

Impact of Event Experience Towards Satisfaction Among E-Sport Events Participant

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to investigate and analyze the impact of event experience on the satisfaction levels of e-sport participants. Specifically, the study focuses on three crucial factors: consumer-to-consumer interactions, effective communication, and online content engagement. Data was gathered from a sample of 259 e-sport participants in Kelantan, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized for data analysis. The results obtained from the data analysis strongly support the proposed research model, reinforcing the significance of consumer-to-consumer interactions, effective communication, and online content engagement in shaping e-sport participants' satisfaction levels. The findings provide meaningful insights into the factors that contribute to participant satisfaction, ultimately informing industry professionals, event organizers, and stakeholders in their efforts to enhance the overall e-sport experience.

Keywords: *E-sport, participants, satisfaction, event experience, consumer-to-consumer interactions, effective communication, and online content engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Asia stands as the largest and most significant region in the global e-sports industry, with more than 57% of the \$1.1 billion market share. In 2021, the Asia E-sports market generated \$634.3 million, marking a 16.6% increase compared to the previous year. The region boasts nearly 700 million e-sports fans, with a 13% growth in viewership observed in 2021. League of Legends, PUBG, and Valorant dominate the PC e-sports scene in Asia, while PUBG Mobile/BGMI, Free Fire, and League of Legends: Wild Rift take the lead in mobile e-sports (Niko Partner, 2022).

Malaysia, specifically, is predicted to generate \$5.31 million in e-sports revenue in 2023. The market is expected to grow further, reaching \$8.47 million in sales by 2027, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.37% during that period. (Hong, 2022). The largest segment, Media Rights, is projected to contribute \$1.38 million in 2023 (Statista, 2023). Malaysian e-sports competitors have achieved notable success, amassing a total prize money of \$17,004,876.42 USD from 1,054 competitions. Dota 2 stands out with \$12,757,611.39 in winnings, accounting for 75.02% of all Malaysian players' earnings. Yap "xNova" Jianwei, with \$2,028,185.72 USD in prize money from Dota 2 competitions, holds the title of the highest-paid Malaysian player.

While the e-sports events industry holds significant potential, it also faces obstacles. Apart from the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there are other noteworthy barriers to growth. Declining e-sports investments and the difficulty of hosting large-scale live events hinder the industry's progress. Prolonged market uncertainty, reduced advertising and sponsorship spending, and challenges in securing additional funding from existing sponsors are among the factors impeding e-sports expansion (Foley & Lardner, 2020). These concerns are mirrored in the fluctuating number of active players in Malaysian e-sports, causing worry among players, spectators, and fans (Statista, 2022).

Figure 1.0: Total number of active players in E-sport in Malaysia from 2016-2021



Sources: Statista, 2022

In response to this landscape, event organizers in the e-sports industry should prioritize efforts to enhance the experience of visitors, audiences, and participants. Research on event experiences suggests that novel, special, or distinctive encounters leave a vivid impression on individuals, leading to stronger recollection (Kim, Hallab, et al., 2012; Kim, Ritchie, et al., 2012). Moreover, participant satisfaction plays a crucial role in fostering repeat participation, as it is closely tied to the perceived event experience (Krohn & Backman, 2011). However, the study of event experiences, particularly in the realm of e-sports events, remains limited. (Jupiter Research, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of event experiences on the satisfaction levels of e-sport participants, filling a crucial gap in the existing research.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship between the impact of online consumer-to-consumer interaction and satisfaction among e-games participants.

2. To examine the relationship between the impact of effective communication and satisfaction among e-games participants.
3. To assess the relationship between the impact of online content engagement and satisfaction among e-games participants.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Academic Perspectives

This study holds academic significance as it adds to the existing knowledge in the field of e-sports research. By investigating the influence of event experience on participant satisfaction, it provides insights into consumer-to-consumer interactions, effective communication, and online content engagement within the e-sports context. (Libai, 2010). This dissertation hopefully will provide a noble benefaction by extending a literature review on the satisfaction of event experience. Furthermore, this study will aid in directing future research advancement, particularly in areas associated with event management, including lecturers and students who are majoring in these subjects and fields. (Brodie, 2013). Additionally, this study will aid researchers in drawing solid conclusions from the outcomes of their theories, hypotheses, and research queries

Practical Perspective

The findings offer practical implications for industry professionals, event organizers, and stakeholders, enabling them to improve the e-sports experience. By understanding the factors that contribute to participant satisfaction, these individuals can make informed decisions and implement strategies to enhance the overall e-sport experience. This study bridges the gap between academia and industry, providing actionable insights that can drive improvements in e-sports event planning, execution, and participant engagement. The findings of this study offer practical implications for enhancing the overall e-sport experience. Understanding the factors that contribute to participant satisfaction enables industry professionals and event organizers to make informed decisions and implement strategies that improve various aspects of e-sports events. By emphasizing the importance of consumer-to-consumer interactions, effective communication, and online content engagement, stakeholders can develop initiatives that foster meaningful engagement and create memorable experiences for participants. (Harris, 2000).

LITERATURE REVIEW

ONLINE CONSUMER TO CONSUMER INTERACTION

Increased customer contact made possible by the emergence of social media has the ability to affect how consumers view businesses (Eigenraam et al., 2018; Brodie et al., 2013). Particularly recent sporting occurrences create a "tremendous buzz" online (McGillivray,

2014). While Johnson and Grier (2013) define it as the active or passive interaction between two or more consumers within a service setting, Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005, p. 21) define consumer interaction from a community perspective as "the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact and co-operate with community members." This is especially true in online settings because users have access to a variety of digital tools that make it easier for them to engage with one another (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013).

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Any organization's marketing strategy must prioritise communicating with customers effectively (Adjei et al., 2010; Grisseman & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). For businesses, effective communication provides a number of advantages, including lowered risk perceptions and positive overall experience ratings from customers (Klaus, 2013). Additionally, Drennan et al. (2015) contend that effective communication improves brand experience and raises brand awareness because people tend to use new information to build experience and draw conclusions that are more certain and self-relevant (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2012). By suggesting that communication is a two-way conversation between a company and its customers, Vargo and Lusch (2004) revolutionised the way businesses approach communication in service settings. Regular contact and follow-ups between the parties involved in this two-way dialogue are essential.

ONLINE CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

This is the basis for setting engagement apart from other relationship concepts with a similar meaning, such involvement. Because it involves a proactive and interactive relationship with an engagement object (such as an event) and necessitates a person's perceived experiential value (Brodie et al., 2013; Mollen & Wilson, 2010), consumer engagement goes beyond involvement (i.e., a consumer's interest and personal relevance of an event) (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Brodie et al., 2011) experiences with a focal agent/object within a particular service connection. Customers are provided with website customizations and website-based interaction (such videos), which not only create value but also encourage more involvement (Liechty et al., 2001). Customization, interactivity, and website design are just a few of the ways that businesses may control how their customers interact with the internet (Srinivasan). According to Schivinski et al. (2016), these elements frequently encourage customers to engage in a two-way conversation with the company (Anderson, & Ponnnavolu, 2002).

Important components of consumer engagement include the capacity for customers to "redesign" their interactions with a company's website (Eigenraam et al., 2018). In other words, increasing the whole experience requires that customers interact with the online material that a company offers (Calder et al., 2009). Mega-events have not been used to test the literature on internet consumer participation. We contend that a greater understanding of the fundamentals of effective consumer participation in this setting is crucial given the universal attraction of big events in contemporary societies and their potential spectrum of repercussions. In particular, we contend that greater comprehension.

The relationship between consumer-to-consumer interaction, effective communication and online content engagement towards satisfaction among E-sport event participants.

The rise of social media has enabled an increased interaction between consumers (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013; Eigenraam, Eelen, van Lin, & Verlegh, 2018), which has the potential to influence their perceptions of organisations (Carlson & O'Cass, 2012). Contemporary sport events in particular generate a 'tremendous buzz' online (McGillivray, 2014). Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005) define consumer interaction from a community perspective as "the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact and co-operate with community members", while Johnson and Grier (2013) refer to it as the active or passive interaction between two or more consumers within a service setting. This is particularly relevant within online environments, where consumers have access to several digital tools that facilitate their interaction with each other (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). As a result, we define online consumer-to-consumer interaction as the dialogue between two or more consumers by virtue of online experiences.

Communicating effectively with consumers is a critical aspect of the marketing strategy of any organisation (Adjei et al., 2010; Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Effective communication has several benefits for organisations, such as reduced perceptions of risk and consumers' positive evaluations of overall experience (Klaus, 2013). In addition, Drennan et al. (2015) have argued that effective communication increases brand awareness and enhances brand experience, because people tend to use acquired knowledge to build experience and make inferences that are more self-relevant and certain (see also, Delgado-Ballester, Navarro, & Sicilia, 2012). Vargo and Lusch (2004) transformed the way organisations approach communication in service settings, arguing that communication is a two-way dialogue between an organisation and consumers. This two-way dialogue needs to include regular contact and follow ups between the organisation and its consumers (Brodie et al., 2013;

Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). In line with this view, Liang, Ekinci, Occhiocupo, and Whyatt (2013) highlighted the importance for organisations to respond promptly to the opinions and information requests from their consumers.

This is the basis for distinguishing engagement from other similar relational terms such as involvement. That is, consumer engagement extends beyond involvement (i.e. consumer's interest and personal relevance of an event; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014), given that it encompasses a proactive and interactive relationship with an engagement object (e.g. event) and requires an individual's perceived experiential value (Brodie et al., 2013; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Experiences with a focal agent/object within a specific service relationship" (Brodie et al., 2011, p. 258). Web customisations and website-based engagement (e.g. videos) delivered to consumers not only generate value but also promote further engagement (Liechty, Ramaswamy, & Cohen, 2001). Organisations have a variety of ways to manage the web experience of their consumers, including customisation, interactivity and website design (e.g. Srinivasan, Anderson, & Ponnayolu, 2002), and these features often lead consumers to a two-way interaction with the organisation (Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski, 2016). Consumers' ability to customise their interaction with an organisation's website and 'redesign' their experience represents important aspects of consumer engagement (Eigenraam et al., 2018).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Based on the discussion above, the hypotheses of the study are proposed as below:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the impact of online consumer-to-consumer interaction and satisfaction among e-sport participants.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the impact of effective communication and satisfaction among e-sport participants.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the impact of online content engagement and satisfaction among e-sport participants.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Research Framework proposed for the current study are as below:

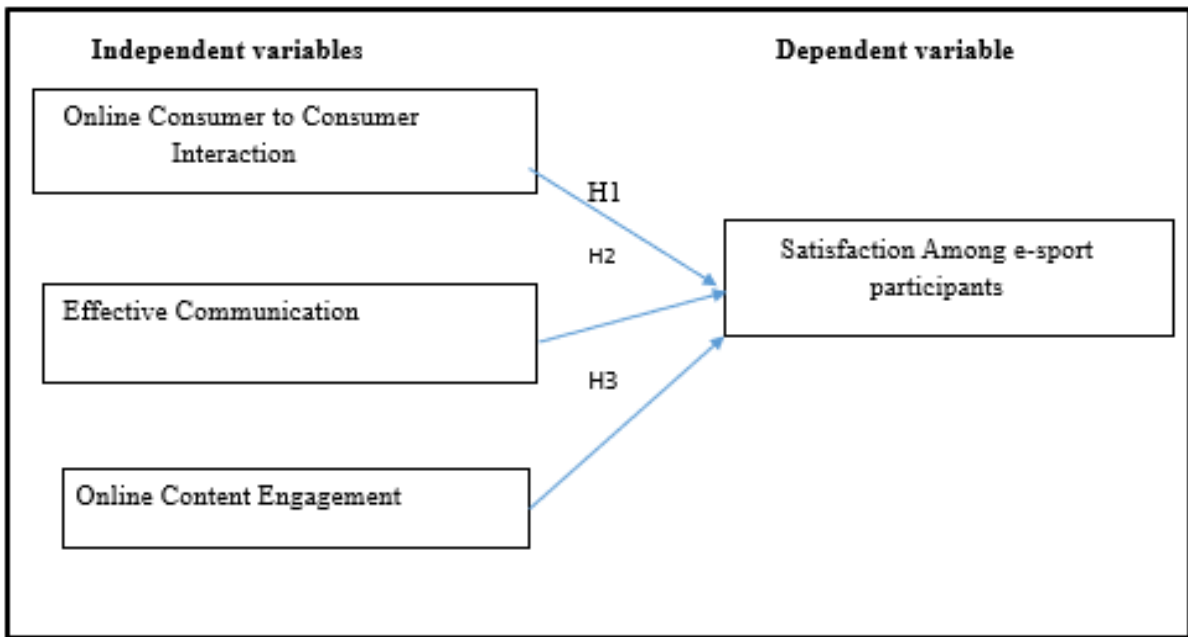


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework adopted from Husni Kharouf & Rui Biscaia (2020)

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the influence of variables such as online consumer to consumer interaction, effective communication and online content engagement towards satisfaction among e-sport event participants. The target population consists of is the audience or viewers who have participated in any e-sports event is 19.8 million. To ensure an appropriate sample size, the researchers followed **Krejcie & Morgan (1970)** set of guidelines. Data collection is conducted through an online survey utilizing Google Forms, with 259 participants involved. The selection of participants relies on purposive sampling, enabling the researcher to exercise judgment and select individuals with e-sport experience. The research instrument incorporates items drawn from Husni Kharouf & Rui Biscaia (2020) using 5 likert-scale. In order to analyze the gathered data, the researchers employ the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0, employing various statistical techniques including descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation, and regression.

FINDINGS

Demographic Profile

The online platform had originally distributed a total of 384 sets of questionnaire via Google Form, however, only 259 respondents responded; with a response rate of 67.44%. In this section, respondents have a contextual profile. About 62.2% were male and another 37.8% were female. The table indicated majority of the respondents were Malay, with a total of 158 (61%).

Respondents who responded to this survey are mostly aged between 21 to 30 years old, with the frequency of 212 respondents (81.9%). This is followed by those who aged between 31 to 40 years with the frequency of 24 respondents (9.3%). Next, respondents under the age of 20 years old make up a total of 8.1% of respondents with the frequency of 21 and finally, respondents whose aged above 41 years old with total frequency of 2 respondents (0.8%).

According to this table, 64.5% respondents (n=167) have a Bachelor Degree. 46 respondents (17.8%) received a Diploma, followed by 22 respondents (8.5%) with a Form 6 Diploma, 13 respondents (5%) owned a Master Degree; and finally, 4.2% respondents (n=11) graduated with a secondary school diploma. None of the respondents have a PhD yet.

Table 1: Demographic of respondents

| Respondent profile | Classification | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | N=259 | |
| Gender | Male | 161 | 62.2% |
| | Female | 98 | 37.8 % |
| Age | < 20 | 21 | 8.1 % |
| | 21-30 years old | 212 | 81.9% |
| | 31-40 years old | 24 | 9.3% |
| | 41-50 years old | 2 | 0.8% |
| Race | Malay | 158 | 61% |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----|--------|
| | Chinese | 70 | 27% |
| | Indian | 26 | 10% |
| | Bumiputera | 2 | 0.8% |
| Marital Status | Married | 40 | 15.4% |
| | Single | 219 | 84.6% |
| Respondent's Religion | Islam | 160 | 61.8 % |
| | Christian | 62 | 23.9% |
| | Buddha | 28 | 10.8% |
| | Hindu | 4 | 1.5% |
| | Sikhism | 1 | 0.4% |
| | Catholics | 1 | 0.4% |
| Education | Secondary | 11 | 4.2% |
| | Form 6 | 22 | 8.5 % |
| | Diploma | 46 | 17.8 % |
| | Bachelor of Degree | 167 | 64.5 % |
| | Master of Degree | 13 | 5 % |
| | PHD | 0 | 0.0% |

Reliability Test

Table 2: Result of Reliability Test

| Variable | Number of items | Reliability Cronbach's Alpha | Comment |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Online Consumer to Consumer Interaction | 3 | 0.921 | Excellent |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------|-----------|
| Effective Communication | 3 | 0.899 | Excellent |
| Online Content Engagement | 4 | 0.900 | Excellent |
| Behavioural Intension | 5 | 0.858 | Excellent |

The dependability of the computation reveals the instrument's stability and precision in calculating the definition, which contributes to the measure's goodness. Table 2 shows the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values for the independent and dependent variables in this study. All variables were ranged between 0.858 to 0.921. This demonstrates that all question presented is reliable and the questionnaire was approved to study the Impact of Event Experience Among E-sports Events Participants.

Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis is a short descriptive coefficient that summarises a given data set, which can represent the entire population or a subset of the population.

Table 3: Results of Descriptive Analysis.

| Variables | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Online consumer to consumer interaction | 259 | 4.9289 | 1.17129 |
| Effective Communication | 259 | 4.9457 | 1.06929 |
| Online content engagement | 259 | 4.9829 | 1.09160 |

Table 3 shows the independent variable and dependent variable, the mean score, and the standard deviation analysis. Online consumer-to-consumer interaction, effective communication, and online content engagement were the independent variables while the behavioural intention was the dependent variables. The highest mean value was 4.9829, which is Online Content Engagement. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value was Online Consumer-to-Consumer Interaction, which is only 4.9289.

Pearson's Correlation

Table 4: Summary result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient

| Hypothesis | Result | Findings of Data Analysis |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| H1: There is a positive relationship between online consumer-to-consumer interaction and e-sports participants' satisfaction. | r = 0.613, p = >0.001 Highly positive | H1: Accepted |
| H2: There is a positive relationship between effective communication and satisfaction among e-sports participants. | r = 0.609, p = >0.001 Highly positive | H2: Accepted |
| H3: There is a positive relationship between online content engagement and satisfaction among e-sport participants. | r = 0.649, p = >0.001 Highly positive | H3: Accepted |

Table 4 serves to summarise the findings of this study. Based on Table 4, the result revealed that all three variables have a strong relationship with the Satisfaction Among E-sports Event Participants with correlation value range from 0.609 to 0.649. The highest correlation relationship was Online Content Engagement and the lowest one was Effective Communication. Nevertheless, all hypothesis are accepted.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study was conducted to examine the Impact of Event Experience Towards Satisfaction Among E-Sport Events Participants. The researchers recognised that there were several limitations to their study. The first limitation is related to the time taken to collect respondents' responses. To overcome this issue, researchers can aid in filling the questionnaire responses on behalf of the respondents. This is due to the fact that most respondents were too busy with their commitments.

Next, the study conducted only focuses on Malaysia's respondents who had participated in esports events. The questionnaire was conducted through Google Form which was then distributed through WhatsApp, and Instagram. Therefore, we believe that this study is still far from being completed since the data collected were only in Malaysia. Besides, the distribution window for this survey is relatively narrow, as it runs from February through April. Hence, for this second limitation, we recommended future researchers to further expand the study to outside of Malaysia to cover wider regions of respondents such as the Philippines and 89Indonesia. This is because Southeast Asia is quickly emerging as a global hotspot for professional gaming, attracting big-name sponsors to an esports sector that is predicted to nearly treble by mid-decade.

Finally, researchers only use only three variables that could influence satisfaction among esports participants namely: content engagement, effective communication, and online consumer-to-consumer interaction. To overcome this issue, future investigations should explore other factors that may influence esport player happiness, such as complex interplay, game design, performance, competitiveness, community and social ties, and accessibility.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of event experience towards satisfaction among e-sports event participants, including factors such as online consumer-to-consumer interaction, effective communication, and online content engagement. The findings revealed a strong association between these objectives and the satisfaction among E-sports events participants. The respondents acknowledged the significant impact that Online Consumer-to-Consumer Interaction, Effective Communication, and Online Content Engagement and their overall satisfaction in E-sports Events as participants. This study has the potential as a guideline to future researchers or event organisers in ensuring that the event participants satisfaction is always be taken as a top priority, hence contributing to the overall success of event organising; especially in E-sports.

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