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Exploring sponsorship perception in E-Sports tournaments:

How do consumers perceive sponsorship, and what factors influence their perception?

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Abstract

Problem: This thesis addresses the rapid growth and increasing influence of E-Sports as a popular and competitive sport, along with the opportunities it offers for marketing and brand promotion. Despite its popularity, there needs to be more knowledge and information about sponsorship in E-Sports and the dynamics of sponsor relationships with E-Sports consumers. Therefore, this thesis intends to bridge this gap by connecting established sponsorship theories with the emerging E-Sports events and competitions market.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how consumers perceive the sponsorship of E-Sports tournaments. The goal is to provide insights for companies looking to engage in E-Sports sponsorship and enhance their strategies in order to effectively connect with E-Sports fans. By focusing on sponsorship congruence in E-Sports tournaments, the study aims to explore consumer perceptions of sponsorship and identify the factors that influence their perception. The research question guides an empirical investigation to help companies improve their sponsorship strategies and enhance engagement with E-Sports fans.

Method: A quantitative research method has been used as an online survey to achieve our study's purpose. It included 83 respondents.Throughout the study, the scales used for the variables are validated through previous research studies conducted in the field of sponsorship. These studies have established the reliability and validity of these scales in measuring the respective constructs.

Results: Our research contributes to understanding the factors that drive effective E-Sports sponsorship and offers valuable insights for academia and industry. It provides a basis for future investigations that can further enhance our knowledge of this dynamic and rapidly evolving field. The study identified key factors that influence the effectiveness of E-Sports sponsorships, including authenticity, fit, and trust. These factors provide insights for future sponsorship investments in the E-Sports industry.

Keywords: E-Sports, sponsorship, E-Sports sponsorship, perception of sponsorship

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1. Introduction

1.1 Practical reasons for the chosen topic

> The crowd goes wild, and people shout, applaud, and celebrate their idols. The atmosphere fills you. You can feel the emotions of the people watching. Everyone is on their feet, eagerly and excitedly following the events. From home, millions of people follow with excitement and anticipation what is being streamed on their TV sets. One could think that the final of the soccer world championship is on, or the Superbowl. But no, it is a computer game competition. Surprisingly similar to the traditional big sports events.

Not so long ago, gamers met at LAN (Local Area Network) parties, playing and competing. These games took place in a small friendly setting. However, that changed quickly with the development of High-Speed Internet and the introduction of social media and streaming providers. Thus, a more professional and much more competitive way of gaming emerged. E-Sports, which stands for electronic sports, are professionally organized videogame tournaments where top gamers, known as pro-players or pro-gamers, compete for prestige and prizes such as money (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 495). The E-Sports phenomenon has gained significant traction in recent years, with a growing number of players worldwide participating in professionally organized video game tournaments (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 495). According to a study by Hamari and Sjöblom (2017), the growth of E-Sports has been fueled by the increasing popularity of video games and the emergence of online streaming platforms. E-Sports tournaments have attracted a substantial global following, with viewership numbers surpassing those of traditional sports events (Hamari et al., 2017, p. 39).

Similar to water sports, E-Sports includes several video games and tournaments, some of which may consist of multiple games (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). These events are categorized into Amateur, High Amateur, and Professional competitions (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). The amateur and high amateur games often occur in a virtual environment, and the professional competitions occur in physical locations such as stadiums and arenas (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). Since 2010, E-Sports has become increasingly popular and a global phenomenon (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). Many people do not think of E-Sports as a sport. However, competitive gaming has been recognized as an official sport in South Korea, and other countries are already following suit (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). It has been identified as the fastest-growing sport in the world. It is generally one of the fastest-growing industries (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). The accessibility of platforms such as Twitch and YouTube has allowed fans from around the world to watch and engage with E-Sports competitions (Hamari et al., 2017, p. 39).

The popularity of E-Sports has risen highly in recent years. This widespread viewership has garnered the attention of marketers, who recognize the potential for brand exposure and engagement with a highly engaged and technologically literate demographic (Hamari et al., 2017, p. 39). Consequently, sponsoring E-Sports tournaments has become an increasingly attractive marketing strategy for companies aiming to connect with this growing audience. It is becoming increasingly popular with major consumer brands due

to the industry's very high popularity, economic impact, and global reach (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). In 2016 alone, more than 600 brands began sponsoring E-Sports, including well-known companies such as Google, Sony, Manchester City, Paris Saint-German, Nissan, Red Bull, and Coca-Cola (Freitas et al. 2020, p. 496). The major benefit of sponsorship is that it allows firms to engage in dialogue with specific target audiences in the fragmented mass market of esports, while also achieving a wide range of brand objectives, including brand awareness, image enhancement, and sales (Garland et al., 2008). Sponsoring E-Sports tournaments offers companies a unique opportunity to reach a younger, technologically literate audience that is difficult to reach through traditional advertising methods. With the growth of social media and online streaming platforms, E-Sports has become a cultural phenomenon that has captivated millions of young people worldwide. By sponsoring E-Sports tournaments, companies can tap into this lucrative and fast-growing market, associate their brand with a popular and exciting activity, and connect with customers to build brand loyalty. In addition, companies can present their products and services creatively and innovatively, setting them apart from their competitors and strengthening their brand identity.

The brands hope to benefit from increased brand awareness by sponsoring competitive gaming since the E-Sports fan base reached 495 million people in 2020 and is estimated to grow to 646 million by 2023 (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). This makes it more extensive than the fan base of the NFL and is similar to several popular sports (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). The potential of E-Sports for marketing and brand promotion is enormous and undeniable, as evidenced by the growing number of companies investing in E-Sports sponsorships. Moreover, E-Sports tournaments have the potential to reach a larger and more diverse audience than traditional sports, as demonstrated by the Intel Extreme Masters in Katowice, which attracted 46 million viewers on YouTube and Twitch, compared to the 1.7 million viewers who watched the 2014 World Cup on ESPN (Freitas et al., 2020, p. 496). Therefore, it is no surprise that E-Sports has become a cultural phenomenon that has captivated millions of young people worldwide.

E-Sports has become a legitimate and extremely popular sport that attracts a large and diverse fan base worldwide. As a result, it has become an attractive market for consumer brands looking to reach a younger audience through innovative and creative marketing strategies. With its potential for brand promotion and audience reach, E-Sports has become a major player in marketing and advertising, setting it apart from traditional sports.

1.2 Connection to a theoretical field

Since E-Sports is a fast-growing phenomenon that attracts the attention of millions of people worldwide, its popularity provides great potential for companies looking to expand their brand presence and revenue streams. In recent years, sponsorship has become an increasingly important tool for companies looking to tap into the E-Sports market (Shin et al., 2018, p. 170). As the E-Sports industry continues to grow, so does the sponsorship demand, and more and more companies are looking to invest in this lucrative sector (Liu et al., 2015, p. 315). While sponsorship is a popular marketing strategy, its effectiveness largely depends on how well the sponsor fits the event or organization (Gwinner, 1997, p. 147). This is where the concept of congruence comes into play.

Congruence, including self-congruence, is an essential concept in the context of sponsorship and describes how well a sponsor fits the event itself (Gwinner, 1997, p. 147). It can be measured, for example, by brand image or values (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003, p. 282).

A sponsor known for manufacturing gaming hardware would have a high congruence when sponsoring an E-Sports tournament. Suppose a sponsor is congruent with the values of the gaming community, such as competition, innovation, and teamwork. In that case, the sponsorship will likely be perceived as more authentic and credible by the target audience (Chikish et al., 2019, p. 477).

Sponsorship effectiveness depends heavily on the congruence between the sponsor and the event. A matching sponsor is more likely to be remembered and perceived positively by the audience, leading to higher brand awareness and purchase intentions (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999, p. 50). In contrast, low congruence can lead to adverse effects such as viewer confusion and backlash (Basil, 1996, p. 482).

Congruence is thus extremely important for sponsorship effectiveness. Research by Kim et al., 2015, (p. 408) underscores the importance of congruence in E-Sports sponsorships. The study emphasizes that in the E-Sports context, where authenticity and credibility are highly valued by players and fans, sponsorships that align with the values and interests of the gaming community are more likely to be effective in achieving sponsorship goals (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408). By partnering with brands that resonate with the E-Sports community, sponsors can enhance their credibility and authenticity, leading to greater acceptance and positive brand perceptions among players and fans.

1.3 Purpose and research question

Given 1.1 and 1.2, it needs to be made clear how consumers perceive the sponsorship of E-Sports tournaments. Therefore, it is interesting to look into marketing and the area of sponsorship to examine the perception of consumer sponsorship in E-Sports tournaments and provide insights for companies looking to engage in E-Sports sponsorship.

In event planning and sponsorship, the specific nature of the event will depend on its purposes, such as promoting a product or service, celebrating a milestone, or providing education and networking opportunities. The choice of the event will also depend on the specific goals and objectives of the organizer, as well as the target audience and the resources available. For example, while sponsorship of traditional sports such as soccer or basketball has been widely researched, there is also a growing interest in E-Sports. E-Sports has rapidly gained popularity in recent years, attracting a young and diverse audience (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017, p. 211). It offers a unique opportunity for sponsors to connect with a new generation of consumers. Sponsors may require different strategies and approaches to effectively engage with E-Sports fans compared to traditional sports fans. They may need to leverage social media platforms and streaming services to reach E-Sports fans who consume content online.

The studies that have been done suggest that E-Sports sponsorship can be very effective in reaching younger audiences. For example, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017, p. 215) found that E-Sports viewers are younger and predominantly male, unlike traditional sports viewers. It was also found that fans of E-Sports perceive sponsors who engage in active

sponsorship activities, such as providing in-game items or sponsoring E-Sports events, more positively than, for example, sponsors who have more passive sponsorship activities, such as logo placement (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).

This study builds upon existing findings by investigating consumer perceptions of sponsorship, within the context of E-Sports tournaments. The research question guiding this empirical investigation is as follows: "How do consumers perceive sponsorship, and what factors influence their perception?" The aim is to provide valuable insights for companies in order to enhance their sponsorship strategies and achieve better engagement with E-Sports fans.

1.4 Disposition of the thesis

The Master's thesis is divided into seven main chapters. Each of them consists of specific sections that build on each other. The introduction is the first chapter and serves as an overview of the research and its practical relevance. It connects the study to a theoretical field and presents the research question. Furthermore, the structure of the thesis is presented in this chapter.

The second chapter is focused on the literature review. It includes an overview of the E-Sports industry and its growth. It examines the different types of sponsorship in these E-Sports tournaments and the benefits and challenges associated with sponsorships. This section explores the theoretical concepts important for comprehending sponsorship and consumer behavior and reviewing prior studies on how sponsorship is perceived in the sports and entertainment sectors. Research gaps and limitations in the literature are also highlighted.

Chapter three provides an overview of the theoretical framework utilized in the study and explains how the empirical choices were justified based on earlier theories. The framework's characteristics are presented, and their significance to the research question is thoroughly examined.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology used in this study. This includes the research design and approach, sampling strategy, data collection methods, measures and variables, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter five of the thesis presents the results of the data analysis. The section starts with an analysis and interpretation of the data collected. It includes descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the study participants, providing a summary of the key demographic variables. Inferential statistics are then conducted to analyze the relationships and patterns within the data. These inferential statistics provide insights into the significance of the relationships and help draw conclusions based on the data analysis.

The sixth chapter, the discussion, summarizes the essential findings and their contributions to the chosen field. The implications of the study for sponsors are discussed, as well as the contribution to knowledge.

The seventh and last chapter is the conclusion, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the target audience and building meaningful connections to enhance sponsorship effectiveness in the E-Sports industry.

2. Literature review

2.1 Overview of the E-Sports industry and its growth

E-Sports, also known as competitive video games, have proliferated over the past decade. This involves organized competitions in video games, usually between professional players or teams, and has gained immense popularity in recent years with millions of viewers worldwide (Woodcock & Johnson, 2018, p. 544). These tournaments are often held in large arenas and broadcast via popular streaming platforms such as Twitch, YouTube, and Facebook (Chikish et al., 2019, p. 477).

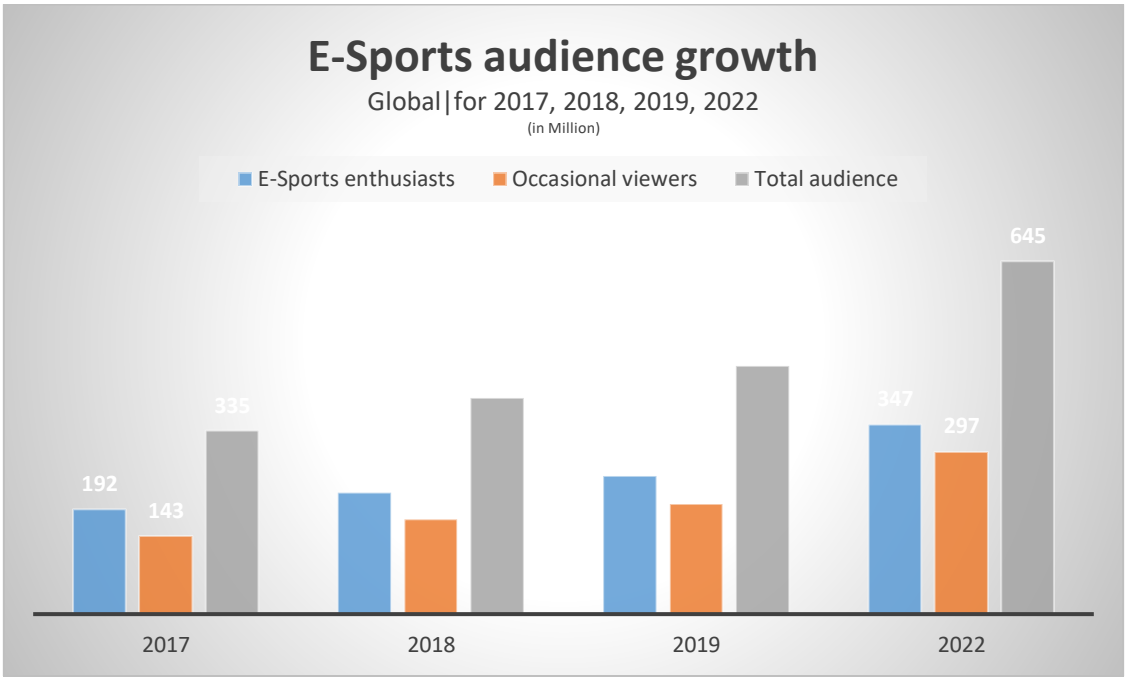

Figure 1: E-Sports audience growth
Source: Newzoo, 2019

The E-Sports industry includes popular games such as League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Dota 2, Fortnite, and Overwatch, which are played in various formats, including first-person shooters, multiplayer online battle arenas, and sports simulations on different devices such as PC, consoles, and mobile devices (Hamari et al., 2017, p. 39). Major E-Sports tournaments include the League of Legends World Championship, The International (Dota 2), the Fortnite World Cup, and the Overwatch League.

The growth of the E-Sports industry can be attributed to several factors. First, the increasing popularity of video games, especially among young people, has increased the demand for competitive gaming (Bányai et al., 2019, p. 351). Second, advances in technology and Internet infrastructure have made it easier for players to compete remotely and for fans to watch games from anywhere in the world (Drachen et al., 2012, p. 163). Third, the rise of streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube has made it easier for fans to access E-Sports content and for advertisers to reach a younger audience (Woodcock & Johnson, 2018, p. 544).

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the growth of E-Sports as traditional sporting events were canceled or postponed, leading to increased demand for online entertainment and competition (Humphries, 2020, p. 1). This led to a surge in viewership of E-Sports events, with Twitch reporting a 50% year-over-year increase in viewership in the second quarter of 2020 (Chikish et al., 2019, p. 477).

It is important to note that sponsorship should not only be viewed from the perspective of companies seeking to promote their brand. It is also crucial to consider the benefits that sponsors can bring to the event, such as financial support and access to a broader audience (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003, p. 282). Therefore, it is essential to identify potential sponsors that align with the values and goals of the event, as well as the interests of the audience, to establish mutually beneficial partnerships (Lokhman et al., 2018, p. 267).

E-Sports has become a significant source of revenue for game developers, tournament organizers, and teams. Sponsorship, advertising, media rights, and ticket sales are among the essential sources of income for E-Sports events (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408). In addition, E-Sports has attracted investment from traditional sports teams, media companies, and celebrities, indicating the growing mainstream appeal of the industry (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).

As E-Sports continues to grow, it faces several challenges, including concerns about player welfare, doping and cheating, and issues related to governance and regulation. However, the industry's continued growth and increasing professionalization suggest that it has a bright future and will play an increasingly important role in the entertainment and sports industries (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017, p. 1498).

2.2 Sponsorship

Sponsorship is "a cash or in-kind investment in an activity in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity" (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 353). It has become an essential tool for marketing as it allows reaching specific target groups through relevant events or products (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 353).

Sponsorship can be divided into different types, including event sponsorship, team sponsorship, athlete sponsorship, and cause sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1996, p. 48). Event sponsorship refers to the sponsorship of an event, such as a music festival, sporting event, or conference. Team sponsorship is the sponsorship of a team, such as a soccer, basketball, or E-Sports team. Athlete sponsorship involves sponsoring individual athletes to use, wear, or endorse a product or service. Finally, sponsorship for a cause involves sponsoring a charitable cause, such as a charity run or fundraiser (Meenaghan, 1996, p. 48).

Sponsorship has many benefits, which include building brand awareness, improving brand image, and promoting sales (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 355). It can effectively increase brand awareness by allowing brands to reach a large audience through events and objects relevant to their target audience. It can also improve a brand's image by associating it with positive attributes and values associated with the sponsored event or object. Finally, sponsorship can promote sales by allowing consumers to experience a

product or service in a relevant context and creating positive associations that can lead to brand loyalty (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 355).

However, sponsorship also presents some challenges. One of the biggest challenges is measuring effectiveness and return on investment (ROI) (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 356). Separating the impact of sponsorship from other marketing activities is often difficult. Another challenge is to ensure that sponsorship is a good fit with the brand and consistent with the brand's values and objectives (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 356). If the company is not such a good fit, it can lead to negative associations and a damaged brand image.

Despite these challenges, sponsorship remains a popular and effective marketing tool. Global sponsorship spending is expected to reach $65.8 billion in 2020 (Statista, 2020). As mentioned earlier, companies such as Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Red Bull have successfully used sponsorship to build their brands and reach their target audiences (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 359).

Thus, sponsorship is an essential tool for marketers because it allows them to reach specific target audiences. Although sponsorship comes with some challenges, the benefits of sponsorship, such as building brand awareness, improving brand image, and promoting sales, make it a popular and effective marketing tool. Companies that use sponsorship effectively can build their brands and connect with their target audiences meaningfully.

2.3 Types of sponsorships in E-Sports tournaments

Given E-Sports' rise in financial capabilities and audience reach, sponsors have invested much energy, time, and capital into E-Sports. Companies get many sponsorship opportunities through E-Sports tournaments, which allow them to reach a targeted and highly engaged audience. Choosing the correct type of sponsorship is critical for companies (Meenaghan, 2001, p. 102) that want to achieve significant exposure and build strong relationships with the E-Sports community. There are several types of sponsorship, including title sponsorship, team sponsorship, broadcast sponsorship, peripheral sponsorship, product placement, and prize sponsorship.

The highest level of sponsorship is title sponsorship. In this, a company pays a large amount of money to have its brand name appear in the name of a tournament (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).
In presenting sponsorship, on the other hand, a company pays to be an official sponsor of the tournament without changing the name of the tournament (Shin et al., 2018, p. 170). Companies gain significant brand exposure through both types of sponsorship.
Another type is team sponsorship. Here, a company provides financial support, equipment, and training facilities to a specific E-Sports team, receiving brand exposure in return (Liu et al., 2015, p. 310). Broadcast sponsorship involves a company sponsoring the live stream or broadcast of the tournament, showcasing the brand during the broadcast, and possibly creating branded content or promotions (Choi et al., 2011, p. 137).
In peripheral sponsorship, a company sponsors the equipment used during the tournament. This is then branded with the company's logo and can be displayed during the broadcast (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).
Product placement is the best-known type of sponsorship. It involves a company paying for its products to be prominently displayed during the tournament by providing snacks for players and spectators (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).

Finally, there is prize sponsorship. Here, a company provides prize money or other rewards for the tournament in exchange for brand exposure during the event and in promotional materials (Shin et al., 2018, p. 170).

Sponsorship revenue is an essential source of income for tournament organizers and teams in the E-Sports industry. However, sponsorship success depends on how well it aligns with the marketing objectives and target audience. This means that companies must carefully consider the type of sponsorship they choose and ensure that it is congruent with their brand image and values (Choi et al., 2011, p. 137). For example, sponsoring an E-Sports tournament or team can be an effective strategy if a company wants to reach a young and technologically literate audience. However, ensuring that the sponsorship is authentic and relevant to the audience is important, as consumers are increasingly sensitive to inauthentic or forced marketing efforts.

2.4 Benefits and challenges of E-Sports sponsorships

E-Sports sponsorship can offer brands numerous benefits, including increased brand awareness, loyalty, and access to a new target audience. In addition, E-Sports sponsorships can provide an opportunity to connect with younger audiences who are less likely to watch traditional media such as television (Biscaia et al., 2013, p. 4). However, there are also challenges associated with E-Sports sponsorship, including the need for sponsors to understand the unique culture and language of the industry and avoid coming across as exploitative or inauthentic.

One of the most significant benefits of sponsoring E-Sports is the ability to reach a large and diverse audience. According to a report by Newzoo (2021), the global E-Sports audience was expected to reach 474 million in 2021, with the majority of the audience between the ages of 18 and 34. This demographic is highly desirable to brands due to their purchasing power and social media influence (Cornwell, 2019, p. 8). E-Sports sponsorship can provide brands with access to this audience and offers the opportunity to build brand awareness and loyalty. In addition, E-Sports audiences are highly engaged and spend much time following E-Sports events, which can increase sponsors' awareness (Biscaia et al., 2013, p. 4).

E-Sports sponsorship also provides a unique opportunity for brands to connect with a younger audience. According to Kim et al., 2015 (p. 408), E-Sports is particularly popular with college students, making it an excellent platform for brands targeting this demographic. Unlike traditional media, E-Sports events can be accessed and watched from anywhere worldwide, making them accessible to a younger audience that tends to consume media online. This accessibility has helped E-Sports become a mainstream form of entertainment, with more people watching and participating in E-Sports events than ever before (Kim et al., 2015, p. 408).

Despite the benefits of E-Sports sponsorship, some challenges come with it. One of the biggest challenges is understanding E-Sports' unique culture and language. According to Cornwell (2019, p. 8), sponsors must understand the gaming community, the language used, and the etiquette and norms of E-Sports events. It is needed to avoid a negative perception of the brand and a potential loss of sponsorship opportunities. In addition, sponsors must avoid coming across as exploitative or inauthentic, which can be a challenge in an industry where authenticity is highly valued. E-Sports audiences are

highly engaged and quick to recognize inauthentic brands or attempt to exploit the community for financial gain (Biscaia et al., 2013, p. 4).

In E-Sports, some challenges arise from sponsorship, especially when promoting alcohol and other adult products. To address this issue, the Capcom Pro Tour has banned such sponsorship advertising, citing the need for a welcoming atmosphere for players of all ages (Chambers, 2020, pp. 144-146). France and Norway have also banned alcohol sponsorship in sports (Chambers, 2020, pp. 144-146).

In addition, the global nature of E-Sports presents a significant hurdle for policymakers, as cross-border advertising from unregulated countries can undermine national laws. Some have called for a legally binding international alcohol framework that would include obligations to restrict all forms of alcohol marketing to exert greater control over cross-border advertising and regulation of alcohol marketing and sponsorship in E-Sports (Casswell, 2019, p. 1759).

One mechanism for restricting alcohol sponsorship in E-Sports is that of game publishers (creators). Publishers own the intellectual property of E-Sports games, giving them the legal authority to remove access to third parties who profit from their use (Casswell, 2019, p. 1759). Many of the major publishers, such as Riot (League of Legends) and Blizzard (Overwatch), actively control the E-Sports ecosystem through dedicated E-Sports divisions, while publishers such as Valve (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive) allow third parties to operate but ultimately reserve the right to intervene at any time. Publishers could legally dictate marketing and sponsorship agreements despite their involvement in the E-Sports ecosystem. In practice, however, publishers are likely reluctant to place additional obstacles in the way of the revenue and promotional activities enabled by E-Sports, such as banning an entire category of sponsors (Chambers, 2020, p. 145).

In addition to alcohol, large corporate sponsorships of unhealthy foods, soft drinks, and gambling pose similar health risks (Chambers, 2020, pp. 144-146). In addition, the World Health Organization has recognized Gaming Disorder as an official international disease, adding to concerns about the impact of sponsorship on the well-being of E-Sports athletes and spectators (World Health Organization, 2018a; Chambers, 2020, pp. 144-146).

Several brands have suffered reputational damage from E-Sports sponsorship, primarily because they were unaware of the industry's problems with disreputable behavior (Winnan, 2016, p. 3), highlighting the need for research to educate potential sponsors about the risks. This has even led to some brands terminating their E-Sports sponsorship agreements (Winnan, 2016, p. 3). Given that approximately 74% of revenue in the E-Sports industry comes from sponsors (Lokhman et al., 2018, p. 264), it is clear that sponsorships play a crucial role in the industry's financial success. As a result, the industry is highly dependent on the support of sponsors to sustain growth and development (Callus & Potter, 2017; Holden et al., 2017; Winnan, 2016). However, with this dependence comes a responsibility to identify and mitigate any sources of dishonorable behavior. Such behavior can negatively affect the industry's reputation and the trust of its stakeholders (Ströh, 2017, p. 22). By taking proactive steps to prevent unethical behavior and maintain high standards of integrity, E-Sports can protect its reputation and continue to attract sponsors and fans alike. As E-Sports grows, dishonorable behavior becomes more apparent (Holden et al., 2017, p. 46). It threatens the popularity, sustainability

(Lokhman et al., 2018, p. 264), and integrity of competitive gaming (Holden et al., 2017, p. 48).

In summary, E-Sports sponsorship offers numerous benefits for brands, including increased exposure to a large and diverse audience and the ability to appeal to younger audiences. However, there are also challenges associated with E-Sports sponsorship, including the need to understand the unique culture and language of the industry and avoid coming across as inauthentic or exploitative. Suppose brands understand these challenges and take steps to overcome them. In that case, they can maximize the benefits of sponsoring E-Sports events.

3. Theoretical frameworks

Sponsorship in E-Sports tournaments has become a popular strategy for brands to reach a younger and technologically literate audience. With the growing popularity of E-Sports, many companies are investing in sponsoring E-Sports tournaments to increase brand awareness and build relationships with consumers. However, sponsorship success depends on how the target audience perceives it. This chapter will discuss the theoretical frameworks of self-congruity theory and brand community theory and how they relate to the perception of sponsorship in E-Sports tournaments.

3.1 The Importance of Aligning with Consumers' Values and Interests to Create a Stronger Brand-Consumer Relationship in E-Sports Sponsorship

Self-congruence theory is a psychological theory that states that consumers are more likely to choose brands that match their self-concept. In other words, consumers prefer brands that reflect their personalities, values, and beliefs. According to Sirgy (1982, p. 278), self-congruence can be defined as the degree to which a consumer's perception of a brand matches their self-perception. That is, a consumer who perceives himself as adventurous is likelier to choose a brand that promotes adventure.

In the context of E-Sports tournaments, the theory of self-congruence suggests that sponsors must match the values and interests of E-Sports enthusiasts to be successful. Holdenson and Nijman (2019, p. 50) state that "E-Sports enthusiasts are generally young, technologically literate, and passionate about games and technology." They often value a healthy lifestyle and are interested in the latest trends and technologies. Sponsors aligning with these values and interests will resonate better with E-Sports enthusiasts.

For example, Nike's sponsorship of the League of Legends Pro League (LPL) in China was successful because it aligned with the values and interests of E-Sports fans. Nike launched an E-Sports-themed apparel and footwear collection, promoting healthy living and an active lifestyle. This approach resonated with the E-Sports community and helped the company build a positive brand image among E-Sports enthusiasts (Gillespie, 2020, p. 117).

Research has confirmed the importance of self-congruence in the context of E-Sports tournament sponsorship. For example, Simmons et al. (2013, p. 295) study found that self-congruence significantly predicted consumers' attitudes toward a League of Legends tournament sponsor. Specifically, the study found that consumers who perceived high self-congruence between themselves and the sponsor had more positive attitudes toward the sponsor and were more likely to purchase from the sponsor in the future.

In addition, a study by Ko et al. (2017, p. 200) found that perceived congruence between a sponsor and a League of Legends team positively influenced consumers' attitudes toward the sponsor. The study also found that perceived congruence was positively associated with purchase intention for the sponsor's products.

It is also important to note that word-of-mouth communication can significantly impact consumer behavior and brand perception (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006, p. 60). Positive

word-of-mouth from satisfied customers can increase brand awareness, higher sales, and a stronger brand reputation. Additionally, word-of-mouth is often perceived as more trustworthy than traditional advertising, as it comes from a trusted source (Brown & Reingen, 1987, p. 73). This leads us to formulation of the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses:

H1: Consumers who perceive a higher level of self-congruence between themselves and a sponsor's brand will have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor and a stronger intention to purchase their products.
H2: Consumers who feel that a sponsor's brand represents their desired self-image will have a stronger identification with the brand and a greater likelihood of engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication.

Brand community theory, in turn, is a sociological theory that states that consumers who share the values and interests of a brand are more likely to form a community around the brand. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001, p. 412) define brand communities as "a specialized, non-geographic community based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand." Brand communities form when consumers share experiences, values, and interests around a brand.

In the context of E-Sports tournaments, brand community theory suggests that sponsors must create shared experiences and interests with E-Sports enthusiasts to form a brand community. E-Sports fans are highly engaged in the community and closely follow their favorite teams and players. Sponsors that can create unique experiences for E-Sports enthusiasts are more likely to build a strong relationship with the community.

For example, Red Bull sponsors E-Sports tournaments and hosts events like Red Bull Player One, a global League of Legends tournament that pits everyone against everyone. These events provide unique experiences for E-Sports enthusiasts and help Red Bull build a community around its brand. Red Bull has also partnered with E-Sports teams such as Cloud9 to create exclusive content and experiences for fans, further strengthening the brand's relationship with the E-Sports community (Hutchinson, 2021, p. 1).

A study by Biscaia et al. (2013, p. 6) confirmed the importance of brand community in E-Sports tournament sponsorship, stating that sponsoring a League of Legends tournament positively influenced consumers' identification with the sponsor. The study also found that sponsorship indirectly influenced consumers' purchase intentions toward the sponsor's products through identification with the sponsor. Building on the previous discussion, we can now proceed to outline the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses:

H3: Consumers who are more closely connected to a brand community will have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor and a greater likelihood of purchasing their products or services.
H4: Consumers who participate in brand community activities organized by the sponsor will have a stronger sense of belonging and loyalty towards the brand.

Current research on sponsorship focuses mainly on traditional sports, but the increasing interest in E-Sports and the lack of studies in this area highlight the need for further research. Therefore, our study aims to test these hypotheses in the context of E-Sports sponsorship in order to add to the existing literature on this emerging field. To support those hypotheses, studies have suggested that when people feel like a brand reflects their personality and values, they tend to view the sponsor more positively and are more likely to purchase their products. This provides evidence supporting the hypotheses linking self-congruence between consumers and a sponsor's brand to favorable attitudes and purchase intentions. (Sirgy et al., 1991, p. 45). Escalas and Bettmann concluded (2005, p. 506) that consumers with private solid label loyalty have a more positive attitude toward the brand and are likelier to buy its products. Furthermore, when consumers are closely associated with a brand community, they have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor and are likelier to purchase its products or services. (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). This hypothesis is supported by a study by Johar and Sirgy (1991, p. 245), who found that consumers who perceive a strong fit between themselves and a brand have higher brand loyalty and are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. Finally, consumers who participate in brand community activities organized by the sponsor will have a stronger sense of belonging and loyalty toward the brand (McAlexander et al., 2002, p. 42). A study by Albert et al. (2008, p. 1062) found that participation in brand community activities leads to higher brand attachment and loyalty.

In summary, E-Sports tournament sponsorship can be a powerful marketing tool for brands to reach and engage with the growing community of E-Sports enthusiasts. Self-congruence and brand community theories provide a valuable framework for developing effective sponsorship strategies that resonate with E-Sports enthusiasts. By aligning with their values and interests, creating shared experiences and interests, and offering exclusive content and rewards, sponsors can build strong relationships with the E-Sports community and increase their brand presence and revenue. Further research is needed to better understand the complex relationships between sponsorship, self-congruence, brand community, and consumer behavior in the context of E-Sports tournaments.

3.2 The importance of perceived benefits in building positive relationships between consumers and brands

Social Exchange Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory are two theoretical frameworks that can be useful in understanding the importance of perceived benefits in building positive relationships between consumers and brands in E-Sports. Both theories assume that consumers will engage with sponsors if they see value or benefit in the relationship.

Social exchange theory emphasizes that consumers engage in an "exchange" with sponsors, giving something in exchange for something they perceive as valuable in return (Morgan & Hunt, 1994, p. 23). For example, E-Sports fans might give their attention or loyalty to a sponsor by seeing the sponsor's logo on a team's jersey during a tournament in exchange for tangible benefits such as discounts on the sponsor's products or intangible benefits such as status or social recognition. The theory suggests that consumers who feel they receive more benefits than they give are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the sponsor and engage in behaviors that benefit the sponsor, such as making purchases or recommending the brand to others. As a result, we can derive the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses:

H5: Fans who perceive a greater benefit from a sponsor will have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor and will be more likely to recommend the sponsor to others.
H6: Fans who perceive a greater benefit from a sponsor will have a stronger intention to purchase the sponsor's products or services.

On the other hand, the Uses-and-gratifications theory assumes that consumers use media (including sponsored content) to fulfill specific needs or desires, such as entertainment, social interaction, or learning (Katz et al., 1973, p. 509). For example, E-Sports fans might be interested in a sponsor's content because it gives them a behind-the-scenes look at their favorite players, offers exclusive fan merchandise, or allows them to interact with other fans. The theory is that consumers are more likely to engage with media that meet these specific needs. Active players choose which media to consume based on their preferences and motivations.

Empirical research supports the importance of perceived benefits in building positive relationships between consumers and sponsors in E-Sports. For example, Liu et al. (2015), p. 384, found that the perceived value of sponsorship (including tangible and intangible benefits) positively influences consumers' attitudes toward the sponsor and purchase intention toward the sponsor's products. Similarly, Choi et al. (2011, p. 6) found that the perceived entertainment value of sponsorship (measured by the amount of unique and engaging content provided) positively influences consumers' attitudes toward the sponsor and their intention to watch more E-Sports events in the future.

Many examples of successful sponsorship in the E-Sports industry demonstrate the importance of perceived benefits in building positive relationships with consumers. Red Bull, for example, has been a long-time sponsor of E-Sports events and teams, providing unique and engaging content that fulfills fans' desires for entertainment and behind-the-scenes access (Choi et al., 2011, p. 6). Red Bull has sponsored tournaments such as Red Bull Kumite and Red Bull Player One and E-Sports teams such as Cloud9 and G2 E-Sports (Red Bull, 2021). In addition to financial support, Red Bull has also offered unique experiences for fans, such as virtual reality experiences, meetings with players, and live streams of tournaments (Red Bull, 2021).

Similarly, Logitech is a successful sponsor of E-Sports teams and events, offering tangible benefits such as discounts on its gaming gear and exclusive merchandise, as well as intangible benefits such as social recognition and status for fans who use its products (Logitech G, n.d.; TSM, 2021; G2 E-Sports, n.d.). Logitech sponsors teams such as TSM and G2 E-Sports and offers its own E-Sports tournaments, such as the Logitech G Challenge (Logitech G, n.d.). By providing benefits that meet fans' desires for high-quality gaming equipment and competitive opportunities, Logitech has built a strong relationship with the E-Sports community and increased its brand recognition and sales. This leads us to formulation of the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses:

H7: Fans who perceive that a sponsor offers content that fulfills their specific needs and interests will have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor and will be more likely to engage with the sponsor's brand.
H8: Fans who perceive that a sponsor offers content that helps them to achieve their goals and aspirations will have a stronger intention to use the sponsor's products or services.

Since most sponsorship research focuses on traditional sports, the growing interest in E-Sports and the insufficient research in this area make further investigation necessary. Therefore, our study seeks to test these hypotheses about E-Sports sponsorship to expand the available knowledge about this emerging industry. There have been many studies that support these hypotheses and also support the idea that sponsorship relationships can impact fan behavior. Hamari et al. (2016, p. 311) discovered that social interaction and community building are among the most critical factors for attracting and engaging fans in E-Sports events. Sponsors that organize activities and events that cater to these needs can increase fan engagement. Another study by Chang and Zhuang (2018, p. 2) explored the relationship between sponsors and E-Sports fans. They found that a positive attitude toward the sponsor is essential for building a solid connection between the fan and the sponsor. Sponsors should create strategies to promote a favorable attitude towards their brand and company to develop better relationships with fans. Furthermore, according to Hamari et al.'s (2016, p. 500), fans who feel that a sponsor's content helps them reach their goals and aspirations are likelier to use the sponsor's products or services. By tailoring their content to fans' goals and desires, sponsors can increase the chances of fans using their products or services.

Overall, Social Exchange Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory can provide valuable insights into how sponsors can build positive relationships with E-Sports fans by offering perceived benefits that align with their desires and motivations. By testing hypotheses based on these theories, researchers can continue to develop a deeper understanding of how sponsorship is perceived in the E-Sports industry and how it can be used effectively to achieve marketing goals.

In summary, social exchange and benefits and gratifications theories provide a helpful framework for understanding the importance of perceived benefits in building positive relationships between consumers and sponsors in E-Sports. By offering tangible and intangible benefits that match fans' desires and motivations, sponsors can build positive attitudes toward their brand and increase engagement with their target audience. Successful sponsorships in the E-Sports industry demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Companies like Red Bull and Logitech offer unique and engaging content, tangible benefits, and social recognition to build strong relationships with the E-Sports community.

While most studies on sponsorship have traditionally focused on traditional sports, the increasing popularity of E-Sports and the limited research in this area highlights the need for further investigation. Understanding the importance of perceived benefits in E-Sports sponsorship can help sponsors develop effective strategies to connect with their target audience and build positive relationships that benefit both the sponsor and the consumer. These theories provide a solid foundation for this understanding. Future research can

further explore these frameworks to gain deeper insights into consumer behavior in the E-Sports industry.

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design for the study, which is quantitative. We choose quantitative research because it allows for systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of numerical data and provides a reliable and valid approach to measuring and quantifying research variables (Babbie, 2016, p. 45; Creswell, 2014, p. 56). It is also helpful in identifying patterns, trends, and relationships among variables and generalizing findings to a larger population (Bryman, 2016, p. 78).

The quantitative research approach is chosen specifically for this study for several reasons. First, the study's research questions analyze how fans perceive E-Sports consumer sponsorship programs. These research questions require data collection that can be measured quantitatively, such as fan perceptions, attitudes, and opinions toward specific sponsorship programs. Quantitative research methods, such as surveys using structured questionnaires, are well suited for collecting numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and trends (Creswell, 2014, p. 56).

Second, this type of research allows for identifying relationships between variables through statistical analysis. The study aims to test specific hypotheses formulated based on existing literature and designed to examine relationships between variables. A quantitative research design provides a robust approach to test such relationships using statistical techniques (Babbie, 2016, p. 45).

In addition, quantitative research allows for generalizing findings to a larger population. The study aims to draw conclusions that can be generalized to many E-Sports fans. Quantitative research allows for collecting data from a larger sample, which increases the findings' external validity and the likelihood of generalizing the results to a broader population (Bryman, 2016, p. 78).

In contrast, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or observations, can provide rich and in-depth insights into individual experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. However, they may need to provide the statistical rigor and generalizability that quantitative research offers (Creswell, 2014, p. 56). Given the research questions and objectives of the study, a quantitative research design is deemed appropriate for this study.

It is essential to acknowledge that the perception of sponsorship programs in E-Sports is subjective and can vary among individuals. Various factors, such as personal experiences, cultural background, and social norms, can influence the subjective perception. Some scholars argue that subjective perception is a social construct, meaning that knowledge and reality are shaped by social and cultural factors (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 67). Others believe that subjective perception is an objective reality that can be understood and measured through empirical research (Babbie, 2016, p. 45).

In this study, we recognize the subjective nature of perception and aim to measure it through quantitative research methods. By collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires, we aim to identify patterns and relationships in fans' perceptions of E-Sports sponsorship programs. While acknowledging the limitations of quantitative research in capturing the complexity of subjective experiences, a quantitative approach can provide valuable insights into the perception of sponsorship programs in E-Sports.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that the sponsor’s motives and objectives can also influence the subjective perception of sponsorship programs. For example, fans may perceive a sponsorship program positively if they believe that the sponsor's values align with their own or if they perceive tangible benefits from the sponsorship program. On the other hand, fans may perceive a sponsorship program negatively if they believe the sponsor's objectives do not align with their values or perceive the program as exploitative. Thus, understanding the subjective perception of E-Sports sponsorship programs can provide valuable insights for sponsors to develop effective strategies that align with the fans' values and objectives.

4.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is based on a cross-sectional survey in which data are collected from a sample of participants at a single point in time. This design is suitable for examining relationships between variables and identifying patterns and trends (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p. 102). The benefits of a cross-sectional research design include the ability to collect data from a large sample size at a single point in time, which is efficient and cost-effective. It also allows for examining relationships between variables and identifying patterns and trends, which can provide valuable insights into the research questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p. 102). Cross-sectional studies can also provide a snapshot of a population's characteristics at a particular time, making them useful for monitoring changes over time or comparing groups (Babbie, 2016, p. 89). Additionally, cross-sectional studies can be used to generate hypotheses for further research, such as longitudinal studies that examine changes in variables over time (Creswell, 2014, p. 74). A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data and will be provided to participants through an online platform.

The questionnaire is designed based on the research questions and hypotheses of the study. The research questions focus on the perception of consumer sponsorships in E-Sports and the fans' view of different types of consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports. Hypotheses are formulated based on existing literature and are designed to test specific relationships among variables.

The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions with Likert scales and single-item scales to measure participants' perceptions, attitudes, and opinions about consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports. Each hypothesis is addressed through three questions that comprehensively assess the research variables. The questions are designed to be clear, concise, and relevant to the research questions and hypotheses and are pilot tested to ensure clarity and comprehensibility.

To ensure the content validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire is developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature and existing validated scales. Demographic questions are also included in the questionnaire to collect relevant participant information that can be used for further analysis and interpretation of the results.

4.2 Sampling Strategy and data collection methods

For this study, selecting a purposive sample, also known as a non-probability sample, is a conscious decision based on the recommendation of Patton (2015, p. 45). A purposive sample is a non-random sampling method where individuals or cases are selected based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research objectives. This sampling strategy is deemed appropriate to capture the perspectives and opinions of E-Sports fans who actively participate in consumer E-Sports sponsorship programs because it allows for targeted recruitment based on specific criteria. The intentional selection of participants who have knowledge and experience in E-Sports sponsorship was to ensure that the data collected would be relevant and provide valuable insight into the research topic.

A self-administered online survey with a structured questionnaire is used for data collection. The questionnaire is carefully designed based on the formulated research questions and hypotheses, considering the unique characteristics of the E-Sports industry and the research objectives. The Likert scale, a widely used and established method for measuring attitudes and opinions as proposed by Likert (1932, p. 1), is chosen to capture participants' perceptions, attitudes, and opinions regarding consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports. The single-item scale, a concise and efficient approach to measure specific constructs, is utilized in this study to minimize respondent burden and survey length. The structured nature of the questionnaire allows for standardized data collection, increasing the results' reliability and validity.

The study obtains a sample of 83 respondents who provide complete and valid responses to the survey. The survey is posted on various online platforms, including Twitch and the E-Sports Association of the University of Bielefeld, to ensure the sample's representativeness and generalizability. The purposive sampling approach allows us to target individuals who meet the inclusion criteria, such as active E-Sports fans and participating in consumer sponsorship programs. The survey distribution across multiple platforms ensures that we reach a broad range of participants, including those with different cultural backgrounds, experiences, and attitudes toward consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports.

4.3 Measures and variables

In this study, we employ established measures to assess the variables of interest. The measurement instruments used in this research are selected based on their relevance to the research questions and hypotheses and their established validity and reliability in previous research. Throughout the study, the scales used for the variables are validated through previous research studies conducted in the field of sponsorship. These studies have established the reliability and validity of these scales in measuring the respective constructs. Specifically, we use one-item scales to measure the variables in this study. Although one-item scales are considered less reliable than multi-item scales, previous research studies in sponsorship have shown that one-item scales can be a valid and reliable. Therefore, we adopt one-item scales in this study to maintain consistency with the literature and provide a valid and reliable measure of the constructs being studied. It is also important to note that one of the hypotheses in this study required the adaptation of an existing scale to fit the context of E-Sports sponsorship programs.

The variables in Hypothesis 1 are self-congruence, attitude toward sponsorship, and purchase intention. The dependent variable is "purchase intention," as it is the outcome variable expected to be influenced by the other variables in the hypothesis. The independent variables are "self-congruence" and "attitude toward sponsorship," as they are the variables that are expected to affect the dependent variable, "purchase intention," according to the hypothesis being tested.
Self-congruence is measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The response options are: 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = fairly well, 5 = very well. This measurement is based on the item for self-congruence from the scale developed by Sirgy et al. (1991) for measuring consumer-brand congruity.
The other two variables in this hypothesis are measured using similar 5-point Likert scales. Attitude towards sponsorship is measured with response options ranging from 1 = very negative to 5 = very positive. This measurement is based on the item for attitude toward sponsorship from the scale developed by Gwinner et al. (1998) for measuring consumer attitudes toward sponsorship.
Purchase intention is measured with response options ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely. This measurement is based on the item for purchase intention from the scale developed by Speed & Thompson (2000) for measuring purchase intention towards companies engaged in sponsorship activities.

The variables in Hypothesis 2 are self-image representation, brand identification, and positive word-of-mouth communication. The independent variables are "self-image representation" and "brand identification," as they are the variables being measured and manipulated to test the hypothesis. The dependent variable is "positive word-of-mouth communication," as it is the outcome variable expected to be influenced by the independent variables according to the hypothesis being tested.
They are measured using a single-item scale. For self-image representation, participants are asked to rate the extent to which they feel that a sponsor's brand represents their desired self-image, using a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). This item is adapted from Escalas' (2004) scale for measuring brand-self-image congruence. Brand identification is assessed by asking participants to rate the extent to which they generally identify with brands supported by sponsors using the same scale. This item is adapted from Bhattacharya et al.'s (1995) scale for measuring brand attachment. Positive word-of-mouth communication is assessed by asking participants how likely they are to speak positively about brands supported by sponsors or recommend them, using an item adapted from Brown et al.'s (2005) scale for measuring consumer word-of-mouth.

In hypothesis 3, the variables are Brand Community Connection, Attitude toward Sponsor, and Purchase Intention. The variables being measured and manipulated in the hypothesis are "Brand Community Connection" and "Attitude toward Sponsor," which are the independent variables. The outcome variable that is expected to be influenced by these independent variables is "Purchase Intention," which is the dependent variable.
They are measured by using a five-point Likert scale. "Brand Community Connection" is calculated using an item adapted from Muniz and O'Guinn's (2001) scale for measuring brand community membership. Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they feel connected to the community of consumers who support or use the same brand, from "1 = not at all" to "5 = very much."
The second variable, "Attitude toward Sponsor," is assessed using an item adapted from Wohlfeil and Whelan's (2006) scale for measuring attitudes toward sponsors. The

respondents are asked to rate their general attitude towards companies or sponsors that support or promote a brand community, from "1 = very negative" to "5 = very positive."Finally, the third variable, "Purchase Intention," is measured using an item adapted from Bhattacharya et al.'s (1995) scale for measuring brand loyalty. The participants are asked to indicate how likely they are to purchase products or services from companies or sponsors that endorse or promote a brand community, ranging from "1 = very unlikely" to "5 = very likely."

Hypothesis 4 consists of three variables: brand community participation, identification, and loyalty. The independent variable is "Brand Community Participation," which is the variable being measured and manipulated to test the hypothesis. The dependent variables are "Brand Identification" and "Brand Loyalty," as they are the outcome variables expected to be influenced by the independent variable according to the hypothesis being tested.
All of them are measured by using a five-point Likert scale. Firstly, the measurement of brand community participation is based on an item adapted from the scale developed by Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn (2001). Participants are asked to rate their general level of the involvement in brand community activities organized by sponsors, ranging from "never" (1) to "very often" (5). Secondly, the measurement of brand identification draws from a scale developed by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003). Each respondent is asked to rate the strength of their emotional connection and sense of belonging to sponsor-supported brands, ranging from "not at all strong" (1) to "very strong" (5). Lastly, the measurement of brand loyalty is based on an item from the scale developed by Oliver (1999). In the survey, people are asked to rate their general loyalty to the brands supported by the sponsors. The scale ranges from "not at all loyal" (1) to "very loyal" (5).

Hypothesis 5 also tested three variables: perceived benefits from the sponsor, attitude toward the sponsor, and likelihood of recommending the sponsor. The independent variable is the "Perceived Benefit of Sponsor," as it is the variable that will be both tested and manipulated to probe the hypothesis. The dependent variables are "Attitude toward sponsor" and "Likelihood to recommend sponsor," as they are the outcome variables expected to be influenced by the independent variable according to the hypothesis being tested. The first variable measured a single-item question in which respondents rated their overall perception of benefits from the sponsor on a scale from "1 = no benefits at all" to "5 = very much benefits." This item was adapted from a scale that Cornwell et al. (2005) developed in their earlier research on perceptions of benefits from sponsors.
Similarly, the second variable was assessed using a single-item question that asked respondents to rate their overall attitude toward sponsors on a scale ranging from "1 = very negative" to "5 = very positive." It is an item that was taken from a scale developed by Cornwell et al. (2005) in their earlier research on attitudes toward sponsors.
To measure the third variable, the survey again included a single-item question in which respondents rated their overall likelihood of recommending the sponsor on a scale ranging from "1 = very unlikely" to "5 = very likely." Based on a scale developed by Meenaghan (1998) in his study on the willingness to recommend sponsors, this item was used to assess the likelihood of the respondents recommending the sponsor to others.

The variables in hypothesis 6 are "perceived usefulness of the sponsor," and "intention to purchase the sponsor's products or services." The independent variable is "Perceived Usefulness of the Sponsor", as it is measured and manipulated to test the hypothesis. The dependent variable is "Intention to Purchase the Sponsor's Products or Services," as it is

the outcome variable that is expected to be influenced by the independent variable. These variables are measured using single-item scales from previous research studies. Perceived sponsor benefits are calculated using a single-item question that asks respondents to indicate the extent to which they perceive benefits from the products or services offered by sponsors. Response options range from no benefit at all to very significant benefit. This item is modeled after a scale developed by Dodds et al. (1991) to measure customer-perceived benefits.
Furthermore, the intention to purchase sponsor products or services is also measured with a single-item question asking respondents to rate their overall intent to purchase them. The response options vary from not at all intentional to very strongly deliberate. It is an item taken from a scale developed by Ajzen (1991) to measure behavioral intentions.

The variables in hypothesis 7 relate to fans' perceptions of a sponsor's content, their attitudes toward the sponsor, and their likelihood of engaging with the sponsor's brand. The independent variable is measured and manipulated as "perception of need and interest satisfaction." The dependent variables, namely "attitude toward sponsor" and "brand affiliation," are considered dependent variables assumed to be influenced by the independent variable according to the hypothesis under test. These variables are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The first variable, "perception of need and interest fulfillment," is based on an item from the scale developed by Gwinner et al. (2009) to measure fan loyalty. Fans receive five response options ranging from "not at all" to "very much." For the second variable, "attitude toward sponsor," the scale was adapted from the one developed by Meenaghan (1998) to measure attitude toward sponsorship, with five response options ranging from "not at all positive" to "very positive." Finally, the third variable, "brand affiliation," is based on the scale Backman et al. (2011) developed to measure brand affiliation in the context of sponsorship. Five response options are available to fans, ranging from "not at all likely" to "very likely."
These variables are essential in understanding the relationship between fans' perception of a sponsor's content, their attitude toward the sponsor, and their likelihood of engaging with the sponsor's brand.

For hypothesis 8, two variables are used for measurement. They are based on a 5-point scale. The independent variable in hypothesis 8 is the "Perception of Helpful Content," as it is measured and manipulated to test the hypothesis. The dependent variable is "Intention to Use Products/Services," as it is the outcome variable. The first variable is the perception of helpful content. Participants rate their perceptions from "not at all" to "very much." This item was adapted from a scale Kuo and Feng (2013) developed that measures perceptions of social media content. For the second variable, the intention to use products/services is rated by participants who rate their intention from "not at all" to "very much." It is an item taken from a scale developed by Ajzen (1991) to measure behavioral intention, a fundamental construct in the theory of planned behavior.

4.4 Data analysis techniques

In this study, we use regression analysis to examine the relationships between E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs and their demographic characteristics, level of engagement in E-Sports, and other factors. The study aims to investigate how sponsorship is perceived in E-Sports tournaments, specifically by examining the perception of consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports and how fans perceive them.

We use the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to conduct a regression analysis. We first entered the data into SPSS, creating a dataset with variables for each factor we were interested in examining. These variables include E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs, their demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), level of engagement in E-Sports (e.g., frequency of attendance, participation in online forums), and other factors that may impact their perception of sponsorship programs (e.g., media consumption habits).

Next, we run a multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. The regression analysis output includes coefficients, which indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables, as well as p-values, which indicate the statistical significance of the relationships.

We then interpret the regression analysis results, examining the coefficients and p-values to determine which independent variables are most strongly related to E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs. We also use the results to predict how fans perceive sponsorship programs based on their demographic characteristics, level of engagement, and other factors.

In addition to running multiple regression analysis, we conduct other types of regression analysis, such as simple linear regression, to examine the relationships between individual independent variables and the dependent variable. However, given the nature of our variables, which do not exhibit solid correlations and are not expected to have a linear relationship, diagnostic tests such as checking for multicollinearity and regular distribution of the residuals are not applicable.

In conclusion, using SPSS for regression analysis is essential to our study on E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs. It allows us to examine the relationships between fans' perception of sponsorship programs and their demographic characteristics, level of engagement in E-Sports, and other factors and draw meaningful insights from our data. The regression analysis results provide valuable information for understanding how sponsorship is perceived in E-Sports tournaments and could inform the development of compelling consumer sponsorship programs.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The survey adheres to anonymity and data security principles to meet ethical standards. Participants' identities are kept confidential, and all data is stored securely and by applicable privacy laws. Informed consent is obtained from participants before participation in the study, and they are fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. We confirm that all respondents are 18 years or older, and therefore, no additional steps were needed to avoid putting minors at risk. The scales used in the survey are validated and established as reliable and valid measures of their respective constructs, as established by previous research studies.

5. Results

This chapter presents a detailed account of the data analysis process involved in the study. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to solicit responses from interested individuals. The data collection process garnered 83 valid responses subjected to statistical analysis using the IBM SPSS Statistics tool. The first segment of this chapter pertains to the descriptive statistics of the data. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and present the data meaningfully. The second segment of this chapter is dedicated to inferential statistics. Regression analysis was performed to test the study's hypotheses, formulated based on the research questions. Using descriptive and inferential statistics has provided meaningful insights into the data, which can be used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The findings of the study are presented in the subsequent chapter.

5.1 Analysis and interpretation

The present study investigated the relationships between E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs and various demographic characteristics, level of engagement in E-Sports, and other relevant factors. Specifically, the study aimed to examine how sponsorship is perceived in E-Sports tournaments by exploring the perception of consumer sponsorship programs in E-Sports and how fans perceive them.

The study employed the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to conduct descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to accomplish the research objectives. SPSS, which stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, is a software application widely used in social sciences and market research for statistical analysis. It provides researchers with a comprehensive set of tools and techniques to manipulate and analyze data. The dataset was cleaned and formatted to facilitate the statistical analysis of variables such as E-Sports fans' perception of consumer sponsorship programs, their demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), level of engagement in E-Sports (e.g., frequency of attendance, participation in online forums), and other factors that may impact their perception of sponsorship programs.

Descriptive statistics were computed using frequency tests to describe the sample's demographic characteristics. Furthermore, linear and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (i.e., demographic characteristics, level of engagement, and other relevant factors) and the dependent variable (i.e., perception of consumer sponsorship programs). Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to explore and quantify the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It helps researchers understand how changes in the independent variables are associated with changes in the dependent variable. The regression analysis results included coefficients that indicated the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables and p-values that showed the statistical significance of these relationships.

To evaluate the findings of the regression study, the independent variables most significantly correlated with how E-Sports fans felt about consumer sponsorship programs were identified by looking at the coefficients and p-values. By utilizing these statistical methods, this study shed light on the variables that affect how E-Sports fans view consumer sponsorship initiatives and positively contribute to our comprehension of

the dynamics of E-Sports sponsorship.

5.2 Descriptive statistics of demographic characteristics of the study

Gender

A frequency test was conducted to investigate the gender profile of a sample population. The results are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. A total of 83 individuals were included in the sample. Of these, 66 individuals (79.5%) identified as male, while 17 (20.5%) identified as female. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the gender distribution in the sample. These findings suggest that the sample population is predominantly male.

Table 1: Gender Profile

	Frequency	Percent
Male	66	79.5
Female	17	20.5
Total	83	100.0

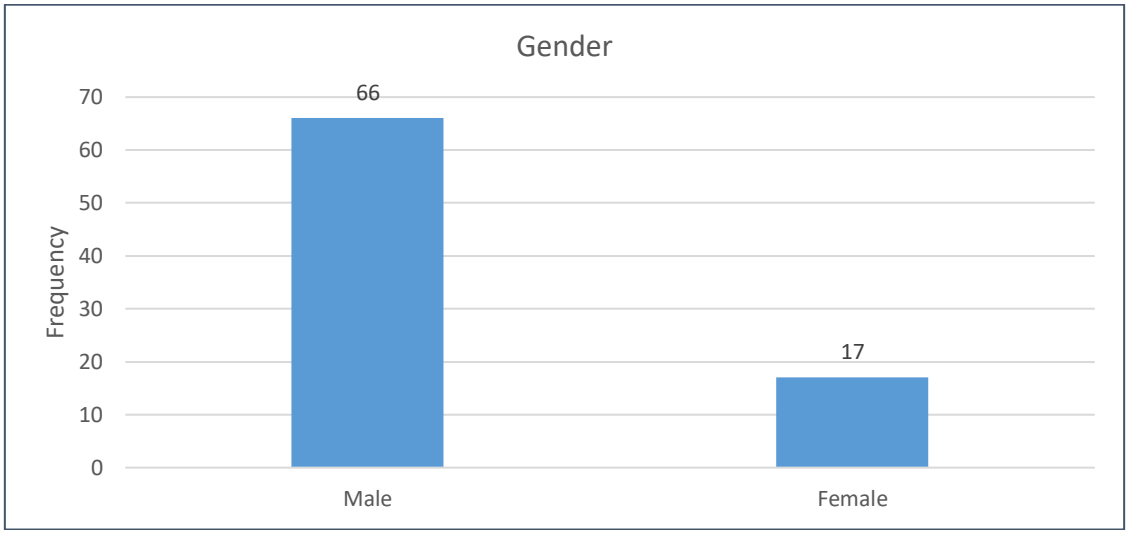

Figure 2: Illustration of the gender of the sample of the study

Age

The age profile of a sample population in a study is presented in Table 2 and Figure 2. A total of 83 individuals were included in the sample. Most participants (67.5%) fell into the age range of 23-27 years, with 56 individuals falling into this category. The age range of 18-22 years was represented by 18 individuals (21.7%), while only nine individuals (10.8%) fell into the age range of 28-32 years. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the age distribution in the sample. These findings suggest that the sample population primarily comprises young adults in their early to mid-twenties.

Table 2: Age Profile

	Frequency	Percent
18-22	18	21.7
23-27	56	67.5
28-32	9	10.8
Total	83	100.0

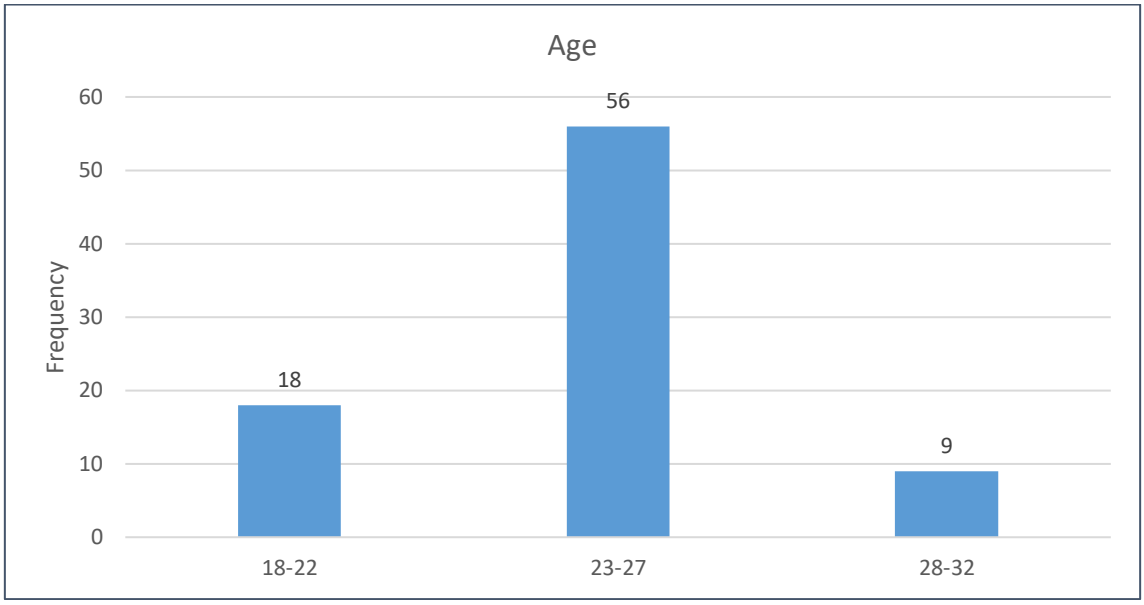

Figure 3: Illustration of the age of the sample of the study

5.3 Inferential Statistics

5.3.1 First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis tested in this study was that consumers who perceive a higher level of self-congruence between themselves and a sponsor's brand would have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor and a stronger intention to purchase their products.

The model summary in table 3 shows that the predictors (self-congruence and Attitudes towards Sponsorship Scale) account for 36.6% of the variance in purchase intent (R^2 = 0.366, adjusted R^2 = 0.350). The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model is significant ($F(2, 80) = 23.124$, $p < .001$).

The standardized coefficients indicate that self-congruence ($\beta = 0.432$, $p < .001$) has a stronger relationship with purchase intent than attitudes towards sponsorship ($\beta = 0.235$, $p = .040$). This suggests that consumers who perceive a higher level of self-congruence between themselves and a sponsor's brand are more likely to have a stronger intention to purchase the sponsor's products.

The findings have several implications for sponsorships and branding strategies. Sponsors should focus on creating a strong brand image that aligns with the values and identity of their target consumers to increase self-congruence. This may involve conducting market research to understand the target audience and developing targeted branding strategies to

appeal to them. Additionally, sponsors should prioritize building positive attitudes towards sponsorship to enhance purchase intent.

The output of the first hypothesis

Table 3: Output 1st hypothesis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.605[a]	0.366	0.350	1.00550
a. Predictors: (Constant), self-congruence, Attitudes Towards Sponsorship Scale				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.757	2	23.378	23.124	.000[b]
	Residual	80.882	80	1.011		
	Total	127.639	82			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent						
b. Predictors: (Constant), self-congruence Scale, Attitudes Towards Sponsorship Scale						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.701	0.364		1.924	0.058
	Attitudes Towards Sponsorship	0.255	0.122	0.235	2.091	0.040
	Self-congruence	0.444	0.115	0.432	3.844	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent						

5.3.2 Second Hypothesis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between consumers' brand identification and self-image representation with positive word-of-mouth communication about the brand. The results indicate that the overall model was significant ($F(2, 80) = 56.014$, $p < .001$) and accounted for 58.3% of the variance in positive word-of-mouth communication. The results also showed that both brand identification ($\beta = .507$, $p < .001$) and self-image representation ($\beta = .343$, $p < .01$) significantly predicted positive word-of-mouth communication, indicating that consumers who felt that the sponsor's brand represents their desired self-image and had a

stronger identification with the brand were more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication about the brand.

These findings have important implications for marketers. Creating a strong brand image that resonates with consumers' desired self-image can lead to higher brand identification and positive word-of-mouth communication. This, in turn, can enhance the brand's reputation, increase customer loyalty, and ultimately lead to increased sales. Therefore, marketers should create a brand image that aligns with their target audience's desired self-image to enhance brand identification and promote positive word-of-mouth communication.

The output of the second hypothesis

Table 4: Output 2nd hypothesis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.764[a]	0.583	0.573	0.81736
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Identification, Self-Image representation				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	74.843	2	37.422	56.014	.000[b]
	Residual	53.446	80	0.668		
	Total	128.289	82			
a. Dependent Variable: Positive Word of mouth Communication						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Identification, Self-Image representation						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.701	0.220		3.179	0.002
	Self-Image representation	0.337	0.089	0.343	3.807	0.000
	Brand Identification Scale	0.492	0.087	0.507	5.633	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Positive Word of mouth Communication						

5.3.3 Third Hypothesis

Multiple regression analysis examined the relationship between brand community connectedness, attitude toward sponsor, and purchase intent. The results showed that the overall model was significant ($F(2, 80) = 30.332$, $p < .001$) and explained 43.1% of the variance in purchase intent.

The results also indicated that both brand community connectedness ($\beta = .428$, $p < .001$) and attitude toward the sponsor ($\beta = .366$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of purchase intent, indicating that consumers who were more closely connected to the brand community and had a more positive attitude toward the sponsor were more likely to purchase their products or services.

These findings suggest that creating and nurturing a brand community can benefit sponsors significantly. By fostering a sense of community among their customers, sponsors can increase customers' connectedness to the brand and strengthen their positive attitude towards the sponsor. This, in turn, can lead to increased purchase intent and loyalty to the brand.

Marketers should, therefore, invest in community-building activities, such as creating online forums, organizing events, and encouraging user-generated content to promote brand community connectedness. They should also focus on improving their brand image and fostering a positive attitude among their customers to enhance purchase intent and customer loyalty.

The output of the third hypothesis

Table 5: Output 3rd hypothesis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.657[a]	0.431	0.417	0.95258
a. Predictors: (Constant), attitude toward sponsor, Brand community connectedness				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.047	2	27.523	30.332	.000[b]
	Residual	72.592	80	0.907		
	Total	127.639	82			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent Scale						
b. Predictors: (Constant), attitude toward sponsor, Brand community connectedness						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.487	0.344		1.416	0.161
	Brand community connectedness	0.381	0.081	0.428	4.725	0.000
	Attitude toward sponsor	0.389	0.096	0.366	4.038	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent						

5.3.4 Fourth Hypothesis

Regression analysis examined the relationship between participation in brand community activities and the sense of belonging to the brand. The results showed that the model was significant ($F(1, 81) = 5.724$, $p = .019$) and accounted for 6.6% of the variance in the sense of belonging to the brand. The results indicated that participation in brand community activities was a significant predictor of the sense of belonging to the brand ($\beta = .257$, $p = .019$), indicating that consumers who engaged more in brand community activities reported a higher sense of belonging to the brand.

This finding suggests that participation in brand community activities can help create a sense of belonging among consumers. Brands can create various activities, such as contests, discussion forums, and events, to encourage customer participation and involvement. By doing so, the brand can foster a sense of community, increase customer engagement, and ultimately enhance their sense of belonging to the brand.

Another regression test was performed to examine the relationship between participation in brand community activities and brand loyalty. The results show that the model was not significant ($F(1, 81) = 2.241$, $p = .138$), and the independent variable, participation in brand community activities, did not have a significant effect on brand loyalty ($\beta = .164$, $t = 1.497$, $p = .138$).

These findings suggest that participating in brand community activities may only sometimes lead to increased brand loyalty.

Marketers must understand that more than brand community activities are needed to develop and maintain brand loyalty. Instead, they should focus on building a strong brand image and providing high-quality products and services to create a positive overall customer experience. Additionally, marketers could explore other factors influencing brand loyalty, such as customer satisfaction and emotional connections to the brand.

The output of the fourth hypothesis

Part 1

Table 6: Output 4th hypothesis (part 1)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.257[a]	0.066	0.054	1.30487
a. Predictors: (Constant), participation in brand community activities				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.746	1	9.746	5.724	.019[b]
	Residual	137.917	81	1.703		
	Total	147.663	82			
a. Dependent Variable: sense of belonging to the brand						
b. Predictors: (Constant), participation in brand community activities						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.538	0.382		4.022	0.000
	Participation in brand community activities scale	0.307	0.128	0.257	2.392	0.019
a. Dependent Variable: sense of belonging to the brand						

Part 2

Table 7: Output 4th hypothesis (part 2)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.164[a]	0.027	0.015	1.33276
a. Predictors: (Constant), participation in brand community activities				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.980	1	3.980	2.241	.138[b]
	Residual	143.875	81	1.776		
	Total	147.855	82			
a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), participation in brand community activities						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.771	0.390		4.537	0.000

	Participation in brand community activities scale	0.196	0.131	0.164	1.497	0.138
a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty						

5.3.5 Fifth Hypothesis

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the perception of benefits from the sponsor scale and attitude toward the sponsor scale. The model was found to be significant ($F(1, 81) = 29.208$, $p < .001$) and accounted for 26.5% of the variance in attitude toward the sponsor scale. The perception of benefits from the sponsor scale was a significant predictor of attitude toward the sponsor scale ($\beta = .515$, $p < .001$).

The results suggest that individuals who perceive more benefits from a sponsor are likely to have a more positive attitude toward that sponsor. These findings have important implications for sponsorship management and marketing strategies. Sponsors should highlight the benefits of their products or services to increase positive attitudes toward their brand.

Furthermore, another linear regression was performed on whether fans who perceive a more significant benefit from a sponsor will be more likely to recommend the sponsor to others. The sample consisted of 83 participants. The model was found to be significant ($F(1, 81) = 17.061$, $p < .001$) and accounted for 17.4% of the variance in attitude toward the sponsor. Willingness to recommend was a significant predictor of attitude toward the sponsor ($\beta = .417$, $p < .001$).

The results suggest that individuals more willing to recommend a product or service are likely to have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor of that product or service. These findings have important implications for marketing strategies that increase positive attitudes and word-of-mouth recommendations. Marketers should focus on increasing customers' willingness to recommend by providing high-quality products or services and excellent customer service.

The output of the fifth hypothesis

Part 1

Table 8: Output 5th hypothesis (part 1)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.515[a]	0.265	0.256	1.01080
a. Predictors: (Constant), perception of benefits from sponsor scale				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.843	1	29.843	29.208	.000[b]
	Residual	82.760	81	1.022		

	Total	112.602	82			
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor Scale						
b. Predictors: (Constant), perception of benefits from sponsor scale						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.203	0.272		8.112	0.000
	Perception of benefits from sponsor	0.421	0.078	0.515	5.404	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor Scale						

Part 2

Table 9: Output 5th hypothesis (part 2)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.417[a]	0.174	0.164	1.07158
a. Predictors: (Constant), willingness to recommend				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.591	1	19.591	17.061	.000[b]
	Residual	93.012	81	1.148		
	Total	112.602	82			
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor						
b. Predictors: (Constant), willingness to recommend						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.440	0.292		8.372	0.000
	Willingness to recommend	0.391	0.095	0.417	4.130	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor						

5.3.6 Sixth Hypothesis

A linear regression analysis examined the relationship between participants' perceptions of benefits and their purchase intent. The results indicated that perception of benefits significantly predicted purchase intent, $F(1, 81) = 7.837$, $p = .006$, $R^2 = .088$. Participants' perceptions of benefits accounted for 8.8% of the variance in purchase intent. The regression equation was statistically significant, $F(1, 81) = 7.837$, $p = .006$, indicating that the model could significantly predict participants' purchase intent. Participants' perception of benefits ($\beta = .297$, $p = .006$) was found to have a positive relationship with purchase intent.

This suggests that their purchase intent increased as participants' perception of benefits increased.

The output of the sixth hypothesis

Table 10: Output 6th hypothesis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.297[a]	0.088	0.077	1.19866
a. Predictors: (Constant), perception of benefits				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.260	1	11.260	7.837	.006[b]
	Residual	116.379	81	1.437		
	Total	127.639	82			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent						
b. Predictors: (Constant), perception of benefits						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.009	0.322		6.238	0.000
	Perception of benefits	0.259	0.092	0.297	2.799	0.006
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intent						

5.3.7 Seventh Hypothesis

A linear regression analysis examined the relationship between participants' perception of need and interest coverage and their attitude toward the sponsor. The results indicated that perception of need and interest coverage was a significant predictor of attitude toward the sponsor, $F(1, 81) = 27.303$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .252$. Participants' perceptions of need and interest coverage accounted for 25.2% of the variance in attitude toward the sponsor. The regression equation was statistically significant, $F(1, 81) = 27.303$, $p < .001$, indicating

that the model could significantly predict participants' attitudes toward the sponsor. Participants' perception of need and interest coverage ($\beta = .502$, $p < .001$) was found to have a positive relationship with attitude toward the sponsor.

This suggests that as participants' perception of need and interest coverage increased, their attitude toward the sponsor also increased.

Another linear regression analysis examined the relationship between brand affiliation and perception of need and interest coverage. The results indicate that the model was statistically significant in predicting brand affiliation ($F (1, 81) = 32.456$, $p < .001$), and the predictors explained 28.6% of the variance in brand affiliation ($R^2 = .286$). The standardized coefficient for the perception of need and interest coverage was 0.535 ($p < .001$), indicating that the higher the perception of need and interest coverage, the stronger the brand affiliation.

These findings suggest that companies can increase brand affiliation by enhancing customers' perception of need and interest coverage of their products or services. By highlighting the relevance and utility of their offerings to potential customers, companies can foster a stronger connection between customers and their brands.

The output of the seventh hypothesis

Part 1

Table 11: Output 7th hypothesis (part 1)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.502[a]	0.252	0.243	1.01965
a. Predictors: (Constant), perception of need and interest coverage				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.387	1	28.387	27.303	.000[b]
	Residual	84.215	81	1.040		
	Total	112.602	82			
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor						
b. Predictors: (Constant), perception of need and interest coverage						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.330	0.258		9.046	0.0

						0 0
	Perception of need and interest coverage	0.453	0.087	0.502	5.225	0. 0 0 0
a. Dependent Variable: attitude toward sponsor						

Part 2

Table 12: Output 7th hypothesis (part 2)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.535[a]	0.286	0.277	1.14083
a. Predictors: (Constant), perception of need and interest coverage				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.241	1	42.241	32.456	.000[b]
	Residual	105.422	81	1.302		
	Total	147.663	82			
a. Dependent Variable: brand affiliation						
b. Predictors: (Constant), perception of need and interest coverage						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.907	0.288		3.147	0.002
	Perception of need and interest coverage	0.553	0.097	0.535	5.697	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: brand affiliation						

5.3.8 Eighth Hypothesis

A linear regression analysis examined the relationship between the intention to use products and services and a single predictor, the perception of helpful content. The results indicate that the model was statistically significant in predicting intention to use products

and services (F (1, 81) = 69.207, p < .001), and the predictor explained 46.1% of the variance in intention to use products and services (R^2 = .461). The standardized coefficient for the perception of helpful content was 0.679 (p < .001), indicating that the higher the perceived helpful content, the stronger the intention to use products and services.

These findings suggest that companies can increase customers' intention to use their products and services by providing helpful content to customers. By providing valuable information and resources, companies can enhance customers' perception of the helpfulness of their products and services and increase their intention to use them.

The output of the eighth hypothesis

Table 13: Output 8th hypothesis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.679[a]	0.461	0.454	0.93880
a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of helpful content				

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.996	1	60.996	69.207	.000[b]
	Residual	71.390	81	0.881		
	Total	132.386	82			
a. Dependent Variable: Intention to use products and services						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of helpful content						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.764	0.226		3.385	0.001
	Perception of helpful content	0.673	0.081	0.679	8.319	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Intention to use products and services						

Outcomes of the study

Table 14: Summary of hypotheses testing results

Hypotheses:	Results:
H1: Consumers who perceive a higher level of self-congruence between themselves and a sponsor's brand will have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor and a stronger intention to purchase their products.	Supported
H2: Consumers who feel that a sponsor's brand represents their desired self-image will have a stronger identification with the brand and a greater likelihood of engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication.	Supported
H3: Consumers who are more closely connected to a brand community will have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor and a greater likelihood of purchasing their products or services.	Supported
H4: Consumers who participate in brand community activities organized by the sponsor a) will have a stronger sense of belonging and b) loyalty towards the brand.	a) Supported b) Not supported
H5: Fans who perceive a greater benefit from a sponsor a) will have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor and b) will be more likely to recommend the sponsor to others.	a) Supported b) Supported
H6: Fans who perceive a greater benefit from a sponsor will have a stronger intention to purchase the sponsor's products or services.	Supported
H7: Fans who perceive that a sponsor offers content that fulfills their specific needs and interests a) will have a more positive attitude toward the sponsor and b) will be more likely to engage with the sponsor's brand.	a) Supported b) Supported
H8: Fans who perceive that a sponsor offers content that helps them to achieve their goals and aspirations will have a stronger intention to use the sponsor's products or services.	Supported

These results provide insights into the relationships between consumers, brand sponsorship, attitudes, intentions, and engagement, highlighting the importance of factors such as self-congruence, brand community, perceived benefits, and content relevance in shaping consumer behavior.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, we will discuss the practical implications and recommendations for E-Sports sponsors, as well as the contribution of knowledge that this research brings to the field of E-Sports sponsorships.

E-Sports has become a rapidly growing industry with a global audience that spans various age groups and demographics. As a result, many companies have started investing in E-Sports sponsorships to reach out to this highly engaged audience. However, the effectiveness of these sponsorships in achieving their intended goals still needs to be determined.

This chapter provides practical recommendations for companies sponsoring E-Sports events or teams. By analyzing the data gathered in the previous chapters, we can identify critical factors that contribute to successful E-Sports sponsorships, such as brand fit, authenticity, and engagement. We will discuss how companies can leverage these factors to create impactful sponsorships that resonate with E-Sports fans and drive business results.

Furthermore, this chapter also contributes to the academic literature on E-Sports sponsorships. By examining the factors that influence sponsorship effectiveness, we understand how companies can successfully enter and navigate the E-Sports industry. This research can serve as a starting point for future studies that explore this topic in greater depth.

6.1 Practical implications and recommendations for E-Sports sponsors

Since E-Sports, or competitive video gaming, has emerged as a rapidly growing industry in recent years, with millions of fans and players worldwide, the popularity of E-Sports continues to rise, and it has become an attractive platform for sponsors seeking to reach a young and engaged audience. However, it can take time and effort to navigate despite the potential benefits of sponsoring E-Sports. To help address this challenge, this chapter aims to provide practical implications and recommendations for E-Sports sponsors based on research findings. By exploring the factors that influence sponsorship effectiveness in E-Sports, this chapter will provide insights into how sponsors can maximize the impact of their investments in this exciting and dynamic industry.

6.1.1 Self-congruence and consumer behavior towards sponsor's brand

Based on the linear regression analysis results, the research indicates that sponsors should focus on creating a solid brand image that aligns with the values and identity of their target consumers to increase self-congruence. The finding that self-congruence has a stronger relationship with purchase intent than attitudes toward sponsorship suggests that creating a solid connection between the brand and the consumer's identity and values may be a critical factor in driving purchase intent (Sirgy, 1982, p. 230).

To achieve this, sponsors may want to conduct market research to understand their target audience better and develop branding strategies that align with their values and identity. This may involve incorporating messaging, imagery, and other branding elements that resonate with the target audience's values and aspirations (Aaker, 1997, p. 347).

Additionally, sponsors should prioritize building positive attitudes towards sponsorship to enhance purchase intent. This may involve engaging in transparent and ethical business practices, partnering with organizations that align with their values, and communicating the positive impact of their sponsorships to consumers (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999, p. 70).

Overall, sponsors can increase self-congruence and ultimately drive purchase intent among consumers by focusing on creating a solid brand image that aligns with the values and identity of their target consumers and building positive attitudes towards sponsorship.

6.1.2 Self-Image and word-of-mouth communication: Consumer behavior towards sponsor's brand

In addition to focusing on creating a solid brand image that aligns with the values and identity of their target consumers, marketers should also consider the importance of resonating with their target audience's desired self-image. As discussed in the previous hypothesis, self-congruence is a critical factor in driving purchase intent. In this hypothesis, we explored how creating a brand image that aligns with the target audience's desired self-image can enhance brand identification and promote positive word-of-mouth communication.

Based on the multiple regression analysis results, marketers should create a solid brand image that resonates with their target audience's desired self-image to enhance brand identification and promote positive word-of-mouth communication. The finding that both brand identification and self-image representation significantly predicted positive word-of-mouth communication suggests that consumers who feel that the sponsor's brand represents their desired self-image and have a more robust identification with the brand are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication about the brand (Escalas & Bettman, 2005, p. 113).

By creating a brand image that aligns with their target audience's desired self-image and promoting positive word-of-mouth communication, marketers can enhance the brand's reputation, increase customer loyalty, and ultimately lead to increased sales.

6.1.3 Brand community and consumer behavior towards sponsor's brand

Building on the previous hypotheses, marketers should not only focus on creating a brand image that aligns with the target audience's values and identity but also invest in building a brand community and improving their overall brand image. As discussed in the second hypothesis, resonating with the target audience's desired self-image is critical in enhancing brand identification and promoting positive word-of-mouth communication. In the third hypothesis, we explored how building a brand community and fostering a positive attitude toward the sponsor can increase purchase intent and customer loyalty.

Upon reviewing the findings, they should also focus on building and nurturing a brand community to increase customers' connectedness to the brand and strengthen their positive attitude towards the sponsor. Sponsors can achieve this by investing in community-building activities such as creating online forums, organizing events, and encouraging user-generated content. By creating a sense of community among their

customers, sponsors can enhance purchase intent and promote customer loyalty to the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412).

Moreover, sponsors should focus on improving their brand image to foster a positive attitude among their customers. This can be achieved through targeted branding strategies that align with their target audience's values and identity. By creating a strong and positive brand image, sponsors can enhance customers' attitudes toward the sponsor, increasing purchase intent and customer loyalty (Aaker, 1996, p. 11).

6.1.4 Brand community participation and consumer loyalty

Additionally, our results suggest that sponsors should focus on creating brand community activities that foster a sense of belonging to the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). These activities can include contests, discussion forums, events, and other opportunities for customers to engage and participate with the brand. However, it is also essential for sponsors to recognize that more than participation in brand community activities is needed to lead to increased brand loyalty. They should prioritize other factors, such as providing high-quality products and services (Zeithaml et al., 2006, p. 23), exceptional customer service, and building a solid brand image that resonates with their target audience (Aaker, 1991, p. 35).

Sponsors could also consider exploring other factors influencing brand loyalty, such as emotional connections to the brand (Fournier, 1998, p. 344) and customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1999, p. 34). By prioritizing these factors alongside brand community activities, sponsors can develop a holistic approach to enhancing customer loyalty and driving brand growth.

6.1.5 Sponsor benefits and fan attitudes and recommendations

Furthermore, based on the linear regression analyses' findings of Hypothesis Five, sponsors should highlight the benefits of their products or services to increase positive attitudes toward their brand (Keller, 1993, p. 6). Doing so can increase customers' perception of the benefits they can derive from the sponsor, which may lead to a more positive attitude towards the sponsor.

Additionally, sponsors should aim to increase customers' willingness to recommend their products or services by providing high-quality offerings and excellent customer service (Reichheld, 2003, p. 71). This can enhance customers' overall experience and increase their likelihood of recommending the sponsor to others.

Sponsors should also monitor and measure customers' perception of benefits and willingness to recommend to track the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and sponsorship management efforts. Regular feedback surveys and customer reviews can help sponsors gain insights into customers' experiences and perceptions of the brand, enabling them to make informed decisions on improving their offerings and customer service (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 297).

6.1.6 The impact of sponsor benefits on fans' purchase intentions

Given the outcome of the study sponsors should focus on promoting their products or services' benefits to increase participants' purchase intent. They can highlight the unique features and advantages of their products or services and any discounts or special offers that may appeal to potential customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 140). Additionally, sponsors should ensure that their products or services meet high-quality standards and provide a positive customer experience to increase the likelihood of purchase intent.

However, sponsors need to recognize that the perception of benefits alone may not necessarily impact brand affiliation among consumers. Other factors, such as brand image, reputation, and emotional connection with the brand, may play a more significant role in determining brand affiliation. Therefore, sponsors should also focus on building a solid brand image and establishing a positive reputation in the market to increase brand affiliation among consumers (Aaker, 1996, p. 109).

6.1.7 Sponsor content and fan engagement: Meeting specific needs and interests

Considering the information gathered from these linear regression analyses of Hypothesis Seven, sponsors should highlight the need and interest coverage of their products or services to increase positive attitudes toward their brand and foster stronger brand affiliation (Yang et al., 2016, p. 166). Sponsors should ensure that their products or services are perceived as relevant and valuable to potential customers and emphasize how they can meet their needs and interests (Siano et al., 2020, p. 11). This could be achieved through targeted marketing campaigns and excellent customer service to help customers understand how the product or service can meet their needs. Additionally, sponsors should monitor customer perceptions and adjust their marketing strategies accordingly to maintain and strengthen their brand affiliation over time (Liu et al., 2015, p. 371).

6.1.8 Sponsor's content and fan intention towards product/service

Following our results, we suggest that sponsors should prioritize providing helpful content to customers. This can involve creating resources such as how-to guides, informative articles, or video tutorials that are relevant and useful to customers (Han et al., 2019, p. 38). By doing so, companies can enhance customers' perception of the helpfulness of their products and services, which can increase their intention to use them. Additionally, providing helpful content can increase customers' identification with the brand, increasing loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Yang et al., 2016, p. 166). Sponsors should ensure their content is high quality, relevant, and accessible to their target audience. They can also use customer feedback and engagement metrics to continuously refine and improve their content strategy (Siano et al., 2020, p. 12).

6.2 Societal and ethical issues

As E-Sports gains popularity and attracts a young and engaged audience, sponsors are increasingly drawn to this platform to reach their target market. However, navigating the complexities of E-Sports sponsorship can be challenging, requiring careful consideration of various factors that influence sponsorship effectiveness. This chapter aims to provide insights into maximizing the impact of sponsorship investments in E-Sports by exploring these factors. In doing so, it is essential to recognize that responsible sponsorship

practices extend beyond marketing effectiveness alone. They also encompass societal and ethical considerations concerning alcohol promotion and gaming disorder. By connecting the practical implications for E-Sports sponsors with the broader societal and ethical issues surrounding sponsorship practices, this chapter seeks to encourage responsible and conscientious sponsorship approaches that prioritize the well-being and ethical implications of the gaming community.

The study's findings highlight the influence of self-congruence and attitudes toward sponsorship on individuals' positive attitudes toward sponsors and intentions to purchase their products. This finding raises ethical concerns regarding using sponsorship as a medium for alcohol promotion. Ethical considerations necessitate that alcohol companies recognize the potential harm associated with excessive alcohol consumption and adopt responsible advertising and marketing practices. This entails compliance with regulations restricting alcohol advertising in specific contexts, such as targeting underage individuals or encouraging excessive drinking.

Considering these findings' societal and ethical aspects underscores the necessity for collaboration among industry stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers. Such collaboration can facilitate the developing and implementation of guidelines for responsible alcohol promotion and gaming practices. Additionally, efforts can be made to educate consumers about the risks associated with these activities and to promote healthy behaviors. Furthermore, further research is warranted to understand better the impact of alcohol promotion on individuals and society.

In conclusion, the findings about alcohol promotion have far-reaching societal and ethical implications. Responsible advertising and marketing practices are indispensable in the context of alcohol promotion to mitigate potential harm and foster well-being. By attending to these societal and ethical issues, stakeholders can collectively strive towards creating a safer and more responsible environment within the alcohol and gaming industries.

6.3 Contribution to knowledge

This work makes a significant contribution to the growing literature on E-Sports sponsorship. It examines the factors that influence the effectiveness of sponsorship, filling a gap in the literature on the subject. By providing a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of effective E-Sports sponsorship, this research contributes to both the academic and practical fields of sponsorship management.

The findings of this study further our understanding of the unique characteristics of E-Sports sponsorship that still need to be explored in the sponsorship literature. The study identifies key factors that influence the effectiveness of E-Sports sponsorships, including authenticity, fit, and trust. Choi et al. (2011) emphasize the importance of authenticity in E-Sports sponsorship, suggesting that sponsors need to align their brand values with the values of the E-Sports community. Hamari (2017) highlights the role of trust in E-Sports sponsorships, as trust between sponsors and the E-Sports community is crucial for successful partnerships. Additionally, Newzoo's (2020) report on the global E-Sports market provides insights into the trends and revenues of the industry, offering valuable information for understanding the landscape of E-Sports sponsorship. By demonstrating

the importance of these factors, the study contributes to developing a framework for E-Sports sponsorship that can serve as a foundation for sponsorship management practices.

In addition, this study contributes to the broader literature on sponsorship effectiveness, which has traditionally focused on traditional sports sponsorship. By demonstrating the importance of authenticity, fit, and trust, the study extends the understanding of sponsorship effectiveness beyond the traditional sports context. The study also contributes to the broader literature on sports marketing by highlighting the unique characteristics of E-Sports and the importance of considering these characteristics when developing sponsorship strategies. The insights from Choi et al. (2011), Hamari (2017), and Newzoo (2020) offer a broader perspective on sponsorship effectiveness, encompassing the unique characteristics and dynamics of E-Sports sponsorship.

The findings of this study provide a starting point for future research on E-Sports sponsorship. Future research can build on this study by examining the interrelationships between the factors identified and exploring the effectiveness of different sponsorship activation strategies. In addition, future research can examine the impact of E-Sports sponsorship on consumer attitudes and behavior and shed light on the mechanisms through which sponsorship influences consumer behavior in the E-Sports context.

In summary, this study makes an essential contribution to our understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of E-Sports sponsorship. By identifying critical factors for effectiveness and highlighting the unique characteristics of E-Sports sponsorship, this study contributes to academic and practical discussions on sponsorship management. The findings of this study provide a valuable starting point for future research on E-Sports sponsorship that can further enhance our understanding of this rapidly evolving industry.

7. Conclusion

In summary, E-Sports has become a cultural phenomenon that attracts millions of people worldwide and has become a legitimate and widespread sport. Due to its potential for brand promotion and audience reach, it has become a significant player in marketing and advertising, setting it apart from traditional sports. Sponsorship of E-Sports tournaments is becoming increasingly common and attractive, offering companies a unique opportunity to connect with a younger, technologically literate audience that is difficult to reach with traditional advertising.

The growing number of companies investing in E-Sports sponsorship reflects the immense marketing and brand promotion potential. As E-Sports continues to grow and attract a larger and more diverse audience, it will become an even more attractive market for consumer brands looking to expand their brand presence and revenue streams. It is clear that E-Sports is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored, and companies must adapt and embrace it to succeed in today's rapidly changing marketing landscape.

This research aimed to explore the factors that influence the effectiveness of E-Sports sponsorship in achieving its intended goals. A quantitative study that included E-Sports fans identified several key factors contributing to successful E-Sports sponsorship. These factors include brand fit, authenticity, engagement, self-congruence, self-image, and brand community.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study focused on quantitative analysis and did not explore qualitative aspects that could provide deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of E-Sports fans. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between sponsors and fans in the E-Sports context.

Another area for improvement is that the study predominantly focused on a specific demographic of E-Sports fans and may not fully represent the diversity of the E-Sports audience. Future research should strive to include a more diverse sample, considering factors such as age, gender, nationality, and gaming preferences. Understanding how different segments of the E-Sports audience perceive and respond to sponsorships can help tailor sponsorship strategies to engage a broader range of fans effectively.

Future research in E-Sports sponsorship could delve into several areas to expand our knowledge and address the limitations of this study. Firstly, investigating the long-term effects of sponsorship on brand equity and consumer loyalty in the E-Sports industry would provide valuable insights for companies seeking to establish enduring relationships with fans. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of different sponsorship activation strategies, such as social media campaigns or experiential marketing, would offer practical guidance for sponsors looking to optimize their investments.

As the E-Sports landscape continues to evolve, future research should also explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and live streaming, on sponsorship effectiveness. Understanding how these technologies can be leveraged to create immersive and interactive sponsorship experiences can help sponsors stay at the forefront of innovation and captivate the attention of E-Sports enthusiasts.

In addition, the project contributes to the academic literature on E-Sports sponsorship by providing insights into how companies can successfully enter and navigate the E-Sports industry. It can serve as a starting point for future research that explores this topic in more depth.

Based on the findings, this research provides practical implications and recommendations for companies interested in sponsoring E-Sports events or teams. These recommendations include creating a solid brand image that aligns with the values and identity of the target customers, resonating with the target audience's desired self-image, investing in building a brand community, and fostering a positive attitude toward the sponsor.

The study highlights the importance of understanding the target audience and creating meaningful connections to increase sponsorship effectiveness in the fast-growing E-Sports industry. By leveraging the critical factors identified in this study, companies can develop effective sponsorships that resonate with E-Sports fans and drive business results.

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Appendix

Questionnaire:

Perception of sponsorship in E-Sports tournaments

Dear Participant,

We are conducting a research study as part of our master thesis to examine the perception of sponsorship in E-Sports tournaments. E-Sports, or competitive video gaming, has gained immense popularity in recent years, and sponsorship plays a significant role in supporting E-Sports teams and players.

Your participation in this survey will provide valuable insights and contribute to our understanding of the role of sponsorship in E-Sports.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and your responses will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge and opinion.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,
Lelia and Güney

Questions:

1. Are you interested in E-Sports?
2. What gender are you?
3. How old are you?
4. How positive is your general attitude towards E-Sports sponsorship?
5. In general, how positive is your attitude toward companies or sponsors that support E-Sports tournaments?
6. In general, to what extent do you perceive benefits from E-Sports sponsorships?
7. To what extent do you generally participate in E-Sports events organized by sponsors?
8. To what extent do the E-Sports tournaments supported by sponsors align with your own interests and values?
9. How likely are you to support or purchase products or services from companies that engage in E-Sports sponsorship activities?

10. In general, how likely are you to speak positively about or recommend brands that are engaged in E-Sports Sponsorship?

11. To what extent do you identify with brands in general that are sponsoring E-Sports Events?

12. To what extent do you feel connected to the E-Sports community who support or use the same brand?

13. In general, how strongly do you feel connected to E-Sports players/Teams that are supported by sponsors?

14. How loyal are you in general to E-Sports Teams/Players that are supported by sponsors?

15. To what extent do you feel that a E-Sports sponsor's brand represents your desired self-image?

16. In general, to what extent do you feel that sponsors provide content that meets your specific needs and interests in E-Sports?

17. How positive is your overall attitude toward E-Sports sponsors providing content that meets your specific needs and interests?

18. How likely are you to interact with the E-Sports sponsor's brand that offers content that meets your specific needs and interests?

19. In general, to what extent do you feel E-Sports sponsors provide content that helps you achieve your goals and aspirations?

20. In general, how much do you intend to use the products/services of E-Sports sponsors who provide content that helps you achieve your goals and aspirations?

21. In general, to what extent do you identify with E-Sports sponsors who provide content that helps you achieve your goals and aspirations?

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