Esports and Wellbeing Impacts: Implications for Policy & Governance

Tri-Peaks Webinar August 3rd 2021
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The Projects

The pros and cons of online competitive gaming:
An evidence-based approach to assessing young players’ wellbeing (with VicHealth)

A New Frontier: Alcohol Sponsorship Activation through Esports (with Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education)
How are you targeting millennials and Gen Z? Alphas?
ESPORTS AUDIENCE GROWTH
GLOBAL | FOR 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022

OCCASIONAL VIEWERS
ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

TOTAL AUDIENCE
335M

2017
192M
143M

2018
222M
173M

2019
245M
198M

2022
324M
271M

TOTAL AUDIENCE
596M*
+12.2%
CAGR 2017-2022

Asia-Pacific will account for
57%
of Esports Enthusiasts in 2019

198M
2019

16%
11%
16%
57%

NAM EU APAC REST OF WORLD

*Due to rounding, Occasional Viewers (324M) and Esports Enthusiasts (271M) add up to 596M.
©Newzoo | 2019 Global Esports Market Report, June 2019
Social issues- esports integrity

- Health risks and addiction
- Potential power as a platform for positive social engagement and change
- Increasing commercialization incentivizing corruption and infiltration of organized crime.
- Rise of the esports influencer
- Diversity and inclusion
- Content and structure of games
- Lack of literacy-policy makers and parents
- Harmful product and influencer advertising
Content Analysis: Sponsorship in Esports
Content Analysis Findings

• Twitch was the primary platform for streaming events
• Junk food was the most frequent type of esports sponsorship
• Alcohol was the second most activated in streamed advertising
Conclusions

• Alcohol advertising in esports is linked to consumption and preferences.
• Gamer influencers have a powerful platform for advertising
• Sponsorship by harmful product categories is growing
• There are both adverse and beneficial wellbeing impacts of gaming, with heavier gamers more at risk than casual gamers
• Gaming and esports as potential platforms to support wellbeing and social change
Survey Snapshots

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Survey Snapshot- Alcohol advertising

• Aim was to determine extent of exposure to alcohol advertising and sponsorship in esports and impacts upon consumption and preference
• Online survey of Australian gamers aged 16-34 years (60% male)
• Heavy gamers were those who played 3-4 days per week or more
• Addicted gamers were those who endorsed meeting at least half the criteria of a validated Gaming Addiction Scale
Percentage of heavy gamers

- Heavy: 45.6%
- Casual: 54.4%

Percentage of addicted gamers

- Addicted: 53%
- Non-Addicted: 47%
Most recalled and most influential types of advertising placement

- Team or Player Apparel
- Media Platform
- Branded Content
- Celebrity Endorsement
- Naming Rights
- Interactive Advertising
- Branded Gaming Equipment
- Venue Branding
- Product Placement

Bar chart showing the percentage of most recalled and most influential advertising placements.
Conclusions

• Alcohol advertising in esports is linked to consumption, in addition to gaming generally
• Product placement in game is the most commonly recalled advertising strategy
• Gamer influencers have a powerful platform for advertising
• Heavier gamers tend to discuss brands affiliated with gaming with friends
• Classifying esports as a sport could assist with governance and regulation
• Differences between heavy and casual gamers
Pros & Cons of Online gaming Study

- Wellbeing outcomes, along with mitigation strategies were measured through a cross sectional survey of Australian gamers and non-gamers aged between 12 and 24 years, and parents of the 12 to 17-year-olds surveyed (n= 905 total)

- Adverse health consequences were associated with heavy gaming, more so than light/casual gaming, suggesting that interventions that target moderated engagement could be effective.

- No notable difference in wellbeing between casual and non-gamers.

- Life satisfaction, sedentary lifestyle, social connection, trouble sleeping, consumption of alcohol and sugar drinks, bullying linked to gaming, smoking, addiction to gaming were measured.

- Limiting game time was found to be an effective strategy, in addition to engaging in more physical activity
Systematic Literature review
Lifestyle outcomes and Online video gaming

We identified 3,694 studies, 36 of which met the inclusion criteria.

The studies reported associations between online video gaming (including eSports participation and consumption) and poor lifestyle outcomes:

1. physical activity-related (decreased levels of physical activity, increased body mass index (BMI) and sedentary behaviour)
2. nutrition-related (poorer diet, sweetened beverage consumption)
3. sleep-related outcomes (decreased quality/duration, increased sleepiness/sleep deprivation).
4. physical lifestyle-related outcomes (eye strain, wrist pain, neck pain)
Governance failures

- Divergence of publisher interests and esport community interests
- Absence of universal regulations and governance to ensure competitive integrity
- Lack of regulation to ensure duty of care for players and audiences
- Self regulation doesn’t exist at supra game level
- Multi team ownership
- Team houses
Governance hurdles unique to esports

- Publisher market power
- Disparate nature of the industry - games, genres, competitions, tournaments, ownership, jurisdictions
- Commercially driven purpose
- Highly networked
- Culture – next gens distrust of authority
- Digital landscape – e-doping, incentives for organized crime
- Minors form the majority of a decentralized audience
- Enforcement inconsistency across jurisdictions and competitions
- Self regulation in infancy and inexperienced
References


Q & A
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