

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE TERMS
“ESPORTS” AND “METAGAME”: FORMAL AND
ETHNOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF VALORANT AND
COUNTER-STRIKE: GLOBAL OFFENSIVE**



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JANUARY 2023

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ABSTRACT

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Video game industry has evolved from arcade saloon activities and grew into a professional sport and found a home in ballrooms and stadiums. Video games are becoming a part of most people’s everyday lives. New terms such as esports, Competitive video games, professional gamers, esports athletes, metagame (also known as meta) have arisen as well as a need for a clearer view on this topic.

As a player who formerly pursued a career in esports and kept close ties to esports ever since, an ethnographical and formal research of these terms seems worth investigating and giving another point of view for the future researchers which comes directly from the culture itself. In this research, these terms regarding esports will be given clear definitions with both necessary research and up-to-date examples.

Keywords: Competitive Video Games, Esports, E-sports, Metagame, Professional Gaming

ÖZ

“ESPOR” VE “METAGAME” TERİMLERİNE ETNOGRAFİK BİR BAKIŞ AÇISI: VALORANT VE COUNTER-STRIKE: GLOBAL OFFENSIVE OYUNLARININ ETNOGRAFİK VE RESMİ İÇERİK ANALİZİ

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Video oyunları endüstrisi oyun makinası salonlarına sığmayıp yatak odalarına ve stadyumlara kadar uzandı ve sonunda profesyonel sporlar arasında yerini aldı. Günümüzde de çoğu insanın günlük yaşantısına giriş yapmış bulunmakta. Bununla birlikte ortaya çıkan metagame, espor sporcusu, metagame gibi terimler için de daha net bir bakış açısına ihtiyaç ortaya çıktı.

Geçmişte espor sporcusu olarak bir kariyer sürdürmeye çalışıp sonrasında da espora olan ilgimden dolayı esporu yakından takip etmeye devam eden biri olarak, literatürdeki araştırmaların netlike açısından eksikliğini farkettiğim için bu terimler üzerine etnografik bir araştırmanın gelecek araştırmacılara ve oyun sektöründeki insanlara daha net bir bakış açısı ve canlı örnekler kazandırabileceğini düşündüm. Bu araştırmamda, açığa çıkan bu yeni terimlerin daha net bir tanımı ve güncel örneklerini ortaya koyacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rekabetçi Video Oyunları, Espor, E-spor, Metagame, Profesyonel Oyunculuk

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
MMORPG	Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Game
RPG	Role-playing Game
DM	Dungeon Master
NPC	Non-player Character
IESF	International Esports Federation
EVO	Evolution Championship Series
LAN	Local Area Network
PC	Personal Computer
P2W	Pay to Win
CS:GO	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive
VCT	Valorant Champions Tour
FPS	First Person Shooter
SMG	Submachine Gun
AWP	Arctic Warfare Police
IGL	In-game Leader

Chapter 1

Introduction

Video gaming industry has become more and more popular, and it has evolved to the certain point where people can access there at any time and place. The activity that once was taking place on dining room tables or in arcades machines, has now moved into our houses, mobile devices, and social media platforms. It has become a source of entertainment and fun, sports-like, activity. As technology evolved, gaming has evolved with it.

Throughout this adventure, even the idea of “gaming” has evolved with the technology as well since growing technology allowed this new culture to nurture and the gaming society became more eager and demanding. Some players sought to interact better with their games and wanted new peripherals to do so such as Virtual Reality. Some wanted to create their own realities via role-playing or sandbox game types. Some wanted to spend some leisure time away from the stress of their daily lives. This article will be focusing on the ones which wanted to compete against others to accomplish their own dreams which can be to become famous, to do what they love for a living (streaming or competing) or just to satiate their curiosity whether they are good enough to be crowned the best. Thus, the esports (also known as electronic sports) were born.

Professional esports athletes have been honing their skills to increase their chances of success. These skills were mainly split into two categories: mechanical (motor) skills and the metagaming skills. While mechanical skills mainly focused on physical attributes of the players, metagaming skills consisted of the knowledge over the strategic trends that reign supreme over the others. These competitions got fiercer as the athletes got better and better, esports have grown along with it because the number of people who enjoyed the content arose along with the revenue.

Even though esports have been rapidly growing in terms of revenue and viewership and yet there are gaps in the literature when it comes to terms such as metagaming and esports. Luckily, the lack of research materials for students has not gone unnoticed. It has been mentioned on the website of eSports Yearbook:

Although, there is substantial progress in eSports, from a scientific and cultural perspective there are not that many publications. This book gives an insight into the many facets of the eSports phenomenon. So, if you would like to be published internationally in order to help out students who desperately look for eSports sources they can quote from – please consider contributing something now. (Scholz & Hiltcher, 2010)

As a person who formerly pursued a career in esports and aimed to become an esports athlete, sharing my experiences along with current and some of the most successful esports athletes' video clips and giving insight to future researchers in an ethnographical manner to help build upon the existing research and to get a clearer perspective on these new and upcoming terms would provide the upcoming researchers with a new source to quote from as well.

Chapter 2

Related Work

2.1 What Is Esports

The definition of esports is:

Esports (also known as electronic sports, e-sports, or eSports) is a form of competition using video games. Esports often takes the form of organized, multiplayer video game competitions, particularly between professional players, individually or as teams. (Esports, 2022)

But the idea behind esports is still disrespected as these two ideas cannot blend well.

Even though their definitions (Game and Sport) in the dictionaries show plenty of similarities, they are disregarded as majorly different due to their natures. It is common to hear parents, educators, and policymakers equate videogame playing with idle time, time that could be put to better use. Yet, even if videogames were merely a children's medium (which they are not, and never were), this reason alone does not adequately explain why they would escape respect. (Bogost, 2007)

As stated above, it's common to hear these opinions in our daily lives during our daily gaming sessions and it also points us out towards the reason why esports is not taken seriously enough by some people. But some people have proven dedicated enough to prove them wrong.

There is a foundation whose sole purpose is "to promote esports as a true sport beyond barriers" which is named IESF (International Esports Federation). According to IESF, the definition of esports (Electronic Sports) is "a competitive sport where gamers use their physical and mental abilities to compete in various games in a virtual, electronic environment."

But before delving into in-depth analysis of the terms esports and gaming, a glimpse of the history of esports throughout the years might prove fruitful towards understanding the community's expectations and enthusiasm of esports.

2.2 History of Esports

According to Wikipedia, earliest known video game competition took place at Stanford University for the game Spacewar on 19 October 1972. The grand prize of this tournament was a year's subscription for Rolling Stone. (Good, 2013)

Similarly, in 1974, Sega held a forerunner of esports. The All-Japan TV Game Championships, a nationwide arcade video game tournament in Japan, was sponsored by Sega to help promote the play and sales of video games in the country. The reward pool for the tournament included television sets, cassette tape recorders and transistor radios. (Borowy, 2013)

In research from Borowy (2013), these competitions became more accessible and frequent with the release of Space Invaders in 1978. Because players now had access to mechanics like high scores. In 1979, with games like Asteroids, players could now type their initials next to their high scores to provoke other players and compete in arcades. Which is why the golden age of arcade video games was signaled by Taito's Space Invaders in a sense.

In 1991, the tides turned again in favor of direct, tournament-level competition between two players with the release of Street Fighter II. Unlike previous competition mechanism which made players compete against one another indirectly by using the scoring system, this system allowed to see who's better in a more face-to-face way. This also paved the way for the competitive multiplayer and deathmatch modes found in modern action games. (Patterson, 2011) The rising popularity of fighting games also led to foundation of Evolution Championship Series (EVO) esports tournament in 1996 which is an exclusive championship series for fighting game genre.

With the rise of fighting games popularity and multiplayer LAN gaming becoming a thing, internet cafés/LAN gaming centers culture also became a common occurrence originating from South Korea between 1991 and 1994. (PC Bang, 2022)

In 1990s, as the technology advanced, internet connectivity increased. PC games adapted to this quickly. Doom's deathmatch mode appeared in 1993. Tournaments for

games like StarCraft, Warcraft, Quake and Counterstrike became possible. (Consalvo, 2022)

The first televised event of esports happened in 2006, Halo 2 on the USA Network (Brand, 2006) but it didn't prove fruitful until 2011. Viewership and prize moneys of tournaments took a big leap during 2010s and esports grew rapidly. To be precise, number of tournaments held in 2000s were 10 and the number of tournaments held in 2010s were 260s. (Popper, 2013)

In 2011, Twitch was established. Twitch allowed people to stream their gameplay live also included ways to communicate with the streamers. During that time, League of Legends also announced its first ever World Championship. In 2013, the event sold out the Staples Center in Los Angeles within minutes of tickets going on sale. (Tassi, 2013)

This increasing popularity and emergence of online streaming services such as Twitch have helped the growth of esports in this period and were the most common method of watching tournaments live. The two most popular Twitch broadcasters were League of Legends and Dota 2 during this period. During one day of The International (Dota 2 Tournament), Twitch recorded 4.5 million unique views, with each viewer watching for an average of two hours. (Popper, 2013)

In 2014, the currently most popular streaming platform named Twitch was bought by Amazon for \$1 billion (Kim, 2014) which also helps prove that esports became a good source of income due to its growing popularity and increasing fan base.

In 2017, with the launch of Fortnite, a player rose and left his name high up top in the history of Twitch. Richard Tyler Blevins, also known as Ninja, has been successfully winning majority of his Fortnite matches and gathering the crowd around his stream with his iconic moves. In March 2018, Ninja broke the peak viewer count record on Twitch when he played together with celebrities Travis Scott, JuJu Smith-Schuster, and Drake. He also became the world's most followed Twitch streamer as of July 2022. It's also important to mention that Ninja's road to fame did not start with Fortnite. He was already getting lots of attention even before he became Major League Gaming's First Ever Halo 4 Champion thanks to his skills as a gamer and an esports athlete. In April 2018, this

professional streamer had more social media interactions than LeBron James, Cristiano Ronaldo and Shaquille O'Neal, making him the most popular athlete in the world. (theScore esports, 2018)

According to Howarth (2022), In 2019, the esports global market was valued at \$957.5 million. This figure has grown to approximately \$1.08 billion today - an increase of over 10% over the last two years. This esports industry growth comes despite a slight pandemic-driven dip to \$947.1 million.

As of 2024, the esports market is forecast to be worth approximately \$1.62 billion.

Esports audience size has also grown year-over-year between 2019 and 2021. In 2019, there were an estimated 197 million esports enthusiasts. And a further 200.8 million occasional Esports viewers. In 2021, these figures grew to 234 million esports enthusiasts. And a further 240 million occasional esports viewers.

By 2024, there are expected to be 285.7 million esports enthusiasts. And an additional 291.6 million occasional viewers.

Judging from such increase in the audience and the number of tournaments, it is safe to assume that esports is becoming more and more common in people's everyday lives and hard to ignore throughout the years.

2.3 Is Esports a Real Sport?

After looking through the history of esports and the increasing numbers, some still argue that esports is not a real sport, and this topic remains controversial. But as all things which are set out to become a phenomenon, they are often met by some roadblocks. Some researchers tried to help and clarify that esports is a real sport by examining esports through the critical lenses of lexicographers.

The definition of sports is "An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment." according to the Oxford Dictionary. To see if esports fits this description, these researchers even documented the methods and results of their tests on competitive players to see if they really do physical exertion while displaying their skills in the medium which we call

video games. According to an article that investigates why esports should be considered a real sport (Kane & Spradley, 2017):

- Aadahl, Kjaer, and Jørgensen (2007) state that absolute intensity can be used to determine the intensity of exercise, by analyzing the multiple of an individual's basal metabolic rate (MET). Since the MET could be used to determine exertion, a connection could be made via how the MET is affected when playing video games. Additionally, the oxygen levels (VO₂) can be used; a moderate physical activity would have a 40%-60% VO₂ reserve and/or 4-6 MET's (Stroud, Amonette, & Dupler, 2010).
- Stroud et al., (2010) was able to get their participants VO₂ and MET at a low to moderate activity level by standing and shaking Nintendo Wii controllers while playing Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games. This shows physical exertion being demonstrated during the playing of video games.
- Modesti, et al., (1994) conducted a study that showed the basal blood pressure is raised while playing a video game.

Finally, the researchers conclude, this proves physical exertion being demonstrated during the sessions of video games.

The number of countries that accepted esports have been increasing annually and currently it has reached the total number of 63 countries according to the IESF. Public movements created and supported by the communities all over the world have emerged such as Esports Yearbook (Christophers & Scholz, 2010) to contribute to its growth and enlighten the society that's not yet aware of the term esports since 2010.

But even if these aren't satisfactory enough, another point of view is to notice how the history is repeating itself in different shapes and forms. For example, Michael Jordan being sponsored and supported by companies and universities back when Basketball industry was still growing with a rapid speed. To be more specific:

- Universities giving scholarships to promising young talented traditional sports athletes

- McDonalds inviting Michael Jordan to play in their advertisements. (Selig, 2020)
- Nike promoting Michael Jordan's brand. (Selig, 2020)

Such events can also be seen in the esports industry when investigated thoroughly. Famous esports athletes also have major brands sponsoring them. Universities have also been giving scholarships to these athletes as well just like universities have been giving scholarships to traditional sport athletes. Such as:

- In 2014, Robert Morris University offered the first esports scholarship. Students that played League of Legends could pay 35% of their tuition (\$12,000) with just the lower tier grant. Since then, hundreds of schools have adopted esports as a valid team sport the whole campus can root for. (ESPN, 2014)
- Michael "Shroud" Grzesiek has been sponsored by Logitech where he branded peripherals and other gears can be found in their website. (Logitech, 2021)
- Mixer paid Ninja, the famous Fortnite player, to come and stream exclusively on their platform. (Gilbert, 2020)
- Faker was sponsored by Razer. (Razer, 2016)

Public figures like John Skipper, the former president of ESPN, stated that esports is not a sport on HBO Sports even after the Dota 2's TI4 (The International World Championship Tournament) made it to front pages of ESPN itself. (HBO, 2013)

"It's not a sport — it's a competition. Chess is a competition. Checkers is a competition. Mostly, I'm interested in doing real sports."

stated John Skipper. But such negative opinions and rejection wasn't enough to deter the esports fans and gamers. In 2017, Riot Games (2017) published their video to show how they feel about esports and how their fans react to it and it's undeniably visible that people really enjoy being a part of the esports community just like other sports.

2.3.1 The dilemma of esports, is it a job or a pursuit of leisure. It is also important to notice that the esports itself is somewhat self-contradictory. Caillois (2001a, p.43), identifies six qualities of play that he suggests working life may corrupt as play in his view

should be: free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, regulated, and fictive. But there are many times where eSport athletes lose sight of most of these aspects. For example:

- A League of Legends or Dota 2 professional player might really enjoy playing a certain character but usually some “conditions” need to be met to win a match and these “conditions” might dictate otherwise. And this situation may last from one patch to another. Sometimes from one season to another. The esports athlete in this scenario would weave their rights to their freedom in play because their priority is not to have fun and be free, it is to win at all costs.
- A competitive player may lose their sight on what is important when encouraged by outer currencies such as fame and wealth and weave their right of being unproductive during play times. Because their manager and organization expect a minimum amount of daily competition quota to be met.

The first example above also indicates that there is another type of game going on in the background of a normal match. This other dimension of gaming is named Metagame, which takes places outside the game and between opponents.

2.3.2 Different types of skilled expertise in competitive video games.

2.3.2.1 Mechanical (motor) skills. Just like all other sports, mechanical (motor) skills of the athlete are the foundation of their success. The knowledge and technique can be taught to an athlete through training and lessons, but the foundation cannot be given. Sharp reflexes, a keen eye to detail and precision of hand-eye coordination is most valuable to an esports athlete. An interesting example of keen eye to detail and metagaming (which will be explained later on) would be Michael “Shroud” Grzesiek (2017) “reading the room” during tournaments. But it is worth mentioning that many pro athletes are also known to practice and train daily just like other athletes to help build up their muscle memories, not every player is born gifted after all. For example:

- FPS players can often be seen playing games such as osu!, KovaaK's Aim Trainer, Aim Hero, Aim Lab to help improve their mouse flicks, reflexes, precision and accuracy. Tyson "TenZ" Ngo playing Aim Lab to train and warm up would be a good example to this. (Ngo, 2021)

- During a stream session of famous VALORANT athlete Michael "dapr" Gulino (2021) shared his sentiments regarding the mindset of a professional athlete.
- MOBA players usually go into custom training maps where they can try out different builds, test their burst skill combos and advanced/extended ability rotations.

A nice example to muscle memory would be the famous Spencer "Hiko" Martin's flick where the casters can't help but yell "Inhuman reactions!". (Martin, 2014)

The next skilled expertise is metagaming. Simply put, your motor skills allow you to strike hard and precisely, your metagaming skills show you where, when, and how to strike.

2.3.2.2 *Metagaming*. People of Wikipedia defined metagame as:

Metagame, Hypergame, or game about the game, is an approach to a game that transcends or operates outside of the prescribed rules of the game, uses external factors to affect the game, or goes beyond the supposed limits or environment set by the game.

Metagame is not simply a strategy, it is the knowledge of current strategic trends. It is the widely accepted set of strategies at your disposal that can affect a game even before the game begins.

The metagame changes as both the game and its players change, and so what is considered the "best" approach to the game is often in a state of flux (Donaldson, 2017).

Metagame is the collective knowledge shared amongst players, the constant learning and testing process of best strategies to employ in certain scenarios. It is the "chemistry" of competitive video games, so to speak. Because even if the player base comes up with the perfect strategy, game becomes repetitive, and outcome is usually predetermined. As games that involve strategy are not meant to be so restricting, developers tend to resolve this issue by updating the game with new mechanics, nerfs and buffs to game elements and new content that suppress existing and overpowering

elements. Due to these constant changes brought upon the competitive video games (which is to keep the game fresh and interesting with new content and address balancing issues) the metagame is never perfected and is going to require more iterations. Even if there is no such overpowering strategy trend going on, the demand for new content from the players will eventually lead to balancing issues all over again.

This term is often shortened and referred to as “meta” by the players. Not to be mistaken with the word metagaming in Role-playing games, which is an immersion breaking and mostly considered as a method to gain advantage over others. As players cannot use their real-life knowledge in the game unless that knowledge is also acquired by their character in the game.

A rule to prevent metagaming in RPG can be found in *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Rulebook* (1981, Gygax & Arneson), pg B60:

- Your character doesn't know that

A player should not allow his or her character to act on information that character has no way of knowing (for example, attacking an NPC because the NPC killed a previous character run by the player, even though the NPC and current character have never met). If the players get careless about this the DM should remind them. The DM may, in addition, forbid certain actions to the characters involved. The DM should make it clear to the players *before* the adventure begins that characters may not act on information they don't have. It will save lots of time later.

Usage of the word meta can often be heard even from the broadcasters of eSport related streams or user guides uploaded to social media platforms. Even though metagaming is similar to chemistry, usually, it is not single-handedly brought together by a single person. After being invented, players will test the limits and try to perfect it further and sometimes, share their findings on the internet. Even if they refuse to share their findings with other players and disrupt the nature of the metagaming, other players will eventually take notice of the findings and copy it. There are websites that do data mining to match results and compare the win rates of certain champions and certain itemization.

There are also multiple ways to observe these good players that ambitious other viewers who also play the game can learn from them.

As demonstrated by a number of studies on video gaming, play does not take place in a sociocultural vacuum, as players will always draw upon existing knowledge derived from previous play experiences or engagement with extrinsic resources in order to achieve success (Ang, Wildon, & Zaphiris, 2010; Chen, 2010; Harper, 2010; Humphreys & de Zwart, 2012; Jansz & Martens, 2005; Lynch, 2013).

Some people may argue that very talented players can single-handedly create unique and superior meta guides but, in my opinion, those players also learn their basics and fundamental understanding of how games work via the social media and applications of others as no player masters a video game without any influence from others in a competitive multiplayer game. Because the environment affects the players in almost every way.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The gaming culture has been embraced by many people across the globe year by year and the age scale of gamers can vary from under 18 to above 65. It is also valuable to mention that the rapid development of technology allowed anyone from almost anywhere to connect and play with other players via servers. Servers in online multiplayer games are divided into regions (such as Europe East, Europe West, North America, et cetera.) and players prefer to play with less latency for optimal gameplay experience which leads them to play with people close to their regions but there are also occurrences where players join other regions despite the latency issues to play with different players.

Because of globality of online gaming, this culture is very diverse in almost every aspect (the age, the level of education, the quality of hardware, the language, connection speed). And yet, when I first delved into the world of gaming, other gamers were still able to understand each other through their own gaming slangs that almost made it seem like a jargon or a language at first. After often hearing the word “meta” and “off-meta” when players tried to indicate what is widely accepted or rejected in terms of strategic choices in video games, it was clear to me that this phenomenon in video games needed to be investigated since people who don’t often play games have less chance of being aware of this interesting phenomenon.

Looking through previous academic research done on this topic, we can see it was done in a more formal and mostly quantitative manner. There is a need for both formal and informal research into the nature of metagaming in video games. Because metagaming, in a sense, is the mixing of games (an activity of leisure), science and strategy to achieve best results in a game. Many may have disregarded the fact that this in-depth research of “what is the best approach to win a game” that has captured a high percentage of players’ attention is not only run by highly educated and intelligent academics and adults but also teenagers and younger players as well. Whether employed poorly or skillfully, the strategic trends in video games have been a widely accepted rulebook that’s been shared (sometimes via word of mouth, sometimes videos and sometimes via diligently run tests turned into texts) in the gamer’s culture.

Thus, the strategy to employ during this research is the ethnographical research strategy to avoid any unnatural and artificial environments and their potential effects on this clearer perspective that we are aiming to deduce from such a culture.

Close-reading technique will also be applied to the medium which we call video games to uncover the hidden details in these competitive video games. Because gamers also apply close-reading technique to figure out the secrets of video games to enhance their chances at winning or learning the game better, even if it is unknowingly. Close-reading is beautifully defined by Sheldon (2004) and the definition speaks for itself:

The purpose was to see beyond the entertainment value each film possessed, to see the seams, to see how all the elements came together to create a unified entertainment experience. If you can get to the point where your favorite game no longer entertains you, you will have taken a crucial step toward understanding how it worked its magic. It can be a sad moment and an exhilarating one all at the same time.

After having thousands of hours of online gaming experience and having set foot in the competitive world of esports (GameXNow, 2013), I believed that it would be fruitful to emphasize, prove and/or disprove the former research perspectives with up-to-date examples from recent tournaments, live official streams of professional esports athletes and websites commonly used by majority of gamers. The research questions I aim to find answers to are as follows:

- What is the definition of esports? Is esports actually a sport?
- What is the definition of Metagaming? What purpose does it serve?
- Can we use Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and VALORANT to gain an understanding on the usage of metagame in competitive video games and esports?

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Rise of Metagaming Trends

When a game is subjected to metagame (the game about the game), it is first dissected into multiple pieces which a player can influence and improve their chances of winning. For example, in MOBA games, these pieces can be team composition, character played, time management, drafting and banning strategies during picking phase, character itemization (even buying order of items), currency management, playing towards early game phase or the late game phase, funneling your resources towards the highest carry potential teammates et cetera.

But it is also worth mentioning that strategic trends employed in games are not always founded or invented in such a scientific and systematic manner. Players tend to notice the win rates of newly released or updated characters, items and try to forge it into a tool. For example:

- A streamer or content creator becomes charmed by a character and plays it exclusively to master it. To make that character their main character or signature character. During this process they find a method that helps them win games easier.

Some of these strategies are mostly be neglected in lower levels of competitive play as the players are mostly forming teams via random matchmaking systems and not everyone is fond of sticking with the meta or trying their best to win because games are not taken as seriously as possible by everyone. The people who avoid sticking by the rules of successful metagaming strategies and trends are often labeled as off-meta and are highly disliked by the majority of the ambitious players.

But viewers also enjoy seeing professional players play some off-meta characters in the tournaments, as it can often be more enjoyable to watch. Even so, repetitive usage of metagame trends can usually be seen in higher rank matches as players are all well-versed in the bible that we call metagame. (Riot Games, 2022)

Because at the summit of the competitions, players have almost highest possible mechanical (motor) skills. So, their mechanical skills have little room left for improvement but the metagame can always be improved upon and applied to the matches to strengthen their chances of winning. And the fact that these players have the mechanical skills to apply the strategies they come up with so efficiently makes it much more impressive to witness up close. Because the impact of metagame grows exponentially when the player can back it up with sufficient mechanical skills.

There have also been certain cases where the viewers hated seeing the same meta over and over, repetitively till the point that it no longer was exciting. When a metagame trend has been so dominant for so long, it disrupts the flux of metagame. Because the question of “what is the best approach to win a game” becomes answered by the same question over and over for a long period of time and players stop inventing, creating or learning. And those are arguably what makes video games fun most of the time. Most recent example of this would be the Overwatch GOATS meta. (theScore esports, 2020a)

4.2 Impact of The Metagame

Metagaming affects the decisions of the players and becomes the tricks up their sleeve to employ in certain situations where players wouldn't be able to handle by just pushing their mechanical skills. A counter matchup, simply being the last one alive in the team against multiple enemy players or even playing versus a hacker like can be the examples to this.

- In a game of Overwatch, there has been a case of a hacker with his friends appearing on a streamers match. This hacker was able to lock his aim onto other players' heads via third party tools (Aimbot) to deal highest possible damage without missing any bullets and no one could stop this guy from killing everyone. But the streamer managed to turn the tables on the hacker by reorganizing his team composition so that they can counterplay the hacker. A character with a shield that can block all the bullets hacker has, a character to absorb the bullets and projectiles shot by the hacker, two supports, a damage dealer character whose head is behind their hitbox to avoid being shot in the head easily yet can deal lots of damage. But this knowledge was available to

the streamer for a long time because it was called the “Pirate ship” strategy. Where you surround the main damage dealer with shields and supply them with lots of heals and protective abilities to survive almost any situation while he can consistently shoot down enemies. (Follow Overwatch, 2017)

- In MOBAs, where the last man standing in the team tries to kill the remaining enemy minion waves before they reach the tower to keep their tower’s backdoor protection active. Backdoor protection is a game mechanic which prevents players from destroying towers straight up to finish the game. Simply put, a tower takes much less damage when no enemy minions are nearby. Minion waves spawn every 30 seconds so if the player kills the enemy minion wave when his teammates are dead (and the death timers usually are between 40 to 90 seconds depending on character level) the next wave spawns 30 seconds later and it takes around another 20 seconds to reach the tower again. So, the player can prevent losing the game just by avoiding enemy players and killing the minion wave either by using long range abilities or cutting off the minion wave before it reaches the enemy team. For example: During an LCS Final series moment commentated by ex esports athlete Yiliang "Doublelift" Peng and his friends noticed that the game was possibly saved by Jonathan “Armao” who used such a strategy. (Peng, 2021)
- Few of the simplest examples for metagaming are the level 1 strategies that are employed in MOBA genres. For example, people who play more than many hours of MOBA, tend to have a habit of moving their characters to the same position they usually play at when the match begins to wait out the starting countdown, which usually lasts for 60-90 seconds. Some players who know this pattern hide and wait for enemy players to walk the same usual “safe” route and ambush them while they are most likely unaware and not on edge. Simply ganging up on enemies even before the match starts.

What heavily affects the metagame and the balance state of the game varies from game to game. While VALORANT allows players to pick champions which are exactly same as the opponents while some MOBA games such as League of Legends don’t. On top of that, character itemization in VALORANT can also be exactly the same, without

any relation to the character selected while League of Legends characters can't build exactly the same items and achieve the same results on both teams when the champions are different. These core game mechanics and design help create a fairer and more balanced competition environment for the VALORANT allowing both teams to stand a chance till the matches end.

After seeing both the consumer and the producer sides of the game development, what seems to ruin many games that have tremendous esports potential is that the policies that are enforced by the financial reasons or lack of game design experience. For example:

- Payment options that are introduced in video games that allow progression via money to gain an upper hand over others (also known as pay to win or P2W) which cause players to not be able to compete in an equal environment by bringing economic hierarchy in real life to video games where poor cannot match the resources of the rich. These pay to win mechanics can often be seen in mobile games and MMORPGs. According to research done by Gregg2g (2022), Diablo Immortal becomes exponentially pay to win as the game progresses further allowing in depth customizations. And the amount required to max out your character in Diablo is over \$540.000. (Knox, 2022)
- New classes or characters introduced in MOBA games sometimes come out so strong that they are almost game-breaking. Arguments about why some champions are released so strong can be seen all over the internet and even though some cautions are taken before they hit the esports grounds, sometimes they are not enough. While some believe it also is a marketing move to encourage buying the new product, the others argue that it's just that people don't know the champions mechanics yet and can't understand how to play against them. For example, Riot's one of the strongest champions upon release (if not the strongest), Aphelios, dominated the tournaments and was among the top champion picks for so long. (theScore esports, 2020b)

- Even upon achieving a balanced state of the game, players tend to get bored from the repetitiveness of the gameplay. Which is why the new content is given to increase customer retention and as the size of the content grows and interaction between playable characters and items increase, balance becomes harder to maintain and eventually lead to self-destruction of the game. And such things are investigated closely by players such as Vandiril (2022), who dedicated his Youtube channel to finding bugs and breaking records.

Instead of presenting more examples and to avoid the prerequisite knowledge to understand these examples, we will narrow down our scope to two renown FPS games. To give clearer insight on this topic, our focus will be the comparison of VALORANT and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive. After applying close reading to these games and extracting the information from the comparison, we'll present our findings and try to reach the conclusions to the questions in mind.

4.3 The Comparison of VALORANT & CS:GO

The reason why the comparison of VALORANT and CS:GO is chosen over other games is basically because they share the same fundamentals in their designs. The order of renown FPS games from oldest to newest are in order of Wolfenstein (1992), Doom (1993), Quake (1996), Rainbow Six (1998), Unreal Tournament (1999), Counter-Strike (1999), Halo (2001), Battlefield (2002), Call of Duty (2003), Overwatch (2016) and the latest one is the VALORANT (2020).

Even though VALORANT is the newest, it isn't the most popular yet. Surprisingly and statistically, CS:GO is still reigning as champion in terms of popularity according to esportsearnings.com. (Top Games Awarding Prize Money - Esports Game Rankings, n.d.)



Figure 1. List of Top Games Awarding Prize Money taken from esportsearnings.com in 31 July 2022.

And Riot Games (the developer and publisher of VALORANT) hired ex esports athletes, who played FPS games like Counter-Strike, to help develop VALORANT. So fundamentally, VALORANT and CS:GO have major similarities. Few game mechanics in VALORANT are adjusted to address the issues which were noticed by these

professionals during their careers (when they used to play CS:GO) and turn VALORANT into a different and ideally a better game.

4.3.1 Fundamental rules. For starters, both have plant/defuse the bomb game mode as their chosen competitive game mode. In this game mode, players are split into 2 teams of 5. Terrorists/Attackers and Counter-Terrorists/Defenders are competing to stop one another either by completely eliminating the enemy team or successfully achieving their objective. Terrorists' objective is to plant the bomb and secure it till the bomb explodes and the Counter-Terrorists aim to stop them from planting or defuse the bomb that has been planted. The time limit for Terrorists to plant the bomb is 115 in CS:GO and 100 in VALORANT. The players will swap teams at 15th round in CS:GO and 12th round in VALORANT to allow them to play on both sides. The win condition is to win 15 matches in CS:GO and 13 matches in VALORANT. If both sides are tied at 15-15 or 12-12, the match continues overtime. In overtime, player's in-game currency is set the certain number and weapons in hand are reset to set them on equal footing before the decisive rounds. To win in overtime, the score difference should be greater than one such as 17-15 or 18-16.

Apart from the fundamental rules of the game, players have come up with their own set of strategies to help them play the game better. Some of these are to control the economy better while some of them are to manage the role and objective distribution of each other.

4.3.2 In-game economy. Both these games have their own currencies to allow players to purchase their weapons and equipment before the start of a round. In the first round, players are granted barely enough to purchase themselves a pistol and a few pieces of equipment. The winner of the first round gets a major money advantage over the opponents in terms of currency and can purchase stronger rifles with a full armor that usually helps the winner of the first round win the next round as well since the opponents are only able to afford close range weapons such as submachine guns and pistols. But in some cases, If the losing team with the disadvantage can manage to kill an opponent and snatch their weapon away, this can be very punishing for the other team because they will have exhausted all their resources and the enemy will be able to match them in terms of

firepower. The detailed information about gold distribution can be found in the Table 3.1 below.

Table 1

Ingame Economy and Currency Distribution Variables of VALORANT and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive.

	VALORANT	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive
First round amount	800	800
Currency per Kill	200	300
Planting the Bomb	300	250
Defusing the Bomb	300	250
Round lost	1900	1400
Round won	3000	3250
Losing streak of two	2400	1900
Losing streak of three	2900	2400
Losing streak of four	2900	2900
Losing streak of five	2900	3400
Maximum currency limit	9000	16000

If inspected carefully, you can see that both these games even have comeback mechanics available to help players. Losing many rounds back-to-back allows them to afford equal weapons to opponents after a while and there are limits to amount of currency that can be held by each player so that gap in currency doesn't grow infinitely larger during a one-sided match (where a team dominates the other).

As I mentioned earlier, proper equipment will perform much better in the hands of a good player. So, the in-game economy has a huge impact on the outcome of the match. To maintain being able to buy proper equipment or sometimes catch enemies off guard,

players came up with various strategies and named them accordingly. Most commonly known ones are as follows:

- Full buy: rifles or snipers, armor, and abilities
- Force buy: SMGs, pistols, some armor, some abilities
- Eco/save: pistols and very few abilities
- Full save: no weapons or abilities

Often after winning the first round, winning team full buys to maintain advantage and opponent usually goes for economic buys to save some currency for next round also known as eco. But sometimes players choose to force buy so that they can catch enemies off guard to potentially kill them, deliver economic damage and take away their equipment. This can also be observed when the game is about to be lost and the best option is to force buy because there is no point in saving money if there isn't going to be a next round.

Full buy costs approximately 3400 for the rifle, 1000 for the armor and few hundred more for the gadgets. Unless the player prefers a sniper rifle which is around 5000. There is also another thing worth mentioning which is when a player is close to reaching the maximum currency limit, they often are expected to buy weapons for their teammates so that the excess currency does not go to waste.

4.3.3 The team composition. The older FPS games like Counter-Strike do not have champions to be selected, they've come up with roles of their own to address the issue of lacking meta. There are 5 roles that are not defined in the original Counter-Strike guidelines yet experienced players know which role to assume. These roles are Entry Fragger, Support, In-game Leader (IGL), AWPer, Lurker.

- Entry Fragger – The first person to enter each objective when attacking. Riskiest role in the game where the player usually ends up dying and providing info with whereabouts and numbers of enemies in the objective. If an Entry Fragger manages to kill a person before dying, it is considered a good trade. Entry fraggers must have a good angle clearing ability which allows them to take on enemies 1 by 1 instead of multiple enemies looking at him at once. This is also why

sometimes players resort to unpredictable methods like walking over Molotov cocktails and smoke grenades to catch enemies off-guard. During his co-casting of a tournament with his friend, Michael “Shroud” Grzesiek comments about the role of an Entry Fragger. (Grzesiek, 2022b)

- Support – The player who specializes in the in-depth usage of their utilities to help their Entry Fraggers and the rest of the team advance to the point while taking less risks. Supports use smoke grenades as a cover to block out specific angles where defenders usually cover and shoot from. Flashbang grenades are also utilized right before a solid push to blind enemies who are protecting the route their team is pushing through. Explosive grenades are to push enemies out of their camping corners or even kill them if they don’t react quickly. They are also responsible for taking trades of their Entry Fraggers that die during the push.
- In-game Leader – As the name implies, they are the leader of the team. The voice every player on the same team listens to. In-game Leaders usually are the smart players in the game who control the flow of the team and constantly observe the game. They keep players on the same page so that everyone works towards the same goal without hindering one another. As matches have quick paces and it requires on the spot thinking with the little time you have before enemies come rushing in to defend or attack, team leaders need to have total control over the situations and share the strategy quickly which is usually using a concise language. Leadership skills of these players also allow them to quickly recover from a tough round or lose streak and help boost their team’s morale back again.
- AWPPer – The name comes from the weapon AWP (previously known as Magnum Sniper Rifle) which is one of the most, if not the most, deadly weapons in Counter-Strike. The weapon has the highest range, highest bullet damage per bullet in the game which basically translates to one shot, one kill. But it also has its disadvantages. It has a high price, long reloading animation after each shot, and a very limited ammo. So, it is a high risk and high reward weapon. As such, almost every team has their own AWPPer, who excel with this weapon. AWPers usually secure long corridors, try to secure some key picks. The weapon impacts the team’s economy as it is quite pricey, so the AWP is not always affordable in a

tough match. So, when given the opportunity, the AWPers must get the most out of their weapons and try to not lose it for as long as possible. World renown snipers like Kenny “kennyS” Schrub provides perfect examples on how to be a good AWPPer.

- Lurker – A strong attack involves all team members executing a perfect push strategy and securing the objective by overpowering the enemy players. But lurkers use the chaos and noise their team is creating on the other objectives of the game to their advantage. They silently walk around the enemy rotation routes. The enemy assumes that all players are positioned at the objective where the gunshots can be heard from so, they are usually rushing to defend the objective unaware of the Lurker waiting for them to walk by around the corner. Lurkers usually have to be patient, have keen senses to notice the approaching or retreating enemy footsteps and provide their team some info, some picks from the enemies, catch the flankers off-guard and secure the other objectives that enemy has left open for their teammates to rotate quickly. A very good example of patience and awareness during lurking can be seen in a clip of Oleksandr "s1mple" Kostylev, who is presumed to be one of the best players in CS:GO. (Kostylev, 2016)

But these roles are mostly fluid, and players can interchange these roles between them even during an ongoing match. Richard Garfield defined metagame as “how a game interfaces beyond itself” and I believe these roles defined by the players are a good example for it. Players added layers, hierarchy, and systems to enhance their odds of winning and control the chaos on their virtual battlegrounds. But these weren’t the only terms and strategies they employed to win games all this time. Once VALORANT embraced these metagaming terms and strategic trends, they also embedded these into the roots of their video games.

In VALORANT, by default, the agents are broken down into four general roles: Sentinels, Controllers, Initiators and Duelists. These roles are given to agents based on their unique abilities.

- Controllers can help control the perimeter of the objectives via smoke fields or walls, enabling their teams to deploy safer while Initiators are able to lead the team

into those objectives safely as their toolkit allows them to survive the initial conflict moment which is the deadliest one as all enemies are alive. Basically, Controllers are the Supports who use smoke grenade like abilities to allow players secure the perimeters with less risks such as smoke screens and walls.

- The Duelists are designed for the ace players of the team, who are the main fraggers of the team. Some duelists are fast and more mobile (i.e., Jett) while some others allow players to go on a killing spree safer by draining health or becoming invincible (i.e., Reyna). Phoenix's ultimate allows him to rush into the point, clear the angles and take some kills if possible before returning before his ultimate expires which makes him a perfect Entry Fragger.
- Initiators don't often use their own abilities to push the objectives themselves because equipping their tools and swapping back to weapons is a huge risk while advancing. Initiators are the other type of Supports which use abilities that create earthquakes or flashbangs to support their Entry Fraggers to safely push into an objective and fight enemies who are blinded or stunned.
- Sentinels are the defensive players who don't aggressively rush into points but defend the objectives on the Defenders side. When placed on the Attackers team, Sentinels become the lurkers and secure the other objective or the route behind their team.

If investigated further, these roles match with the roles in CS:GO.

4.3.4 The metagame carries over. So, VALORANT players already had this level of metagame available in their hands since the launch of the game. What they did to further improve this existing common knowledge was to first research new possibilities which were enabled via the game mechanics that was added on top of the existing Counter-Strike mechanics and test the limits of the existing environment starting from the limits of each and every map. Then they moved onto test the agents to find their limits.

For example, on the map named Ascent there is a wall that divides the attackers base and the bomb site B. After realizing that wall there is not bulletproof (bullets shot through the wall can still damage the players even though it deals less damage) players started adjusting their weapons to the head-level of enemies and spraying through the walk

path of enemies just to score some damage or sometimes instantly kill enemy players standing in a traditional spot. Even further improved counter strategy to this is to shoot the bullet holes that appear on the wall because the defender players are standing literally right behind those holes as they shoot through and are also susceptible to being damaged by the bullets themselves. This action of shooting enemies through walls by predicting their positions is referred to as Wallbanging. (Peak, 2020) But when combined with the Sova's recon bolt ability, which scans enemies nearby the result was quite impressive.



Figure 2. Screenshot taken from Peak's Strong Wallbang Spots on Ascent for Sova video on Youtube. (Peak, 2020)



Figure 3. Screenshot taken from Peak’s Strong Wallbang Spots on Ascent for Sova video on Youtube. (Peak, 2020)

Another example would be the usage of abilities of certain agents, such as Brimstone and Viper, which enable them to deter defenders from defusing the bomb in a post-plant scenario without even seeing the enemies or shooting at them. On almost every available map, players have designated a perfect bomb plant site that they can cover from longest distances. On top of this, some advanced players have also memorized the trajectories of their Snake bite (Viper) and Incendiary (Brimstone) abilities to precisely land them on top of the planted bombs. This allowed Attackers to effectively kill defenders as they are trying to defuse the bombs without even seeing them or being close to them because these abilities deal just enough damage to kill defenders before they can fully defuse the bombs. If defenders choose to wait out the duration of these abilities, player can still contest the point from a distance with their weapons to stall them out longer to help secure the win for their team. This is what players call a “Lineup” and various examples can be seen in pro play.



Figure 4. Screenshot taken from How to CLUTCH with Brimstone Molly Lineups | Valorant video of Youtuber danklar. (danklar, 2021)



Figure 5. Screenshot taken from How to CLUTCH with Brimstone Molly Lineups | Valorant video of Youtuber danklar. (danklar, 2021)

Some example usages and the impact of the lineups can also be seen in pro play during VALORANT Ignition Series - FaZe Clan vs 100T (S. Martin, 2020) and VCT NA Stage 2 - Sentinels vs Luminosity (Valorant Clip Collect, 2022). Even though the language used there is inappropriate, VCT NA Stage 2 video gets the message across clearly. Even without knowing how to shoot your weapon, you can beat professionals using metagame. And even if it is not how the game is meant to be played, it doesn't matter. Because esports is not an activity of leisure, it's a job. A job where players compete to win and provide their teams with profitable, marketable content just like in other traditional sports.

To emphasize this message even further, VALORANT developers had a show match against the ex-CS:GO pros and the results speak for themselves. During the show match, VALORANT developers used strategies that were not yet acquired by the professionals who had to solely depend on their mechanical skills. Because this show match took place during the close beta prior to the launch of VALORANT. Here are some highlights from the match:

- Volcano's paint shells (grenades) coming through teleporter (GoldenboyFTW, 2020c)
- Nickwu's recon bolt lineup to spot enemies across the map (GoldenboyFTW, 2020a)
- Nickwu's trying to secure a pick from enemy team via Hunter's Fury and a lineup combo (GoldenboyFTW, 2020b)
- Volcano fighting 1vs3 to stop enemies from planting when there is only 20 seconds left on the timer (GoldenboyFTW, 2020d)

The show match results are as shown below:

Table 2

Match Results of Team Developers vs Team Loaded (Ex-pros)

Map	Developers	Streamers
Bind	13	3
Haven	13	5
Split	13	2

Volcano's 1vs3 scenario (GoldenboyFTW, 2020d) is not only a display of skill but also a display of game knowledge. He knows that the other team has only 20 seconds left on the timer to plant to bomb to avoid losing the round. While planting the bomb, players cannot use their weapons or move so the 1vs3 scenario is reduced to a 1vs2 scenario. Which is why he uses the grenade to force enemies to relocate first then proceeds to rush in when the explosions cover his footsteps to finish them off. Even if he fails to do so, enemies will not be able to plant or eliminate the rest of his teammates in the little time they have left which is how he uses the existing knowledge in his favor to win the match.

Another example to this would be the clip where Michael "Shroud" Grzesiek shifted his focus to the enemy bomb carrier. He also combined wallbanging with the info that he received from his teammates to pinpoint the location of the enemy bomb planter and he secured the win for his teammates. (Grzesiek, 2022a)

Chapter 5

Discussion & Conclusion

While reviewing the literature on the topics of esports and metagame, it was obvious that metagame has been investigated in a formal manner and data driven from the sources like analytic websites and tested in artificial environments. The inference of such data driven experiments should be limited to the info that comes from the success rates of existing game mechanics and content such as team compositions, itemization of characters and ability point distributions after thoroughly filtering the data to find out the players choices and reasonings. Few examples would be:

- Marketing these strategic trends in areas which aim to educate upcoming athletes. Such as gaming lessons, tutorials, or guides.
- Find out popular characters or cosmetics that are played even though they are off-meta to spot the successful design patterns and figure out the customer's preferences.
- Adjusting the games according to these statistics so that the players can enjoy a well-balanced game which isn't overpowered by a single strategy. This will also affect player retention by enabling variety of choices and satisfy both ends of the player spectrum.

The reasoning behind the method mentioned above is that video games are played by people of a wide spectrum where one end goes all the way to most competitive gamers and the other end is the least competitive and casual players who enjoy gaming in their free time for various reasons (to relieve stress, to socialize, to explore, et cetera.). On top of that, there are other factors that disrupts the flow of data such as newly released content's learning curve (which may cause data to be misleading till players actually learn how to play), players skill levels in different ranking brackets (a character can be devastating in a good players hands and useless in the hands of the weak at the same time just like Aphelios), player's hardware not being good enough to perform and many others. Therefore, artificial research would not be able to provide proper information to the people in business fields such as game development or design unless it is run in the targeted game's habitat and corresponding player pool.

Other than economic usages of metagaming trends, the actual usages of metagame in the gamers' culture is as a tool that will help tip the scales in the favor of the hardworking and researching. Just as the definition of metagame on Wikipedia, it is the game beyond the game that goes beyond the supposed limits of the game. To go beyond the game, the player should have tested and learned the possible limitations given by the game and find the ways to surpass these, if there are any. This comparison of VALORANT and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive also brought some facts to light such as metagame transcending a title and flowing into a genre which simply means that a strategy in a tactical FPS game can often be seen in another tactical FPS game's metagame.

As players go up in the ranking system, they are opposed by other players who are at similar or sometimes even higher mechanical skill levels. Players who care about their rankings tend to invoke their knowledge of metagame trends to enhance their chances of winning in dire situations such as counter match ups or challenging matches against good players. Especially at esports tournaments, where players must go against best of the best to achieve the best results which is winning at all costs and bringing the trophies, fame, and the prize money home. So, metagaming is another dimension of the game and another weapon in the arsenal of a competitive video gamer. The cumulative knowledge of gaming strategies that has been shared or displayed on the internet.

I would like to encourage future researchers, esports enthusiasts, game designers and game developers to investigate the methods of balancing video games because of the various reasons I mentioned in Chapter 4 such as maintaining customer retention, financial reasons or lack of design experience which causes imbalance and unfair grounds in competitive video games to help secure the fair and healthy esports environments.

As an upcoming game developer and designer, I would also like to mention the possible benefits of using predetermined character, item or any other content's frameworks and ground rules to keep the games balanced as the game grows bigger and bigger. For example:

- Releasing characters in couples of similar class/categories to enable both teams to benefit from them especially when the game doesn't allow playing multiple of the same characters.

- Having characters that don't have access to abilities of all other classes at the same time and the exact opposite at the same time. Basically, either let every player grow stronger exponentially or stop anyone from overpowering others singlehandedly. (A comparison of Dota 2 and League of Legends would be promising to see the different design factors and how they impact the competitive environment)
- Symmetrical environment designs in games where enemies don't switch sides like in VALORANT, Counter-Strike or Overwatch. This method will allow both teams to utilize all aspects available to the other team's environments (which includes different features that each side of the map has including the bugs, features, and flaws.)

As there are many game genres, coming up with a framework that suits all of them at the same time is near impossible. Which is why I suggest the upcoming researchers to experiment and research the possibilities in their targeted gaming environments.

The statistics regarding the growth of esports' viewership and market worth seems to be convincing enough that future of esports is bright and promising. Yet, the negative consensus upon gaming as a job or gaming as a sport seems to come from the older generations' bias towards games being unproductive and children's play.

Presumably, the newer generations who are more familiar with gaming since their younger ages due to having access to mobile phones, consoles and computers at their homes will be more welcoming towards this new and upcoming sports genre. For those who will have doubts about the esports as a hobby or career will hopefully be convinced by the growing market shares and the gamer population. Because just like our previous generations who weren't encouraged by their parents to pursue careers in art and sports due to their bad reputations to make a living, the current generation of potential esports athletes are having the same doubts as the systems of esports have not been properly managed and systemized yet. Which is why I believe there is still time for esports to mature into a traditional sport which is accepted by the society.

I would also like to mention that due to the nature of ethnographic research method, the data here has been acquired from various esports tournaments, athletes, and

content creators' social media platforms as well as my personal experiences and deductions which means the data gathered here is subject to bias. To reduce these grounds to bias, I suggest readers to utilize the links in references as they read through this research which will also help them understand and visualize the topics and examples better.

I invite future researchers to interview experts and professionals on these topics in a formal manner and attempt to derive as much as information about esports and metagaming which is more quantitative compared to qualitative methods like ethnographic research method.



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