first-person shooters (FPS), real-time strategy (RTS), and multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) games. It is a MOBA game developed by Riot Games. The LOL game was released in October 2009 and is one of the most popular eSports today. This video game fully engages with gaming as a sports practice and it is an excellent example of eSports (Rosell Llorens, 2017); the League of Legends game in 2021 remains as one of the most loved and watched eSports games by gaming fans worldwide. In 2022, LOL Worlds averaged 1.3 million viewers, with a peak of 4.02 million, according to Esports Charts. The LOL World Championship was the longest-watched tournament online on Twitch

and YouTube in 2022, with 141.94 million total viewing hours, while LCK Spring 2022 is currently the longest-watched league online by consumers on Twitch and YouTube, with 74.21 million total viewing hours.²⁾

The growth of eSports leagues, as represented by League of Legends Pro League (LPL) in China and League of Legends Champions Korea (LCK), has attracted many eSports fans to follow competitive events. For example, in the LOL game, China and South Korea have the highest number of LOL fans coming to watch eSports offline, according to the Tencent Sports 2020 eSports annual report. There are also home court systems being promoted in both countries (as in traditional sports like basketball). Offline eSports competitions will undoubtedly attract more fans. Consequently, watching or playing eSports can serve as a motivation for travelers to travel. Like traditional sports organizations, eSports could serve as a major motivating factor for thousands of individuals to travel (DÍLEK, 2019).

Previous studies on traditional sports viewers have considered motivations and preferences related to gender, age, etc. (e.g., Choi, 2019; Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Tang et al., 2021), but regarding eSports there is currently no explicit consideration of differences across geographical scopes or between countries (Asada and Ko, 2019). Among Asian countries, China and South Korea possess a clear advantage when it comes to the maturity of the online gaming industry and the number of eSports enthusiasts (Yu, 2018). It has also become apparent to the governments of both countries that the eSports industry can be best served by a regulatory and driving role on the part of both governments. It has been noted that both the Chinese and South Korean governments

have shown positive attitudes towards eSports and supported its growth in order to promote economic development (Dai, 2019; Yu, 2018). In fact, there are some differences in the composition of the eSports industry between China and South Korea. The 21st Century Pro-Game Association (CPGA) in Korea was established in 2000 and has now been renamed the Korea e-Sports Association (KeSPA). The broadcasting rights for the content of Korean eSports leagues are held by television stations (Dal Yong, 2020). The eSports industry in China has also been continuously expanding over the past decade due to the high number of youth population (Jin, 2010). Tencent Games and the General Administration of Sport of China negotiate the development and management of the eSports industry in China. Live streaming platforms are used to broadcast competition content instead of television stations (Dal Yong, 2020). The home-and-away system currently being implemented by the Chinese eSports industry is also being successfully promoted and supported by eSports fans. While the top level of the industry structure differs between South Korea and China, the two countries with the largest audiences for eSports in Asia have both the largest eSports markets in Asia and have extensive experience hosting eSports tournaments (Dai, 2019).

To be more rigorous, we filtered out fans who had not personally watched an eSports match offline and did not understand the basic rules of LOL game in the screening questions. This study was conducted with eSports fans in China (CN) and South Korea (KR) who know the basic rules of the LOL game and have been to an eSports match at least once. The survey of Korean respondents was conducted from December 5 to December 20, 2021. For Chinese respondents, the survey was conducted from January 3, 2022 to February 1, 2022. Respondents were asked

2) <https://escharts.com/tournaments/lol/2022-world-championship>

to answer a four-part questionnaire. The first part of the study consisted of screening questions used to identify respondents who met the study's criteria (eSports fans who understand the rules of LOL and have seen offline eSports matches). The second part consisted of general questions related to personal viewing of eSports and traditional sports games (frequency of watching eSports games online, frequency of watching offline games, willingness to travel abroad to watch eSports games, and whether there are players or teams they support). The third part included construct questions, which contained seven factors (socialization, player attraction, provocation, entertainment atmosphere, offline escape, beforehand shopping intention, and offline watching intention). Each factor in the third section is composed of four statements, and participants of the questionnaire were asked to answer how much they agreed with each statement. A seven-point Likert scale was used in this section, with 1 indicating complete disagreement and 7 indicating complete agreement (Dawes, 2008). The fourth section contained six questions related to demographics (gender, age, education level, occupation, marital status, and income). The questionnaire was originally designed in English and was based on content from relevant prior studies. Then it was translated into Chinese and Korean by two professionals fluent in English, Chinese, and Korean. The Chinese and Korean versions were then back-translated into English and some differences between English and Korean expressions were corrected. The two translated versions were evaluated for the content validity of the survey questions respectively by a native Korean speaker and a native Chinese speaker.

The questionnaire for this study was difficult to conduct in an offline survey because of the pandemic. Therefore, in this study, the questionnaires for both

China and Korea were conducted online. A leading market research firm Macromill Embrain (www.embrain.com) was commissioned to do the Korean part of the survey in order to obtain potential respondents in Korea, and a quota sampling method was implemented. The Chinese portion of the survey was distributed through the Wenjuanxing website (www.wenjuanxing.com) and Weibo (<https://www.weibo.com>), one of the most popular social media platforms in China.

4.3. Data Analysis

4.3.1 Sample Characteristics

A total of 399 usable surveys were completed. Male respondents accounted for 65.9% and female respondents accounted for 34.1% of the overall sample. 199 from China and 200 from South Korea. Approximately 13.0% of the respondents were 18 or younger, 39.6% between 18 and 20 years of age, 57.7% were between 21 and 23, and 42.6% were between 24 and 26. About 63.9% of the respondents were 4-year university attending or degree, 16.6% were college attending or degree. There are 84.7% of the respondents were single and 15.3% were married. The respondents' detailed demographics are reported in <Table 2>.

4.3.2. Measurement Model

In this study, we separately surveyed Koreans and Chinese who had watched offline eSports games. In order to demonstrate that the specimens collected from two different countries (200 cases in Korea and 199 cases in China) could be analyzed together, we performed a chi-square test. The results showed $\chi^2 = 30.516$, $df = 18$, and $p\text{-value} = 0.33$, which

<Table 2> Demographics (n = 399)

Variable	Content	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	263 (65.9%)
	Female	136 (34.1%)
Country of Residence	China	199 (49.9%)
	South Korea	200 (50.1%)
Age	18 or Younger	26 (6.5%)
	18~20	79 (19.8%)
	21~23	115 (28.8%)
	24~26	85 (21.3%)
	27~29	64 (16.0%)
	30 or Order	30 (7.5%)
Marital Status	Single	338 (84.7%)
	Married	61 (15.3%)
Education	High School Diploma or Lower	48 (12.0%)
	College School or Degree	73 (18.3%)
	4-year University Attending or Degree	255 (63.9%)
	Graduate School Attending or Degree	20 (5.0%)
	Doctoral School Attending or Degree	3 (0.8%)
Monthly Income (In KRW or RMB)	\$1,999 or Below	124 (26.1%)
	\$2,000 - \$2,999	133 (28.0%)
	\$3,000 - \$3,999	81 (17.1%)
	\$4,000 - \$4,999	57 (12.0%)
	\$5,000 or Above	80 (16.8%)

implies no difference between the two data sets (Cochran, 1952). Additionally, we used PLS Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) to analyze the specimens from both groups, and the results indicated p-values of greater than 0.05 for all paths (Hair et al., 2013). Since both methods showed no difference between the two groups, this study was able to combine the data from the different nationalities of the eSports fans for the analysis.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was used in this study to examine the proposed measurement and structural models and to test the proposed hypotheses. As respondents

were asked to rate all survey questions simultaneously, common methodological differences needed to be taken into account. Therefore, Harman’s one-way test was conducted as a post-hoc statistical test to confirm the presence of common method bias in the outcome data set (Harman, 1967). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on all 28 measures and unrotated factor solutions were examined. In this process, the issue of common method bias arises when a single factor is present or when a factor accounts for more than 50% of the variance of a variable (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The EFA results depict seven variables (eigenvalues > 1), each di-

mension explaining between 3.654% and 44.025% of the covariance between measures. Since no single factor accounted for more than 50% of the covariance, it was concluded that the measurements in this study did not have a serious problem of common method bias.

Analysis began by assessing the measurement model through the validity and reliability of the constructs. Convergent validity assesses the strength and significance of the loadings, the average variance extracted (AVE), and the reliability estimates (Bagozzi and Heatherton, 1994). As shown in <Table

<Table 3> Measurement Item Properties

Construct	Items	Loading	alpha	CR	rho_A	AVE
SO	I enjoy the social relationship aspect of offline eSports game watching.	0.781	0.778	0.856	0.780	0.598
	I can share satisfaction with others when watching offline eSports games.	0.766				
	I watch offline eSports games to meet other spectators.	0.790				
	I watch offline eSports games to meet other fans I have known online.	0.757				
PA	I think it was exciting for me to meet eSports players in person.	0.809	0.806	0.872	0.811	0.631
	I watch carefully when footage of eSports players appears on the screen.	0.806				
	I think the eSports players I like are more attractive than the others.	0.791				
	I think excellent eSports players look more handsome than others.	0.771				
AG	I think aggressiveness is an integral part of offline eSports watching.	0.743	0.750	0.842	0.752	0.572
	I can share satisfaction with others when watching offline eSports games.	0.775				
	I watch offline eSports games to meet other spectators.	0.709				
	I watch offline eSports games to meet other fans I have met online.	0.796				
EA	I think that watching offline eSports events is very exciting.	0.818	0.823	0.883	0.826	0.653
	I enjoy the excitement surrounding an offline eSports game.	0.794				
	I enjoy the high level of excitement during an offline eSports game.	0.790				
	I watch offline eSports events because of the entertainment value.	0.829				
OE	I watch eSports games to mentally relax.	0.870	0.865	0.908	0.870	0.712
	I watch eSports games to physically relax.	0.862				
	I watch eSports games to take a break from daily life.	0.859				
	I watch eSports games to escape from daily interpersonal relationships.	0.782				
BSI	I am willing to buy souvenirs online before watching offline eSports games.	0.861	0.877	0.915	0.879	0.730
	I am willing to buy souvenirs around the venue before watching offline eSports games.	0.871				
	I am willing to buy banners before an eSports game to cheer for the teams/ players.	0.868				
	If necessary, I am willing to reserve a place in a restaurant or hotel room around the venue before watching an offline eSports game.	0.817				
OWI	I have the intention of going to watch an offline eSports event.	0.826	0.845	0.896	0.846	0.683
	I am planning to participate in watching an offline eSports event.	0.813				
	I intend to invest money and time to visit an offline eSports event.	0.876				
	My intention to watch offline games in the future has increased through watching offline eSports games.	0.788				

Note: SO = Socialization, PA = Player Attraction, AG = Aggression, EA = Entertainment Atmosphere, OE = Offline Escapism, BSI = Beforehand Shopping Behavior, OWI = Offline Watching Behavior.

<Table 4> Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

	Mean	S.D.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) AG	4.849	1.127							
(2) BSI	4.899	1.269	0.554						
(3) EA	5.402	1.162	0.564	0.485					
(4) OE	4.917	1.712	0.566	0.605	0.594				
(5) OWI	5.124	1.102	0.608	0.678	0.705	0.568			
(6) PA	5.243	1.055	0.515	0.534	0.654	0.566	0.681		
(7) SO	4.939	1.168	0.602	0.590	0.573	0.635	0.598	0.572	

Note: AG = Aggression, BSI = Beforehand Watching Behavior, EA = Entertainment Atmosphere, OE = Offline Escapism, OWI = Offline Watching Intention, PA = Player Attraction, SO = Socialization.

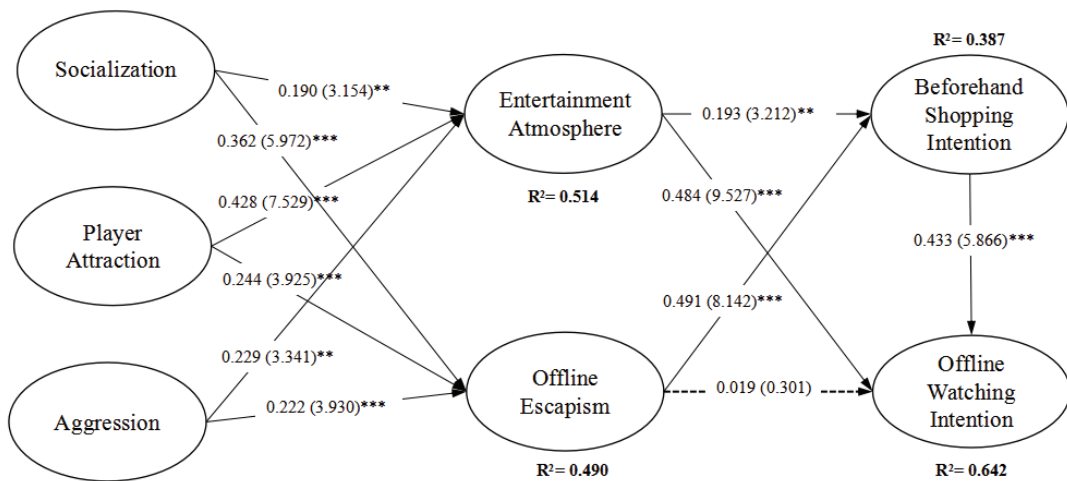
3>, all AVEs were greater than 0.50, exceeding the recommended threshold (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In summary, these results provide strong evidence for convergent validity. Next, construct reliability was assessed by internal consistency and indicator reliability. Internal consistency was assessed using Dillon-Goldstein’s rho, which does not assume parallelism of the apparent variables as Cronbach’s alpha does. Satisfactory reliability was achieved for all factors (Cronbach’s alpha > .70), with Dillon-Goldstein’s rho values ranging from .875 to .967 (<Table 3>). Finally, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), procedures superior to the commonly considered criteria (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and cross-loading were assessed (Henseler et al., 2015). The results showed that all HTMT values for the potential variables were below the critical and conservative value of 0.85 (<Table 4>). The results indicate that, overall, these scales are valid and reliable measures of their respective constructs.

4.3.3. Testing the Hypothesized Structural Model

The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to diagnose the multicollinearity of each independent

variable. The values of VIF for all items in this study ranged from 1.399 to 2.574, satisfying the requirement that the value of multicollinearity needs to be less than 10. The corrected R² values are the explanatory power of the predictor variables for the respective structures. To verify the accuracy of the structural framework, the R² of the variance of beforehand shopping intention (BSI) (0.387) and offline watching intention (OWI) (0.642), located in the end part of the study model, was calculated as the predictive power. In addition to the R² analysis, Stone-Geisser’s Q² values (Stone, 1974) were calculated to assess the predictive relevance of the model in this study. Q² assesses the predictive validity of the model by skipping some indicator values using the calculated parameters. The difference between the skipped data points and the predicted data points is the basis for the Q² calculation (Chin et al., 2008). A Q² greater than 0 implies that the model has predictive relevance, while a Q² less than 0 is interpreted as a lack of predictive relevance. The Q² values for all the important factors in this study ranged from 0.13 to 0.486 and were all greater than zero. In this study, 5000 times of PLS-SEM bootstrap sampling tests were used.

<Figure 4> shows the structural relationships assumed in this study and the results for the control



Note: *p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.

<Figure 4> Result of the Structural Model

variables. Among the control variables considered in this study, most of the independent variables have a strong positive effect with the dependent variable. In terms of the results, avoidance behavior has no direct effect on the intention to watch offline eSports matches (H5b). Other than that, the remaining ten main hypotheses were all supported, as shown in <Figure 4>. The results showed that socialization had a positive effect on the perception of the entertainment atmosphere (H1a: $\beta = 0.190$, $t\text{-value} = 3.154$, $p < 0.001$) and offline escapism (H1b: $\beta = 0.362$, $t\text{-value} = 5.972$, $p < 0.001$). The player attraction of professional players also had a positive effect on the recreational atmosphere (H2a: $\beta = 0.428$, $t\text{-value} = 7.529$, $p < 0.001$) and offline escapism (H2b: $\beta = 0.244$, $t\text{-value} = 3.925$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, provocativeness also positively influenced the entertainment atmosphere (H3a: $\beta = 0.229$, $t\text{-value} = 3.341$, $p < 0.001$) and offline avoidance (H3b: $\beta = 0.222$, $t\text{-value} = 3.930$, $p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, the entertainment atmosphere significantly influenced the beforehand shopping intention (H4a: $\beta = 0.131$, $t = 2.604$, $p < 0.01$) and the eSports game watching intention (H4b: $\beta = 0.131$, $t = 2.604$, $p < 0.01$). Offline escapism positively influenced the beforehand shopping intention (H5a: $\beta = 0.491$, $t\text{-value} = 8.412$, $p < 0.01$), but had no significant effect on the eSports game watching intention (H5b: $\beta = 0.019$, $t\text{-value} = 0.764$). Finally, the willingness of beforehand shopping intention also had a significant positive effect on the willingness to watch offline eSports matches (H6: $\beta = 0.433$, $t\text{-value} = 5.866$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, the entertainment atmosphere had a greater impact on the intention to watch offline eSports matches than the intention to consume beforehand, and offline avoidance was not a direct reason for watching offline eSports games.

< 0.01) and the eSports game watching intention (H4b: $\beta = 0.131$, $t = 2.604$, $p < 0.01$). Offline escapism positively influenced the beforehand shopping intention (H5a: $\beta = 0.491$, $t\text{-value} = 8.412$, $p < 0.01$), but had no significant effect on the eSports game watching intention (H5b: $\beta = 0.019$, $t\text{-value} = 0.764$). Finally, the willingness of beforehand shopping intention also had a significant positive effect on the willingness to watch offline eSports matches (H6: $\beta = 0.433$, $t\text{-value} = 5.866$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, the entertainment atmosphere had a greater impact on the intention to watch offline eSports matches than the intention to consume beforehand, and offline avoidance was not a direct reason for watching offline eSports games.

4.3.4. Group Comparison: The Difference of Fan Identification

Hofstede (2011) asserted that different cultural bodies react differently to the same event. As discussed in the literature study section, it appears that

<Table 5> PLS Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) Result of 4 Groups

Paths		Paths Coefficients	T-value	P-values
EA → BSI	TF	0.134	1.898	0.058*
	NTF	0.337	3.506	0.000***
	PF	0.095	1.282	0.200
	NPF	0.377	4.498	0.000***
PA → EA	TF	0.496	8.840	0.000***
	NTF	0.210	1.738	0.082*
	PF	0.464	7.828	0.000***
	NPF	0.282	2.317	0.021**
SO → OE	TF	0.408	6.110	0.000***
	NTF	0.180	1.148	0.251
	PF	0.421	6.218	0.000***
	NPF	0.153	1.269	0.206

Note: EA = Entertainment atmosphere, BSI = Beforehand Shopping Intention, PA = Player Attraction, SO = Socialization, OE = Offline Escapism, TF = Team Fan, NTF = Not Team Fan, PF = Player Fan, NPF = Not Player Fan, *p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01.

eSports fans have a greater variety of preferences than one would expect. Consumption intentions can be affected by whether one views oneself as a fan of a team or a particular player. Therefore, a two-way (Team fan vs. Not team fan) × two-way (Player fan vs. Not player fan) comparison is used in our study to explore how fans with different subjective perceptions of themselves affect the path coefficients of this model (Allen et al., 1993).

Based on the horizontal comparison, we are able to draw two conclusions. First, player fans emphasize the impact of socialization on offline escapism more than team fans. In other words, people who perceive themselves as being player fans feel more comfortable watching an offline eSports game to help them escape from their boring daily lives. Second, the effect of physical attraction on the entertainment atmosphere would be more evident among team fans. LOL is a 5v5 competitive game, as such it cannot be equated with a team's victory based solely on one player's excellent performance. Therefore, the team's fan sen-

timent is more in line with the trend of winning and losing than it is with the team's performance. A slight correlation was found in the vertical comparison between physical attraction and the entertainment atmosphere when a fan was an individual player but not a fan of a specific team. Conversely, when someone is a team fan but not a player fan, there is also a weak correlation between the effects of socialization and offline avoidance.

According to the combined results from the comparison of the 4 groups, those who don't consider themselves fans of players or teams are more likely to purchase an eSports competition if they are willing to spend more in order to experience its entertainment atmosphere. For instance, to better immerse themselves in the high-emotion atmosphere, they might purchase souvenirs and banners hailing the players' arrival. Those who consider themselves as fans are instead less focused on these things (Asad and Ko, 2019; Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008).

<Table 6> The 2 x 2 Comparison Result of PLS Multi-Group Analysis (MGA)

Paths	Group1 (PF) vs. Group2 (NPF)			Group3 (TF) vs. Group4 (NTF)		
	Difference Coefficients	P-value	Results	Difference Coefficients	P-value	Results
SO → OE	0.267	0.054*	Supported (G1 > G2)	0.229	0.177	Not Supported
PA → EA	0.181	0.181	Not Supported	0.286	0.029**	Supported (G3 > G4)
EA → BSI	-0.282	0.011**	Supported (G2 > G1)	-0.203	0.086*	Supported (G4 > G3)

Note: EA = Entertainment atmosphere, BSI = Beforehand Shopping Intention, PA = Player Attraction, SO = Socialization, OE = Offline Escapism, TF = Team Fan, NTF = Not Team Fan, PF = Player Fan, NPF = Not Player Fan, * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

V. Conclusions

5.1. Research Findings and Discussion

As the global eSports industry experiences rapid expansion, an increasing number of research studies are being conducted within the industry. However, little research has been conducted on the factors that motivate eSports fans to engage in live game viewing or eSports tourism. This study examines the intention of eSports enthusiasts to watch offline eSports matches, as well as the atmosphere and emotions that can be experienced while watching a live eSports match, in order to fill this research gap. Our study refers to factors from the Sports Fan Consumption Scale (Wann et al., 1999), International Sports Tourism Motivation (Nishio et al., 2016), and Motivation for Watching eSports Games (Xiao, 2020). In conjunction with the Push-Pull theory, a new theoretical framework was developed and tested based on the aforementioned studies.

Several significant conclusions can be drawn from the analysis's outcomes. First, socialization, player attraction, and aggression are highly correlated with the atmosphere of entertainment and escapism. In

other words, individuals who value fan identity are more likely to be attracted to players. It is also important to note that the greater the audience's loyalty, the stronger the perception of live entertainment's emotions and contrast with everyday life. In addition, this research confirmed that both push and pull factors in the arena have an effect on prior eSports consumption. It was discovered that perceived interest is the most influential factor on disclosure willingness. The results indicate that the entertainment atmosphere has the greatest impact on the intention to watch offline eSports matches. This is followed by the willingness to spend money offline. Additionally, offline escape had no direct effect on the intent to watch the game. In conjunction with the expansion of the gaming industry, there is a growing demand for offline eSports viewing. People watch games more as a means of escape from their daily lives than for pure enjoyment.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

Due to the worldwide expansion of the eSports industry, the number of spectators watching offline eSports competitions has also increased over the

past few years. Despite this, there are few studies that examine the modifications that influence eSports fans' willingness to compete offline as a result of their participation in eSports. This study provides useful insights into the application of the Push-Pull theory to the viewing of offline eSports competitions, with a focus on viewing destinations, as well as theoretical contributions to the eSports academic community and eSports researchers. In this study, the Push-Pull theory is restricted to the site of an eSports tournament (host location) in order to identify the factors that are most strongly associated with watching the tournament on-site, as viewed from a theoretical research perspective. Socialization, player attraction, and aggression are positively correlated with the intention to engage in beforehand shopping intention and eSports game watching at eSports events as a result of beforehand shopping intention, as demonstrated by these studies.

To meet the overarching objectives of this study, we developed a conceptual framework to comprehend the intentions of offline game eSports watching and beforehand shopping intention. The most important theoretical finding is that offline escapism, as a factor that motivates eSports fans to visit destinations, has no direct effect on their intention to watch offline games eSports. This result contradicts previous research that has been conducted. The entertainment atmosphere, which acts as a pull factor, has a direct impact on viewing intentions. eSports fans are more likely to attend offline eSports events if they have the opportunity to experience an exclusively eSports entertainment atmosphere on site. In addition, this study introduces a new factor that influences the consumption habits of eSports fans: beforehand shopping intention. The results indicate that beforehand shopping intention is influenced positively by both entertainment atmosphere

and offline escape. Interestingly, eSports fans' beforehand shopping intention due to escapism psychology are higher than those due to the entertainment environment. In other words, they were able to experience the novelty and satisfaction of a vacation by purchasing related goods and services. Overall, the application of the push and pull theory to offline eSports tournaments helps to extend the research on the eSports tourism industry (e.g., Pizzo et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020; Seo, 2016; Sjöblom et al., 2020). As the eSports industry continues to improve and develop and is gradually recognized by traditional sporting event committees, current research on eSports spectators watching live games also provides references and innovations to research on traditional sporting events (e.g., Taylor, 2016; Trail et al., 2018). Specifically, the positive correlations about the socialization, player attraction, aggression, and entertainment atmosphere suggest that eSports fans' consumption motivations regarding a competition are strongly linked to the special experience that can only be experienced live and fill the gap in research related to the live atmosphere of eSports (e.g., Jang et al., 2020; Jenny et al., 2017; Leon et al., 2022; Xiao, 2020). Moreover, among the three consumption factors influencing the entertainment atmosphere, player attraction has a stronger impact on the entertainment atmosphere than the other two factors, and the difference in comparison between the main factors extends previous findings (e.g., Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Schaeperkoetter et al., 2017). The high correlation between consumption motives and offline escapism regarding offline eSports tournaments also demonstrates that engaging in these consumption motives creates a desire among eSports enthusiasts to participate in activities that match their interests and that they are not often able to engage in. This result

extends the research on the relationship between eSports competitions and offline escapism (e.g., Jenny et al., 2017; Lee and Schoenstedt, 2011; Neus, 2020; Xiao, 2020). It is also noteworthy that research on competition-related consumption behaviors when watching eSports or traditional sporting events is currently limited due to a lack of focus on the important link between beforehand shopping intention and entertainment atmosphere and escapism proposed. (e.g., Lee and Schoenstedt, 2011). This provides a tremendous opportunity for the theoretical construction of offline consumption in the eSports industry.

In the comparative study, we proposed to explore through a multi-group analysis whether the framework presented in this study is influenced by differences in fan identity. We conducted a cross-sectional comparison of this and found that the intention to escape was more influenced by socialization factors among those eSports fans who perceived themselves as fans of the players. At the same time, eSports fans with both fan identity and team identity were more likely to experience the effects of player attraction on the entertainment climate, a finding that extends previous research (e.g., Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Jenny et al., 2017; Schaeperkoetter et al., 2017; Xiao, 2020). There is a very interesting results emerge on the pathway of the influence of the entertainment climate on the behavior of beforehand shopping intention. For those eSports fans who do not consider themselves to have a supported team or player, the more they value the entertainment atmosphere, the more pronounced their intention to engage in beforehand shopping intention. In other words, those who do not consider themselves to have fan status generate more intent to consume in order to fit into the live entertainment atmosphere. These findings greatly extend previous related research on fan identity perceptions (e.g., Jang et al., 2020; Leon et al., 2022; Pu et al., 2022).

5.3. Practical Implications

The results of this study can be applied practically to suggest enhancements to offline eSports development. The entertainment atmosphere is the primary factor to consider. There is room for more audience interaction in terms of socialization and provocativeness as a significant factor in representing “pull” factor. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend how to foster an environment that fosters a stronger sense of identity among fans (e.g., how to increase fan loyalty to eSports teams) (Graham, 2017; Kou and Gui, 2020). For instance, the Chinese eSports industry has implemented a more sophisticated home-and-away system. By combining a region’s culture with the team’s image, it is possible to create a geopolitical effect among fans from various regions. It also increases the level of fan interaction so that they feel excited, enjoy themselves, and are highly involved with one another. Depending on the eSports event, there are also regional differences in the number of players participating in tournaments and fan interest in specific games. As a result, locations for world-class tournaments should consider local fan interest. A top-tier event can attract large audiences for cross-country and interregional travel, as well as provide local fans who have never witnessed a gaming tournament in person with the opportunity to experience the atmosphere of a live eSports event.

Also, As a venue for eSports events, a stadium can also be considered a “fermentation” site for eSports culture. Each tournament’s matches contribute to the history of eSports and enrich its culture by becoming a part of that history. It is essential to emphasize the significance of the atmosphere and cultural space created by fans, commentators, and players during the tournament. In offline tournaments, eSports fans would benefit from increased opportunities for play-

er-fan interaction and communication time (Jing et al., 2021). In addition, enhancing the quality of services and public facilities near stadiums is more likely to encourage eSports fans to spend money and stay for longer (Lee and Schoenstedt, 2011; Leon et al., 2022).

Ultimately, fan identification became an extremely influential factor in this study. Due to the entertainment atmosphere, the results in terms of beforehand shopping intention are particularly intriguing. Spectators who are not the fans of the teams or players have a greater propensity for consumption. In other words, consumers who are not diehard fans are more likely to purchase souvenirs and cheering banners. Additionally, we believe that high-loyalty fans must be motivated in terms of entertainment and ambiance. Post-game interviews or other segments aimed at strengthening the interaction between players and fans are required to achieve the highest level of entertainment. Simultaneously, an entertaining atmosphere can be created by mobilizing the provocative emotions of both teams' supporters within a reasonable range. Home-and-away system can increase the sense of belonging among fans, and this mentality may even influence the behavior of players, thereby impacting the spectator experience.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Integrating online and offline activities and expanding the space with reality-virtual overlays, the evolution of eSports enhances spectator experiences.

we provides theoretically and practically applicable results for offline eSports game watching, but this does not imply that this study is without limitations. First, we selected MOBA-type eSports games (LOL) that have received a great deal of attention in order to prove the proposed hypothesis more effectively. Considering that different types of games have distinct audiences and tournament structures, the results of applying the model proposed in this study to other games may vary. Second, because China and South Korea have a greater number of LOL game players, the level of attention and excitement is also greater in these nations. Due to time and financial constraints, the study only examined eSports fans in these two nations. If we survey and compare gaming fans from more regions in future studies, we will be able to draw more conclusive conclusions and understand the global gaming industry's development trend. It would also be intriguing to determine if there are any differences between tourists who travel across regions or even countries to observe major gaming events.

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