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Unifying Fields: A Comparative Analysis of Career Transitions and the Influence of Parental Perceptions in the Converging Realms of E-Sports and Traditional Sports

Supervisor:
Professor Francesca Vicentini

Candidate:
Giuliano Sansone De Martino
262431

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the burgeoning e-sports industry through the lens of its similarities with traditional sports, universal applicability of career transitions, and the influence of parental perceptions. The research is anchored by the hypothesis that career transition frameworks in e-sports should parallel those in traditional sports, due to the shared fundamental characteristics.

The first part of the paper delineates a comparative analysis between e-sports and traditional sports, breaking down the operational parallels and disparities.

Secondly, the focus pivots to career transitions in both domains. The analysis advocates for a universal career transition model, highlighting its potential impacts on an athlete's career trajectory.

Ultimately, the last part of this research delves into the role of parental perceptions in e-sports career development, exploring the challenges posed by traditional views on gaming and potential mitigation strategies. Overall, this thesis reinforces the importance of recognizing e-sports within the broader sporting context and the need for continued research to unlock its full potential in the digital era.

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I. Introduction

In the past decade, the world has witnessed the meteoric rise of a new industry: e-sports. E-sports, a term coined for competitive video gaming, has emerged from its early stages to become a billion-dollar industry with a global audience. It has transcended the notion of being a mere pastime activity to become a professional career path for many. This thesis delves into the complexities, dynamics, and potential of e-sports in the contemporary digital age.

The journey of this exploration starts with a comparative analysis between traditional sports and e-sports. While both industries share elements such as competition, talent, and audience engagement, they also have intrinsic differences, primarily influenced by their unique origins and evolution. The first chapter examines these similarities and disparities, laying the groundwork for understanding the e-sports landscape within the larger context of the sports industry.

From there, the focus shifts to the dynamics of career transitions, a critical aspect of any athlete's journey, including those in e-sports. Through the lenses of established theoretical models, the second chapter presents a detailed exploration of the process and impact of career transitions. The insights derived from this analysis provide a nuanced understanding of the unique challenges e-sports athletes face, setting the stage for further discussions on the solutions needed to address them.

Lastly, the influence of parental perceptions on the acceptance and growth of e-sports as a career is scrutinized. Given that the e-sports industry is primarily driven by younger demographics, the role of parental support and acceptance cannot be underestimated. The third chapter discusses the challenges arising from traditional parental views, suggesting potential strategies for bridging this perceptual gap.

This thesis aims to contribute to the growing body of research on e-sports, shedding light on the industry's intricacies, challenges, and potentials. It aspires to foster a deeper understanding of the e-sports landscape, aiding its further integration into mainstream culture and acceptance as a viable career path. As we navigate this digital age, the continuous exploration, understanding, and acceptance of e-sports are not only pivotal for the industry but also for the future generations of athletes it will nurture.

II. Unveiling the Parallel Universe of Sports and E-Sports

In this chapter, we encounter many myths and disputes. The equivalence of sports and e-sports divides fans of both. Some see a gap, but others see a bridge. This chapter aims to show that these seemingly different realms are more alike than different, and that equality is possible.

We begin by asking: what is a sport? We want to reveal a perspective that includes sports and e-sports by analysing conventional and new definitions. E-sports, like sports, have competitiveness, talent, strategy, and physicality. Both fields have psychological factors, training, discipline, and collaboration.

Financial matters become important as we go deeper. We analyse sports and e-sports income structures, investments, prize money, and economic effect. We compare their financial trends to show e-sports' extraordinary growth and potential, which today rivals many traditional sports.

Finally, we question the legitimacy of e-sports. A significant paper distinguishes e-sports from sports. While acknowledging this piece's opinions, this chapter provides counterarguments using research, facts, and reasoning to challenge prejudices and preconceptions.

This chapter tries to equalize sports and e-sports as competitive activities. It seeks to explore their parallels and contrasts via a careful, impartial study, sparking a conversation about sports in the digital era. Finally, the reader will understand and embrace this hybrid, digital and developing reality.

A. What is a Sport?

A sort of physical activity or game, often one that is competitive and structured, that seeks to make use of, maintain, or enhance one's physical ability and abilities while simultaneously giving enjoyment to those who participate in the activity and, in some circumstances, entertainment to those who watch the activity is referred to as a sport.

Participation in sports, whether on a sporadic or structured basis, has the potential to boost individuals' physical health. There are hundreds of different sports, ranging from those in which only one person competes against another to those in which hundreds of people compete at the same time, either as members of a team or as individuals. In certain sports, such as racing, many competitors may go head-to-head against one another simultaneously or one after the other, but there can only be one winner. In other cases, the game or competition involves two teams, each of which competes against the other in an effort to achieve victory. In certain sports, such as football, it is possible for there to be no clear

victor and instead a "tie" or "draw" is recorded. As a result of this, new laws came into effect, which give procedures for breaking ties in order to guarantee there will be one winner and one loser. In order to choose a winner of a tournament, it is possible to stage many competitions. The majority of sports leagues decide on an annual champion by holding games throughout the course of a normal sports season, often followed by postseason competitions.

The practice of sport is often controlled by a set of rules or traditions, the purposes of which are to provide a level playing field and permit accurate determination of the victor. The winner of a competition can be chosen by a series of physical actions, such as scoring goals or being the first to cross a line. It is also possible for judges to have a role in the decision-making process. Judges may use objective or subjective criteria to evaluate different aspects of an athletic performance, such as technical performance or artistic impression.[1]

a. Etymology

The word "Sport" comes from the ancient French *desport* meaning "leisure", with the oldest definition in English from around 1300 being "anything humans find amusing or entertaining".[2]

b. Definition

GAISF[3] uses the following criteria, determining that a sport should:

- have an element of competition
- be in no way harmful to any living creature
- not rely on equipment provided by a single supplier (excluding proprietary games such as arena football)
- not rely on any "luck" element specifically designed into the sport

They are also aware that a sport's primary focus might be on the body (such as in rugby or athletics), the mind (such as in chess or Go[4]), the coordination of the body (such as in billiard sports), the support of animals (such as in equestrian sports), the motor (such as in Formula 1 or powerboating). The

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[1] "Sport," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (last updated July 2, 2023), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport.
[2] *Id.*
[3] Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) (previously Sport Accord) is the umbrella organization for all (Olympic and non-Olympic) international sports federations as well as organizers of multi-sports games and sport-related international associations. *See* GAISF, World Lacrosse (last visited July 14, 2023), https://worldlacrosse.sport/about/gaisf/.
[4] Go is an abstract strategy board game for two players in which the aim is to surround more territory than the opponent. The game was invented in China more than 2,500 years ago and is believed to be the oldest board game continuously played to the present day

inclusion of mind sports under definitions of sports has not been uniformly acknowledged, which has led to governing organizations engaging in legal battles in response to being refused financing that is accessible to sports. Although GAISF recognizes a select few mind sports, the organization does not plan to include any further mental competitions in the future.

Especially due to the large scale of participation and organized competition, there has been an increase in the application of the term "sport" to a wider set of non-physical challenges such as video games, which are also called e-sports (from "electronic sports"). However, these are not widely recognized by mainstream sports organizations. According to the European Sports Charter, article 2. (1)a of the Council of Europe, "Sport" means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels.[5]

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[5] Council of Europe, European Sports Charter, art. 2.1(a) (1992),
https://it.scribd.com/document/466454480/EUROPEAN-SPORTS-CHARTER (last visited July 14, 2023).

B. What are E-Sports?

Simply put, e-sports are video games that are played in a highly organized competitive environment. These games can range from popular, team-oriented multiplayer online battle arenas (MOBAs), to single player first person shooters[6], to survival battle royales[7], to virtual reconstructions of physical sports.[8]

The first ever conceived gaming console was the Magnavox Odyssey of 1972 and this release, without a doubt, paved the way for the creation of the most famous consoles known to humans such as Nintendo, Atari, Sega and so on and so forth just to name a few. Therefore, it can be said that e-Sports date back to 1972 and grew rapidly ever since.

The popularity of e-Sports has also increased the awareness of the athletes, who prepare for and participate in competitions either individually or in teams (multiplayer) exactly like traditional athletes in sports like golf or football, respectively. Moreover, with the introduction of YouTube to the internet and the creation of Twitch by Amazon, professional gamers have become their own breed of celebrities establishing a devoted fanbase. League of Legends (LoL), Call of Duty, Counter-Strike, FIFA, Overwatch and Fortnite constitute the most popular group of e-Sports nowadays.

Essentially, revisiting the definition of sport, the most important elements of a sport are

- Body
- Mind
- Coordination of the body
- Support of animals
- The motor

These are all crucial requirements that define and shape the e-sports player but why is this type of sport considered differently from traditional sports ?

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[6] First-person shooter (FPS) is a sub-genre of shooter video games centered on gun and other weapon-based combat in a first-person perspective

[7] Battle royal (PL battles royal; also royale) traditionally refers to a fight involving many combatants that is fought until only one fighter remains standing, usually conducted under either boxing or wrestling rules

[8] Esports Part 1: What are Esports?," Harvard International Review (last visited July 14, 2023), https://hir.harvard.edu/esports-part-1-what-are-esports/.

C. Jim Parry's Quest to Redefine the Boundaries of Sporting Legitimacy

I will examine and analyse Jim Parry's article titled "E-Sports Are Not Sports" in depth. This analysis will place special emphasis on Parry's analysis and proposal of six essential criteria that define what, according to Parry, constitutes a "sport".

First and foremost, sports should be fundamentally human. While various creatures and even machinery can engage in specific activities that are frequently characterized as playful or competitive, humans are always the organizing force behind these activities. The extent of human control is a distinguishing factor in sports, according to Parry. For example, he contrasts equestrian events with greyhound racing[9] and hare coursing[10], emphasizing that in the former, the horse is under constant human control, whereas in the latter, the animals are allowed to travel freely, reducing the human element. In addition, Parry brings up activities such as sailing versus motorboating. He argues that in sailing, despite the use of technology, human skill predominates, whereas in motorboating, the machine or "engine" element is considered to be too important. In addition, the author discusses activities such as Formula 1 and Robot Wars. Although these activities are competitive and entertaining, they do not qualify as sports because the emphasis is not on human abilities. These activities, according to Parry, pose concerns about the role of the human "athlete", an essential concept for characterizing athletics.

Secondly, physicality is a crucial aspect of sports. Parry investigates the characteristics of "physical" sports. He argues that the mere presence of physical activity is insufficient to define a sport; the physical activity must directly affect the outcome of the event. He illustrates this further with activities such as chess, shooting, bridge, horticulture, and feasting competitions. In speed-eating competitions, for example, the objective is consumption rather than physical exertion or movement, thus failing to meet the definition of a sport.

The third defining characteristic is the presence of skill in athletics. Parry contends that sports require the development and implementation of human physical abilities, distinguishing them from simple physical activities such as walking, sprinting, and fundamental training. Although these activities may be an excellent form of exercise, they do not meet the definition of "sport" because they lack a significant skill component and a competitive element, which are essential characteristics of sports.

The fourth stipulation is that all sports must be contests. Parry contends that sports are distinguishable from challenges, pursuits, and non-competitive activities because they are inherently contests. He illustrates this with mountaineering and dance, which, despite being physically taxing, do not qualify

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[9] Greyhound racing is an organized, competitive sport in which greyhounds are raced around a track
[10] Hare coursing is the pursuit of hares with greyhounds and other sighthounds, which chase the hare by sight, not by scent.

as sports because they are not fundamentally competitions. While it is possible to construct competitive events around activities such as dance and music, this does not necessarily classify them as sports, according to Parry. Invoking the historical presence of art competitions at the Olympic Games, he argues that while these activities can complement sports culturally, they are distinct from sports and should not be considered as such.

The fifth condition presented by Parry is that sports are governed by regulations. He asserts that adherence to a set of standards is a defining characteristic of any sport. Therefore, he excludes activities that do not depend on rule specifications to determine results, such as field sports and exercising. As an illustration, Parry uses surfing to emphasize the ongoing debate between "soul surfing" and "competitive surfing". The "soul surfers" fiercely oppose rule structures and institutions, accentuating the spiritual, casual, and enjoyable aspects of surfing. They reject surfing as a sport because it contradicts one or more of Parry's essential conditions, most notably the observance of a set of rules.

The final requirement for a sport is its institutionalization. According to Parry, sports are contests of human physical ability governed by established norms. He explains that a sport is institutionalized when it can coherently represent itself to its national and international constituencies, typically through national and international federations. As an illustration, Parry analyses the case of surfing, highlighting its ongoing controversy despite its recent adoption as an Olympic sport. Numerous surfers contend that organizations professing to represent them are merely advancing their own commercial interests.

In conclusion, Parry emphasizes that the six conditions he outlined in his article - the human factor, physicality, skill, competition, rule governance, and institutionalization - are necessary components for defining a sport. However, these are merely suggestions and the conceptual understanding of what an Olympic sport genuinely entails can be further discussed, critiqued, and refined.[11]

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[11] JIM PARRY, E-sports are Not Sports, Sport, Ethics and Philosophy (2018),
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17511321.2018.1489419 (last visited July 14, 2023).

D. A Striking Example: Fortnite vs. Jim Parry

For simplicity's sake, I will choose one e-sport in order to facilitate the discussion with Parry's six different points and the comparison with traditional sports. Since its release in 2017, Epic Games' free-to-play video game Fortnite has exploded onto the e-sports landscape, with its Battle Royale mode playing a crucial role in its meteoric ascent. With its unique fusion of shooting and construction mechanics, this globally recognized game has become one of the most difficult, competitive, and widely played e-sports in the world, attracting players of all ages and skill levels.

Set in a post-apocalyptic universe, Fortnite challenges players against one another in a conflict for survival. In Battle Royale mode, the game's most popular configuration, up to one hundred players are parachuted onto a vast island with a simple but difficult objective: to be the last player standing. The players must quickly scavenge for firearms and resources while concurrently defending themselves against other players. A lethal tempest continuously reduces the map, forcing players into tighter spaces and more frequent combat encounters, thereby increasing the difficulty of the game.

However, Fortnite is not merely a standard combat game. It distinguishes itself with its distinctive building system. To construct structures, players can collect materials such as wood, brick, and metal. This feature adds an additional layer of strategy and skill, as players can rapidly construct fortifications and platforms to obtain an advantage over their opponents. This combination of fast-paced combat and inventive building makes each Fortnite match an adrenaline-filled experience.

Why has Fortnite Battle Royale become one of the most competitive and difficult e-sports? The answer resides in the game's unique blend of survival, combat, and construction elements, which requires players to acquire a broad range of skills. In addition to shooting precision and tactical aptitude, the game requires quick reasoning, inventive problem-solving, and proficient resource management. This complex combination of abilities makes Fortnite a difficult game to master, resulting in a highly competitive environment.

In addition, Epic Games has actively fostered the e-sports community in Fortnite. They have invested millions of dollars in competitive Fortnite tournaments, which have attracted professional players from around the globe and stoked fierce competition. With a staggering $30 million prize pool, the Fortnite World Cup[12] was one of the largest e-sports events in history, further solidifying the game's position in the competitive gaming landscape.

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[12] "Fortnite World Cup," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (last updated date not available), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortnite_World_Cup (last visited July 14, 2023).

Additionally contributing to Fortnite's success as an e-sport is the game's accessibility and extensive popularity. Fortnite's accessibility on multiple platforms — PC, console, and even mobile — and its free-to-play nature have attracted a large and diverse user base. The game's social features, such as voice chat and the ability to join up with peers, have also contributed to its popularity.

In conclusion, the Battle Royale mode of Fortnite has propelled the game into the e-sports stratosphere. Fortnite has become one of the most difficult, competitive, and widely played e-sports in the world as a result of its unique combination of shooter and construction gameplay mechanics, the developers' active promotion of competitive play, and the game's accessibility.

Using analogies between traditional sports and e-sports, Fortnite's competitive environment shares similarities with established sports structures. The Fortnite Champion Series (FNCS), Fortnite's premier competitive event, is comparable to the UEFA Champions League in football. Similarly, the manner in which Fortnite competitors are ranked mirrors that of professional tennis.[13]

Similar to the UEFA Champions League, the FNCS is a seasonal competition that features the top teams.[15] Similarly to how football clubs from various countries compete in the Champions League, the finest Fortnite players from various territories compete in the FNCS. Each season begins with several weeks of qualifiers, with the best teams advancing to the semi-finals and then, potentially, the

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[13] ATP Tour, https://www.atptour.com/en/ (last visited July 14, 2023).
[14] ATP World Rankings July 2023," Eurosport, https://www.eurosport.com/tennis/atp/standings.shtml (last visited July 14, 2023)
[15] "Competitive News," Fortnite, https://www.fortnite.com/competitive/news (last visited July 14, 2023).

championship match. The format generates a thrilling progression and enables teams to develop strategies and rivalries throughout the season, much like UEFA Champions League football clubs.[16]

In addition, both the FNCS and UEFA Champions League seek to determine the undisputed champion(s) of their respective sports. Similarly to how the victor of the Champions League is regarded as the best club in Europe, the FNCS champion is regarded as the greatest Fortnite team in their region for that season.

Individually, Fortnite has instituted a Power Ranking system comparable to the professional tennis ranking system.[17] Throughout the year, tennis competitors earn ranking points based on their performance in various tournaments. The greater the tournament's prestige and the more advanced the stage, the more points competitors can earn. The player with the most points has the highest world ranking.

In a similar fashion, Fortnite's Power Ranking system awards players points based on their performance in various competitions. These can range from weekly tournaments to large-scale competitions like the FNCS. Similar to tennis, players can climb the rankings in these competitions by consistently performing well and placing highly.

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[16] "UEFA Champions League," UEFA, https://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/ (last visited July 14, 2023).

[17] "Power Rankings," Fortnite Tracker, https://fortnitetracker.com/events/powerrankings (last visited July 14, 2023).

[18] *Id.*

These ranking systems produce a dynamic competitive environment in which new talent can ascend to the top and established competitors must defend their positions. They add a new dimension of excitement to the competition, as supporters can track the progress of their favoured competitors and observe the dramatic shifts in rankings that can occur between events.

Through structures such as the FNCS and the Power Ranking system, Fortnite's competitive scene exhibits distinct parallels to traditional sports. These similarities not only establish Fortnite as a legitimate sport, but also provide spectators with an engaging, understandable, and familiar framework for participating in the competition.

Undoubtedly, Fortnite has emerged as a prominent contender within the world of e-sports, effectively establishing a connection between conventional sports broadcasting and the domain of online gaming. From a broadcasting standpoint, Fortnite exhibits numerous characteristics similar to those found in conventional sports, thereby transforming it from a mere video game into a widely appreciated spectacle that captivates a global audience making up millions of individuals.

Similar to the broadcasting of football, basketball, or soccer games, Fortnite tournaments and matches are live-streamed on popular platforms such as Twitch[19] and YouTube. These platforms carryout a similar function to sports channels in traditional media, as they broadcast the events taking place in the digital battlegrounds to a global audience.

The production quality of the Fortnite broadcasts frequently exhibits a level of excellence comparable to that of traditional sporting events. The editing employs dynamic camera angles that seamlessly transition to capture the most captivating moments, effectively conveying the intensity of the match and showcasing the exceptional abilities of the players. This technique is reminiscent of the way cameras traverse a football field or track a basketball's movement along the court. The televised transmission incorporates live editing techniques to emphasize significant moments, notable player actions, and impressive statistics, comparable to the use of instant replays and statistical backgrounds in conventional sports broadcasts.

In addition, it is worth noting that the inclusion of professional commentary plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall viewing experience of Fortnite, like to its counterparts in traditional sports. Expert commentators break down intricate tactics, identify captivating instances, and provide valuable perspectives, cultivating a heightened atmosphere of enthusiasm and suspense that amplifies viewer involvement.[20] Similar to how a sports commentator provides context and enhances the

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[19] Twitch is where millions of people come together live every day to chat, interact, and make their own entertainment together. *See* https://www.twitch.tv/p/it-it/about/.

[20] BRYANT, J., BROWN, D., COMISKY, P.W. AND ZILLMANN, D. (1982), "Sports and spectators: commentary and appreciation", Journal of Communication, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229733281_Sports_and_Spectators_Commentary_and_Appreciation

complexity of a football match or a tennis game, Fortnite casters also improve the viewer's comprehension and respect of the game.

In a similar vein in comparison to traditional sports, Fortnite broadcasts incorporate pre-game analyses and post-game discussions. Professionals in the field may engage in the analysis of player strategies, the evaluation of game meta, and the examination of the implications arising from the outcomes of the game. This event is indicative of the customary pre-match preparation and subsequent analysis observed in conventional sports broadcasting.

In summary, Fortnite, similarly to traditional sports, goes beyond mere entertainment and assumes the form of a spectacle, a narrative, and a communal encounter, facilitated by the enchantment of contemporary broadcasting methodologies. The broadcasting techniques employed by Fortnite have significantly contributed to its integration into mainstream culture and the realm of sports entertainment.

E. Debunking the Notion that E-Sports Aren't True Sports

Based on the parameters outlined by Jim Parry in his article titled "E-Sports are Not Sports,"[21] it is arguable that Fortnite should be classified as a sport. In this analysis, we shall evaluate Fortnite in light of Parry's six conditions for a sport.

Firstly, it can be argued that Fortnite is a creation of human imaginative thinking and design. This activity, although facilitated by two primary inputs being Mouse & Keyboard and Controller, primarily depends on the contributions and abilities of the human participant. In order to achieve success, the player must engage in strategic decision-making, demonstrate rapid responsiveness, and exhibit precise motor coordination, like to that of an athlete participating in a physical sport.

Furthermore, although Fortnite may not exhibit physical intensity in the conventional sense, it does encompass elements of physical engagement. The manipulation of characters by players requires the utilization of fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. The outcome of the game is directly influenced by the physical movement of the player, thereby satisfying Parry's criterion for physicality. Moreover, it is evident that Fortnite is undeniably a game that requires a high level of skill. Achieving success in the game demands the acquisition and proficiency of a diverse range of aptitudes, encompassing strategic formulation, tactical awareness, resource allocation, precise shooting, and defensive as well as offensive construction. The need to consistently enhance these skills in order to maintain competitiveness is analogous to the commitment and training necessary in conventional

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[21] *See supra* note 11

sports. Put in other words, the rate of improvement and the constant update of the athlete's ability is paramount to achieve stability in the top spots of the world leader boards.

Moreover, it is worth noting that Fortnite runs on a contest-based framework. The primary gameplay mode, known as Battle Royale, can be characterized as a fundamentally competitive environment wherein a total of 100 players engage in combat until a sole survivor emerges. This particular game mode, along with other variants such as Arena or competitive tournaments like the Fortnite Champion Series (FNCS), highlights the inherently competitive aspect of the game.

Moreover, Fortnite exhibits a set of rules that govern its gameplay. The game possesses a well-defined set of regulations that dictate the conduct of gameplay, encompassing the mechanics associated with movement, shooting, and building, as well as the advancement of the storm and the ultimate objective of achieving the status of the final surviving player, commonly denoted by the game itself as "Victory Royale". The aforementioned regulations exhibit consistency and universality, thereby guaranteeing a just and impartial competition for all participants.

Fortnite has now been formally established within institutional frameworks.[22] The presence of a widely acknowledged regulatory entity, Epic Games, is notable within the context of this subject matter. This governing body is responsible for coordinating periodic competitive tournaments, such as the aforementioned FNCS. These events bear resemblance to those found in conventional sports, exhibiting elements of organization, regulations, and substantial rewards with each seasonal FNCS giving the opportunity to players to grab a piece of the 5 million dollars prize pool across all 5 competitive regions (North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Brazil. Fortnite possesses a thriving worldwide community, encompassing players hailing from diverse countries and regions, similar to the international federations observed in conventional sports.

In summary, it can be argued that Fortnite satisfies almost all six criteria outlined by Parry in defining the characteristics of a sport.[23] The phenomenon under consideration possesses characteristics that are inherently human, physical in nature, reliant on skill development, structured as a contest, governed by rules, and established within an institutional framework. Hence, it can be argued that Fortnite should be regarded not solely as a recreational activity, but rather as a bona fide sport, complete with its own class of athletes, audience, and organizational structures. This statement

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[22] RORY SUMMERLEY, The Development of Sports: A Comparative Analysis of the Early Institutionalization of Traditional Sports and E-Sports, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1555412019838094

[23] ANDY MIAH & BRETT HUTCHINS, Virtually Athletes: Where eSports Fit Within the Definition of "Sport", ResearchGate (2016), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297891315_Virtually_Athletes_Where_eSports_Fit_Within_the_Definition_of_Sport (last visited July 14, 2023).

provides evidence to suggest that the parameters of sports are not rigid, but rather subject to change and adaptation in order to encompass new forms of competitive human environments.[24]

Last but not least, if we link the statement "parameters of sports are not rigid, but rather subject to change and adaptation" I would like to conclude this chapter by educating the reader furtherly about the application of e-sports to the 2023 Olympic Games in Singapore which serves its purpose as proof that, there isn't any governing rule deciding whether e-sports will likely ever be considered an equal to traditional sports, and most importantly that descriptors of what we call sports is subject to change and rather dynamic.[25]

In fact, ten different disciplines were chosen by the committee to be present at the e-sports Olympic games, namely:

- Archery
- Baseball
- Chess
- Cycling
- Dance
- Motorsport
- Sailing
- Sharpshooting
- Taekwondo
- Tennis

Andrej Piratov, whose IGN[26] is "Merstach", finished in third place at the sharpshooting competition in fortnite, claiming the bronze medal. Interestingly enough, he's also the champion, alongside his duo[27] partner "Tayson", of the second-last edition of FNCS which took place in march of 2023.

As an e-sports lover and casual Fortnite player, I am thrilled to experience first-hand the international e-sports community gaining recognition.

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[24] *Id*.

[25] BUTLER, N. 2017. Esports take big step towards Olympic recognition. Inside The Games website, 28.10.2017. Available at https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1057203/esports-take-big-step-towards-olympic-recognition .

[26] IGN stands for "In Game Name"

[27] In Fortnite, the competitive format varies between four main modes:
1) Solo mode: Players battle individually against 99 others until the last player standing wins
2) Duos mode: Teams of two or "duos" cooperate to outlast and outperform other duos. Last pair standing claims victory
3) Trios mode: Similar to duos but with teams of three, allowing for more complex strategies
4) Squads mode: Teams of four compete against each other, emphasizing teamwork and role-specific strategies. Last team standing wins

F. E-Sports and Traditional Sports through Financial Lenses

Throughout the course of human history, sports have consistently held a significant role within societies, deeply embedded in cultural practices, traditions, and historical narratives. Equestrian sports have served as a remarkable demonstration of human physical capabilities and the enduring spirit of competition, progressively developing over numerous centuries into a prominent sector with a substantial worldwide economic influence amounting to hundreds of billions. From the historical Olympic Games to the widely renowned FIFA World Cup, conventional sporting events persist in captivating an immense global audience.

On the other hand, the domain of e-sports is a recent addition, emerging from the arrival of the digital era and the widespread availability of video games.[28] Several decades ago, the notion of professional gaming was considered nearly inconceivable.[29] In contemporary times, the realm of e-sports has successfully established a distinct and specialized position, undergoing a notable evolution from a relatively hidden pursuit to a widespread and influential phenomenon within a relatively brief timeframe. The current digital and competitive landscape has emerged as a rapidly growing industry, primarily driven by advancements in technology and the increasing availability of internet access.

Despite their distinct historical backgrounds and different platforms, traditional sports and e-sports exhibit a notable similarity: they are both influential and valuable sectors. Traditional sports have been in existence for many centuries and have continued to evolve and expand in order to meet the demands and preferences of the modern era. This evolution has been facilitated by the utilization of media rights, sponsorships, and merchandise, which have played a significant role in enhancing the overall value of these sports. In contrast, the e-sports industry, despite being in its early stages, has demonstrated a remarkable pattern of expansion. E-sports has emerged as a formidable entity, demonstrating its significant influence through its extensive revenue streams derived from advertising, broadcasting rights, and corporate sponsorships.

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[28] JULIEN BOUSQUET, eSports: Historical Review, Current State, and Future Challenges, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352808190_eSports_Historical_Review_Current_State_and_Future_Challenges

[29] JULIE A. DELELLO, The Rise of eSports: Insights Into the Perceived Benefits and Risks for College Students, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351949388_The_Rise_of_eSports_Insights_Into_the_Perceived_Benefits_and__Risks_for_College_Students

The traditional sports sector is valued at $502 billion globally as of 2023, however there have been well-known ups and downs throughout history, one of which being the COVID-19 pandemic. The sports sector was severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak in the start of 2020. Numerous professional leagues all around the world cancelled their seasons, and the cancellation of public athletic events globally threatened hundreds of thousands of jobs. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be said that the crisis caused the sports industry's income to fall to $74 billion in 2020, which is less than half of the $135 billion pre-COVID-19 predictions. The sports sector then increased to $500 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach $707 billion in 2026 as the globe will heal from this "bump".

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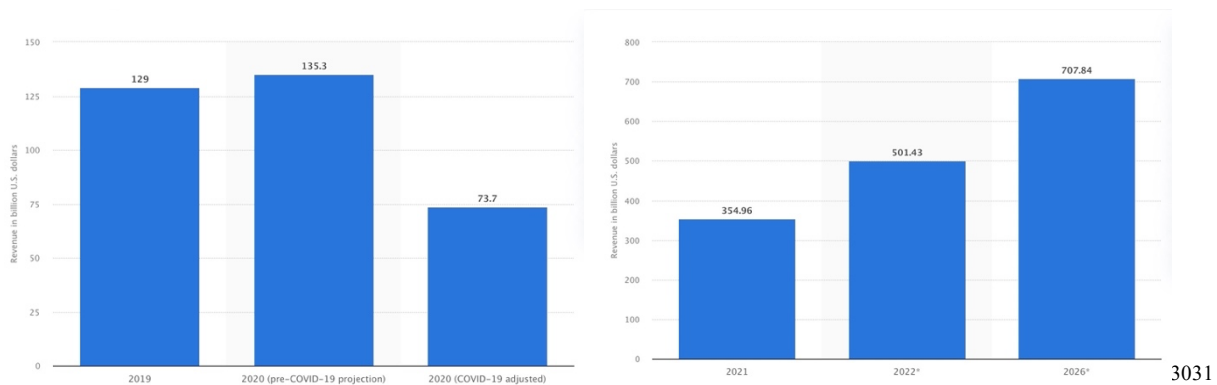
On the other hand, the epidemic allowed e-sports to expanding rapidly. The size of the E-sports market was estimated at US$1.39 billion in 2022, and it is anticipated to increase at a CAGR[32] of 16.7% from 2022 to 2030, finally reaching an industry value of $6.75 billion.

Figure 2
The esports market is expected to grow to about $1.5 billion by 2024

Esports global revenues and audience forecast

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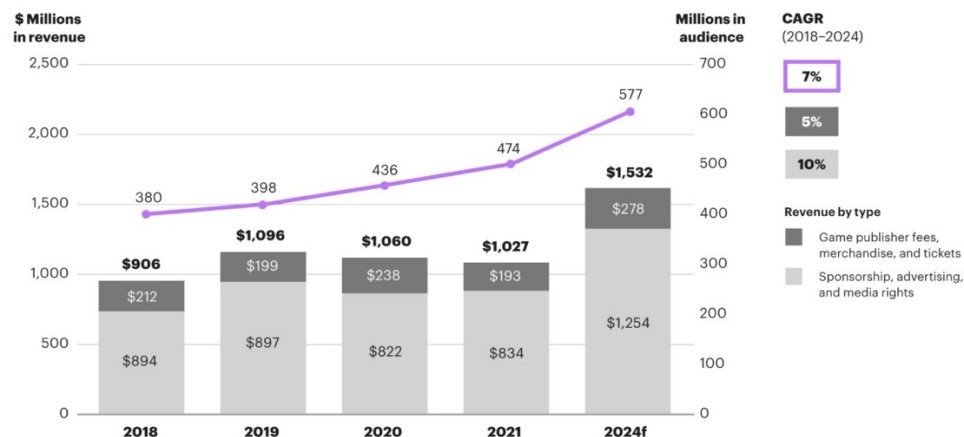
30 "Sports merchandise: global market size 2016-2024," Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/269797/worldwide-revenue-from-sports-merchandising/ (last visited July 14, 2023).
31 "Total sports market revenue worldwide 2021-2026," Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/370560/worldwide-sports-market-revenue/ (last visited July 14, 2023).
32 Compounded Annual Growth Rate
33 "Esports: Leveling up," Kearney, https://www.kearney.com/industry/media/article/-/insights/esports-leveling-up (last visited July 14, 2023).

In conclusion, the e-sports sector, despite its relatively recent inception, shows an incredible potential for expansion. While the traditional sports industry maintains considerable financial worth, gained over centuries of cultural relevance and worldwide involvement. E-sports' worldwide reach is extensive and diversified thanks to its digital nature, and the COVID-19 epidemic has further increased their appeal to people of all ages. E-sports, because of its accessibility, flexibility, and technical appeal, may probably usher in a new period of development and expansion in the sporting world, despite the stark differences in existing values between these two businesses. Although the fact that e-sports are gradually coming to be regarded as traditional sports, in the end we're dealing with two separate sorts of industries but there's no tool to predict what the future is building for the e-sport industry, in fact, with the adequate and correct deployment of strategies and investments, the competitive gaming industry might prevail traditional sports.

In the subsequent chapter, I will discuss the challenges and difficulties of player's career management and the problems they face on a regular basis throughout their professional journeys, utilizing various tools such as theoretical frameworks that analyse in depth the various stages and transitions that traditional- and e-sports athletes go through. Most importantly I will break down, according to the different models, how one is supposed to manage and aid the athlete during challenging changes that are placed before them commonly known as ups and downs.

III. Three Distinct Pillars of Career Transition Models in Sports and E-Sports

In this chapter of the thesis, we dig into the complexities of career management, an essential component of both traditional and e-sports professional sports. The main focus is on exposing the various obstacles and challenges athletes encounter at various stages of their journeys. Through this investigation, I will provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of athletes as they navigate their pathways, casting light on the most common challenges they face, the changes they go through, and the coping strategies they employ. The similarities between the character of these issues in conventional sports and e-sports further support the legitimacy of the latter's as a legitimate sporting domain.

Athlete career management is a complex process featuring many elements that demand attention, guidance, and development - from talent identification and skill development in the early stages, to peak performance maintenance in the prime of the career, to changing management near the end of the competitive career. Traditional athletes and e-sports competitors face many of the same obstacles. They struggle with establishing themselves in a competitive field, improving and preserving their performance, handling competitive stress, and coping with career interruptions caused by injury or personal changes.

More precisely, career transitions present significant obstacles. These include the initial switch from amateur to professional status, periodic transitions due to changes in team compositions or game dynamics, and the final shift from active competition to retirement or another role in the field. Changes in game status, the introduction of new games, and variations to the digital gaming environment may additionally call for shifts for e-sports athletes. These switches frequently necessitate not only practical but also psychological adjustments, requiring athletes to modify their self-perception, motivation, and emotional coping mechanisms.

The ability of athletes to effectively manage their professions and transitions can have a significant impact on their career longevity, performance success, and general happiness. Therefore, athlete support systems, such as instructors, managers, and mental health professionals, must be aware of the unique challenges presented by these evolutions and be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to offer effective support.

In this chapter, we will use a variety of theoretical frameworks to examine these challenges and modifications in greater detail. We will use models from sport psychology, career development theory, and transition management theory to deconstruct the various phases and changes athletes go through and illustrate how these models can be used to comprehend, support, and assist athletes during these pivotal career moments. By comparing the experiences of traditional sports athletes to those of e-

sports athletes, we hope to shed light on the shared issues and derive conclusions that can inform career management strategies in both disciplines.

The objective is to make a contribution towards the advancement of knowledgeable, holistic[34], and efficient support systems that acknowledge and address common challenges encountered by athletes across various sports disciplines.

A. Introduction to Career Management

In a sporting environment, career management is the process of coordinating with important resources, working effectively and in tune with stakeholders to support the achievement of the organization and/or the athlete's business and athletic goals.[35]

This trajectory includes traditional organizational functions in the management field, namely planning, execution and monitoring:

1) Planning: Sports career management involves planning, which specifies an athlete's path, objectives, and methods for skill development.[36]

2) Execution: This stage involves carrying out the strategy, and it includes extensive training, matches[37], and collaboration with key stakeholders.[38]

3) Monitoring: Monitoring is essential, and performance data and health checks should be used to support ongoing evaluations of the athlete's performance and progress in relation to predetermined objectives and goals.[39]

After examining the fundamental aspects of career management, it is evident that an athlete's professional path is not a static entity. Rather, it is a dynamic, continually evolving process that alters as the athlete advances, experiences successes, encounters obstacles, and even fails. Career evolutions, a phenomenon that is not unique to e-sports but is inherent to all forms of sport, are integral to this process of transformation. Changes in a professional athlete's career necessitate adaptation, resiliency, and effective management to ensure continued growth and success. In the

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[34] A holistic approach means to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health needs. The support should also consider their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. *See also* https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/psychosocial/principles/Pages/holistic.aspx

[35] IZTOK RETAR et al., The Definition of Sports management, http://casopisi.junis.ni.ac.rs/index.php/FUPhysEdSport/article/view/1128

[36] CHRISTINE GREEN, Building Sport Programs to Optimize Athlete Recruitment, Retention, and Transition: Toward a Normative Theory of Sport Development, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278411145_Building_Sport_Programs_to_Optimize_Athlete_Recruitment_Retention_and_Transition_Toward_a_Normative_Theory_of_Sport_Development

[37] Training games or "Skrims" in fortnite terms, are practice matches often used by pro players alone without causal players. This method allows athletes to try out new strategies, implement new problem solving and above all, gain constant results

[38] *See supra* note 36

[39] *See supra* note 36

sections that follow, we will delve deeper into the concept of career transitions, as well as their forms, effects, and strategies for successfully navigating them, in the contexts of both traditional sports and e-sports. Understanding such events is a natural extension of career management, providing a complete view of the athletic journey. In other words, the concept of career management is easy on the surface but there's more to it than meets the eye: it becomes challenging as soon as these transitions occur and shape, positively or negatively, the athlete's career.

B. Career Transitions

Career transitions encompass substantial changes that take place throughout an athlete's professional journey, necessitating considerable psychological[40], logistical, and frequent lifestyle adjustments.[41] These transitions embody the potential to manifest in various sports domains, encompassing both conventional sports such as football, basketball, and tennis, as well as electronic sports (e-sports) like Fortnite, League of Legends, and Counter-Strike.

The fundamental nature of career transitions resides in their capacity to instigate change or growth.[42] Athletes are required to effectively manage these modifications, not only by adjusting to changes in their professional regimen but also by potentially encountering substantial transformations in their personal life, self-perception, and overall perspective. The ability to navigate these transitions proficiently can significantly shape an athlete's career, delineating the distinction between sustained accomplishments and ultimate regression.

Normative transitions refer to anticipated and customary changes that occur within an athlete's career trajectory. The aforementioned transitions are inherent components of an athlete's life cycle and can be anticipated and properly prepared for in advance. In the context of traditional sports, an athlete may undergo various transitions, such as progressing from junior to senior competitions, advancing from national to international competitions, or ultimately transitioning from an active sports career to retirement. Within the realm of electronic sports, a normative transition can be observed whereby a player undergoes a developmental progression from engaging in casual gaming activities to participating in amateur tournaments, and subsequently ascending to the sphere of professional

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[40] LAVALLEE, D., & WYLLEMAN, P. (2000). "Career transitions in sport: Theoretical applications and practical considerations." Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance. This source talks about both theoretical and practical aspects of career transitions in sports, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247205190_Career_transitions_in_sport

[41] Hee Jung Hong (2022): eSports: the need for a structured support system for players, European Sport Management Quarterly

[42] NATALIA B. STAMBULOVA & ROY DAVID SAMUEL, Career Transitions, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335001276_Career_Transitions

leagues.[43] Additional illustrations may include a shift towards a different game or genre, or a transition from active participation in competitive endeavours to alternative positions within the industry, such as engaging in content creation, streaming, or coaching.[44]

Conversely, transitions that deviate from established norms, or non-normative[45] transitions, are characterized by a lower level of predictability and are typically linked to unexpected circumstances or significant incidents. These transitions frequently manifest abruptly and necessitate prompt adjustment. In the field of conventional sports, examples of such challenges may encompass enduring a significant physical injury, undergoing an unforeseen transfer to a different team, or grappling with an abrupt decline in performance or self-assurance. Within the ambit of e-sports, non-normative transitions encompass various scenarios, including sudden shifts in game meta, game developers terminating professional backing for a specific game, or unanticipated personal circumstances that hinder gameplay, such as health concerns arising from extended periods of screen engagement.[46]

In addition to the aforementioned transitions, there exist additional categories such as organizational and developmental transitions. Organizational transitions pertain to alterations within a team or organization, including shifts in team dynamics, leadership, or sponsorship. In the context of sports, developmental transitions refer to the progressive development and maturation of an athlete throughout their athletic journey. This phenomenon refers to the process by which a player enhances his abilities or modifies his approach to gameplay in order to accommodate changes within the game or surmount a performance stagnation.

Transitions, without regard to their inherent characteristics, frequently present difficulties and induce stress, necessitating athletes to employ adaptive mechanisms and potentially solicit assistance from coaches, mentors, or sports psychologists. Nevertheless, these challenges also serve as avenues for personal[47] and professional advancement, prompting athletes to assess their trajectories, cultivate novel proficiencies, and venture into unexplored prospects. In the dynamic and ever-changing

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[43] In Fortnite every casual player has the opportunity to play but not to compete as a performing gaming pc costs at least 4000$. In light of this, many players decide to purchase a console and enjoy the game on the surface. However, fortnite's ranked system gives certain types of players (highly ranked players in norm) access to daily cash cups or prize tournaments. Whenever the end of the season approaches, the Fortnite Champion Series (FNCS) starts and demands every player wishing to participate to reach the highest possible arena or rank. In other words, the fortnite's competitive structure and blueprint incites and motivates every kind of player to aspire to become a great athlete within the fortnite realm.

[44] PAUL WYLLEMAN & DAVID LAVALLEE, A Developmental Perspective on Transitions Faced by Athletes, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354209101_A_Developmental_Perspective_on_Transitions_Faced_by_Athletes

[45] Id.

[46] PAUL WYLLEMAN, DAVID LAVALLEE, & DOROTHEE ALFERMANN, eds., Career Transitions in Competitive Sports (1999), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247205190_Career_transitions_in_sport

[47] STAMBULOVA, N., Counseling Athletes in Career Transitions: The Five-Step Career Planning Strategy (2010), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232844112_Counseling_Athletes_in_Career_Transitions_The_Five-Step_Career_Planning_Strategy

domains of traditional sports and e-sports, adeptly managing career transitions can have a profound influence on an athlete's durability, proficiency, and overall professional achievements.

C. Athletic Career Transition Model

The Natalia Stambulova-developed Athletic Career Transition Model (ACTM) offers a well-organized and thorough framework for comprehending the complex dynamics of athletes' careers. It covers a broad range of changes that athletes experience, both normative and non-normative, and offers priceless insights into the processes by which these transitions might be successfully handled. Although the ACTM was primarily designed with traditional sports in mind, it also has significant ramifications for the developing e-sports industry.

The two types of transitions that make up the core of Stambulova's paradigm are normative (predictable or regular) and non-normative (unexpected and irregular). Moving up the ranks from junior to senior level or leaving professional competition are two instances of normative transitions in traditional sports. These could involve switching from being an amateur to a professional player or giving up active competition because of technical developments in e-sports. Non-normative transitions sometimes include abrupt changes, such as an injury, disqualification, or unexpected retirement due to personal reasons, in both conventional sports and e-sports.[48]

According to Stambulova's framework, each shift that the athlete experiences marks both an end and a fresh start. The notions of "conclusion" and "initiation" are crucial to the transition process. The athlete must abandon their previous athletic identity and forge a new one, which may be in a different sport or even outside of the realm of sports. E-sports are equally suited to this idea. Professional e-sports players need to migrate when new games come out and previous ones become outdated as a result of technological advancements in order to stay relevant or even when new META's[49] are released . Coping or adapting[50] are strategies crucial for navigating these professional changes.

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[48] NATALIA STAMBULOVA, DOROTHEE ALFERMANN, TRACI STATLER, AND JEAN CÔTÉ. ISSP position stand: career development and transitions of athletes,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228656551_ISSP_Position_stand_Career_development_and_transitions_of_athletes

[49] In essence, a "meta" in gaming terminology is a generally agreed upon strategy by the community. Said strategy is considered to be the most optimal way to win/ has the best performance at a specific task. Some people have defined meta as an acronym meaning "most effective tactics available"

[50] EMILY CARTIGNY, GRACE HARRISON, EMMA VICKERS & PAUL POTRAC (2023): "What am I doing here?" Experiences of unsuccessful and delayed successful crisis transitions during athlete migration, International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369310678_What_am_I_doing_here_Experiences_of_unsuccessful_and_delayed_successful_crisis_transitions_during_athlete_migration

Effective coping techniques, according to Stambulova, should balance expectations and resources while also developing new abilities to meet the needs of the new stage.

Personal qualities, interpersonal connections, and expert assistance are examples of resources. Building and sustaining a support system of coaches, players, family, and friends is essential for both conventional athletes and e-sports pros.

Nowadays, the term "transition" is defined as a turning phase in athlete's development that brings a set of demands, usually appraised as stressors, and requires adequate coping processes in order to continue athletic and parallel careers, such as education or work.[51] The coping process, like a coin, has two faces: it takes into consideration internal and external resources and barriers.[52]

Internal resources and barriers refer to the athlete's unique personal traits and qualities, such as their skills, abilities, attitudes and beliefs. The athlete's ability to manage the demands of the transition phase might be assisted or, contrarily, chocked by these internal variables. For instance, the self confidence, drive and resilience of an athlete may be internal assets that help with effective coping, whereas nervousness, anxiety, fear of the unknown or lack of coping mechanisms may be internal obstacles and barriers that impede the athlete's successful transition.

The other side of the coin, namely external resources and barriers, relate to the environmental or situational elements that are able to influence and impact the transition process. Financial resources, access to educational or employment possibilities and social support constitute potential resources and barriers. For example, having a supportive trainer or a strong and solid support system among friends and family is heavily resourceful for the athlete as it would make it easier for him to cope and adapt. On the other hand, scarce and few work options, discrimination or unsupportive organizational policies are external obstacles that undermine the athlete's ability to go on[53] (supportive organizational policies are adopted by sports teams or stakeholders in the industry to make sure that education, job training programs, mental health support or other forms of general assistance are granted to the athlete as to secure a safe and successful transition[54]).

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[51] STAMBULOVA, NATALIA B. "Crisis-Transitions in Athletes: Current Emphases on Cognitive and Contextual Factors." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316264779_Crisis-Transitions_in_Athletes_Current_Emphases_on_Cognitive_and_Contextual_Factors
[52] NATALIA B. STAMBULOVA & ROY DAVID SAMUEL, Career Transitions
[53] NATALIA B. STAMBULOVA, TATIANA V. RYBA & KRISTOFFER HENRIKSEN (2020): Career development and transitions of athletes: the International Society of Sport Psychology Position Stand Revisited, International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339106237_Career_Development_and_Transitions_of_Athletes_The_International_Society_of_Sport_Psychology_Position_Stand_Revisited
[54] STAMBULOVA, N. B. (2016). Athletic career transition: Evolution of a holistic and dynamic model over time. In J. Baker, D. Horton, & J. Weir (Eds.), The Routledge handbook of sport and performance psychology. Routledge, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339106237_Career_Development_and_Transitions_of_Athletes_The_International_Society_of_Sport_Psychology_Position_Stand_Revisited

The model shows that there are two types of transition outcomes, specifically, a successful transition and a crisis one.
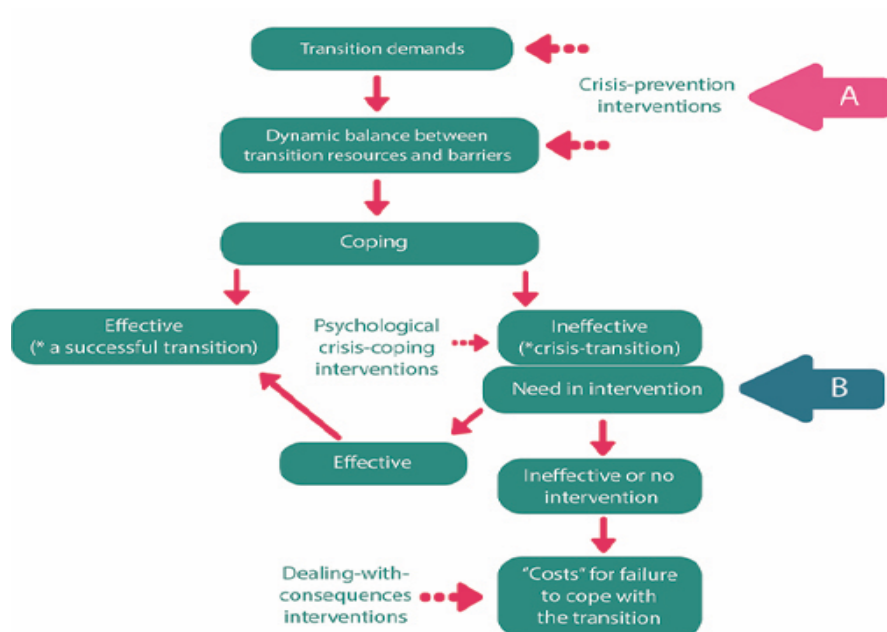
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A successful transition is characterized by effective coping. Effective coping results when the athlete is able to neutralize career-threatening transition demands and obstacles through his own coping resources. Consequently, the athlete experiences improvements in performance, be it in sports or other aspects of life, and will feel fit and well adjusted post-transition.

A crisis transition is the outcome of ineffective coping, triggered by one or more of the following: lack of internal and external resources, high and excessive barriers as well as transition demands or ineffective use of coping resources by the athlete[56].

Until now, the differences between the two pathways (successful transition / crisis transition) have been clarified. However, there's more to a crisis transition than meets the eye. In fact, according to Stambulova's model, whenever an athlete goes down that path, he exhibits signs of decreasing self-esteem, emotional discomfort and disorientation in both decision-making and behaviour. Moreover, whenever an athlete lives through a crisis transition, the latter might have two secondary outcomes: a "delayed" successful transition with help of effective intervention by professionals or other stakeholders, and an unsuccessful transition associated with premature athletic dropout or other negative consequences (clinical depression, premature drop-out, overtraining or doping, all depending on the type of transition and on the stage of the career the athlete finds himself in)[57]. In

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[55] *See* also https://www.open.edu/openlearn/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=105605&section=3
[56] NATALIA B. STAMBULOVA & ROY DAVID SAMUEL, Career Transitions
[57] PEHRSON, S., STAMBULOVA, N., & OLSSON, K. (2017). Revisiting the empirical model "Phases in the junior-to-senior transition of Swedish ice hockey players": External validation through focus groups and interviews.

summary, a crisis is a critical moment in the transition process and assisting the athlete is paramount given that it could shape the course of its career positively.[58]

In addition, gaining new abilities to transition successfully in sports, e-sports or in other domains in life, might entail psychological training (such as goal-setting or stress management), academic endeavours (such as getting a degree or picking up a new interest), or investigating new employment prospects inside or beyond[59] the sports industry. Recognizing the opportunity pursuant to a change, rather than concentrating primarily on what is being left behind, is a crucial part of embracing and accepting this new alteration. Both conventional sports and e-sports require this upbeat attitude to sustain a strong career trajectory.

The ACTM emphasizes the value of psychological assistance during job changes as well. It's essential to create a secure area where athletes may examine their thoughts, anxieties, and aspirations for the future in order to successfully handle changes. Be it in regular sports or e-sports, sport psychologists may provide players crucial direction and support during these difficult times. Athletes' psychological health is paramount for enabling them to embrace change and advance in their sport, regardless of the platform or discipline on which they compete.

In conclusion, Stambulova's model for managing athletic career transitions is an effective tool for comprehending and controlling this process. The ACTM provides a comprehensive approach to career transition management by concentrating on the dynamics of ends and starts, coping strategies, and psychological support. Although it has its roots in traditional sports, it has a wide range of applications in the context of e-sports, highlighting the similar experiences of players in both fields and giving them useful tools to aid in navigating the ever-changing landscapes of their careers. The insights provided by the ACTM will only become more important as e-sports continue to gain popularity and impact.

International Journal of Sport Science and Coaching, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320724919_Revisiting_the_empirical_model_%27Phases_in_the_junior-to-senior_transition_of_Swedish_ice_hockey_players%27_External_validation_through_focus_groups_and_interviews
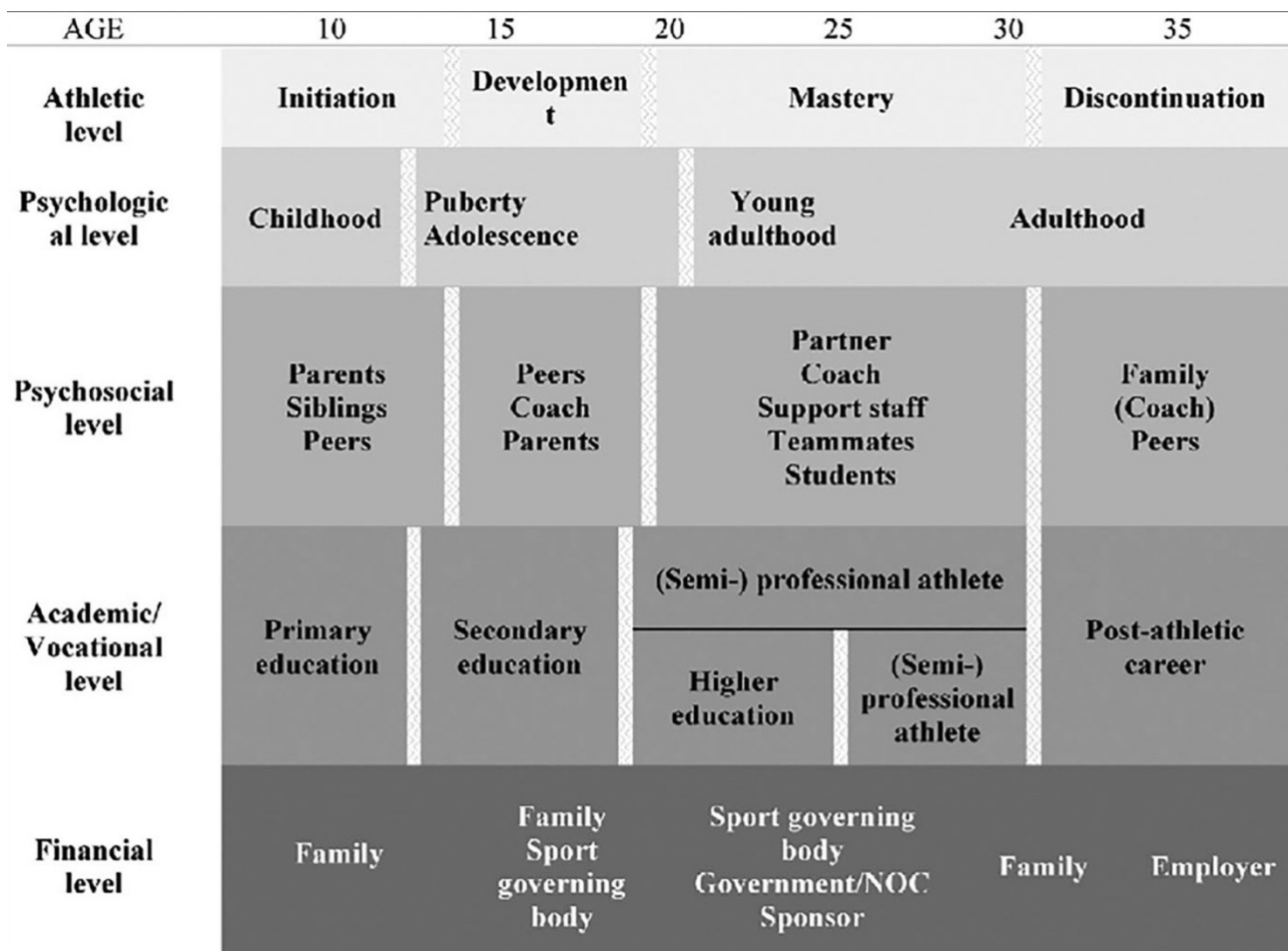
[58] NATALIA B. STAMBULOVA, TATIANA V. RYBA & KRISTOFFER HENRIKSEN. Career development and transitions of athletes: the International Society of Sport Psychology Position Stand Revisited, International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology (2021), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339106237_Career_Development_and_Transitions_of_Athletes_The_International_Society_of_Sport_Psychology_Position_Stand_Revisited

[59] E-sports athletes have remarkable cognitive skills. The demand that e-sports places on athletes has resulted in a growing body of research demonstrating that gamers possess enhanced cognitive abilities compared to non-gamers. As a result, E-sports athletes, if their careers are handled adequately and according to Natalia Stambulova, may find new jobs in environments that require the same skillset that e-sports do, for example in control towers (ATC's) which demands highly concentrated and intense cognitive skills. *See* TIM D. SMITHIES, ADAM J. TOTH, EOIN CONROY, NIALL RAMSBOTTOM, MAGDALENA KOWAL, AND MARK J. CAMPBELL, "Life After Esports: A Grand Field Challenge".

D. Holistic Career Transition Model & Transtheoretical Model

The Holistic Career Transition Model (HCTM) signifies a new era in comprehending career transitions within the realm of sports, acknowledging the intricate and multifaceted nature of an athlete's path. The model considers multiple facets of an individual's existence, recognizing that a transition in sports careers encompasses more than just a vocational shift, but also affects and is influenced by the athlete's broader life circumstances. This perspective holds true in both traditional sports and e-sports, as both demand significant dedication, often commencing at a young age, and consequently influencing multiple aspects of an individual's life.

AGE	10	15	20	25	30	35
Athletic level	Initiation	Development		Mastery		Discontinuation
Psychological level	Childhood	Puberty Adolescence		Young adulthood	Adulthood	
Psychosocial level	Parents Siblings Peers	Peers Coach Parents		Partner Coach Support staff Teammates Students		Family (Coach) Peers
Academic/ Vocational level	Primary education	Secondary education	(Semi-) professional athlete			Post-athletic career
			Higher education	(Semi-) professional athlete		
Financial level	Family	Family Sport governing body	Sport governing body Government/NOC Sponsor		Family	Employer

60

The Holistic Career Transition Model (HCTM) claims that achieving successful career transitions necessitates a comprehensive perspective that encompasses various factors, such as individual attributes, the surrounding context, the unique aspects of the transition itself, and available support networks. The conceptual framework presented in this model depicts career transitions as a

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[60] HEE JUNG HONG (2022): eSports: the need for a structured support system for players, European Sport Management Quarterly,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358195884_eSports_the_need_for_a_structured_support_system_for_players

multifaceted progression encompassing distinct phases: preparation, navigation, and adjustment. This framework acknowledges the inclusion of both pre-transition and post-transition stages within the overall process. The model acknowledges that athletes, irrespective of their chosen discipline, frequently encounter challenges pertaining to alterations in their identity and status, financial fluctuations, as well as the acquisition of new skills and capabilities for their post-sporting endeavours (recall the ATC example with its high demand for cognitive skills). This phenomenon holds true for e-sports athletes as well, as they frequently retire at a relatively young age and encounter substantial obstacles in the process of redefining their sense of self and transitioning into alternative professional trajectories.[61]

Within the domain of conventional sports, the HCTM can clarify the challenges faced by athletes as they navigate the process of transitioning away from high-demand sports. These individuals have dedicated their entire lives to the pursuit of excellence in their respective sports, thereby leaving minimal opportunities for personal development outside of their athletic careers. Likewise, individuals involved in e-sports as athletes, frequently taking on professional gaming during their formative years, may encounter challenges in the process of establishing a fresh sense of self and acquiring unique competencies during retirement or career transitions.

The model emphasizes the significance of a support system comprising sports psychologists, career guidance counsellors, as well as family and friends who can offer emotional support and practical assistance. This assertion remains applicable to the realm of e-sports, wherein, notwithstanding the virtual essence of the sport, the tangible consequences of transitions can be significant. The significance of support networks, career counselling, and transition preparation holds equal importance in the context of e-sports as it does in conventional sports.[62]

Currently, the ongoing discourse regarding the Holistic Career Transition Model serves as a connection to the Trans Theoretical Model (TTM). The Transtheoretical Model (TTM), commonly referred to as the Stages of Change Model, was originally formulated within the sector of health behaviour modification. However, its fundamental principles can be effectively applied to the domain of career transitions. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) posits that change is a progressive process that individuals traverse through various stages, starting from precontemplation, moving to contemplation, then preparation, followed by action, and finally maintenance. The framework presented in this study incorporates a dynamic perspective that takes into account the individual's readiness to initiate a change.[63]

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[61] *Id.*

[62] *Id.*

[63] WYLLEMAN P, ALFERMANN D & LAVALLEE D (2004) Career transitions in sport: European perspectives, Psychology of Sport and Exercise, https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/7648/1/PSE1_2004.pdf .

Similar to how the HCTM places significant focus on the necessity of preparation, navigation, and adjustment, the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) also delineates a progression through various stages of change.[64]

Within the area of athletic career transitions, the aforementioned stages may encapsulate the sequential progression experienced by athletes, commencing with the initial contemplation of retirement[65] (precontemplation and contemplation), followed by the active formulation of plans for career alteration (preparation and action), culminating in the proficient management of a fresh professional trajectory beyond the realm of sports (maintenance).[66]
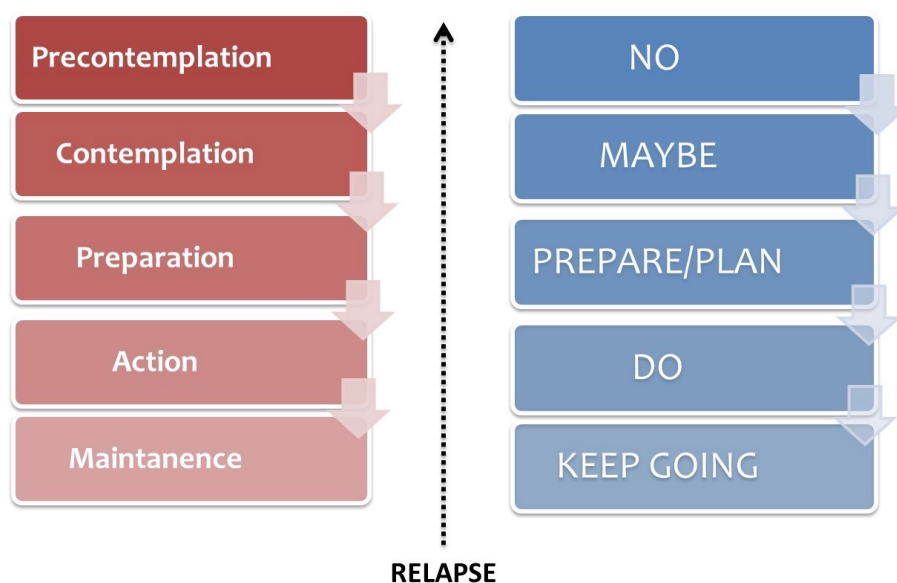
In essence, the Holistic Career Transition Model presents an overall and multifaceted comprehension of transitions in athletic careers, highlighting the significance of the preparation, navigation, and adjustment stages, as well as the value of support networks. This phenomenon is of significance to both conventional sports and e-sports, as it provides insight into the intricate challenges that athletes encounter when transitioning between careers. The emphasis on the process of change and the importance of preparation in this context serves as a seamless transition to the Trans Theoretical Model, thereby enhancing our comprehension of transitions in athletic careers.

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[64] PROCHASKA, J. O., & VELICER, W. F. (1997). "The transtheoretical model of health behavior change." American journal of health promotion, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/13128551_The_Transtheoretical_Model_of_Health_Behavior_Change .

[65] PAUL WYLLEMAN AND NATHALIE ROSIER, "Chapter 13 - Holistic Perspective on the Development of Elite Athletes", https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780128036341000133

[66] See https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/mph-modules/sb/behavioralchangetheories/behavioralchangetheories6.html

[67] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transtheoretical_model#/media/File:Transtheoretical_Model_-_Stages_of_change.jpg

In synthesizing the applicability and usefulness of the Athletic Career Transition Model (ACTM), Holistic Career Transition Model (HCTM), and the Trans-Theoretical Model (TTM) in both traditional sports and e-sports, we must underline the shared experiences and challenges faced by athletes across these two domains. Regardless of the differences in physicality and environment, both traditional sports athletes and e-sports players meet significant career transitions that require adaptability and have deep impacts on their well-being and performance.

Both types of athletes undergo transitions such as initiation, development, mastery, and termination, though with variations in the form and timeline due to the nature and accessibility of each domain. These transitions, whether normative or non-normative, planned or unplanned, are multifaceted processes encompassing psychological, social, and contextual elements. The ACTM, HCTM, and TTM all offer valuable, universally applicable frameworks for understanding and managing these transitions, highlighting the individual's personal traits, environmental factors, coping mechanisms, stages of change, and the interplay between these components.

Moreover, these models' multi-dimensional nature allows us to understand the athletes' holistic experiences, incorporating aspects such as their identities, relationships, emotions, and overall well-being. They recognize and address the unique challenges and needs of athletes' transitions in both traditional sports and e-sports.

In an era where e-sports is gaining recognition as a legitimate professional career, these established models provide essential empirical and systematic support. Despite the different contexts and conditions between traditional sports and e-sports, the core processes and challenges of career transitions remain consistent.

In conclusion, while the context and conditions may differ between traditional sports and e-sports, the fundamental processes and challenges of career transitions remain remarkably consistent. Hence, the ACTM, HCTM, and TTM serve as universal models applicable to both domains, facilitating our understanding and management of athletes' career transitions in a comprehensive, tailored, and holistic manner.

IV. One Reason Why E-Sports and Sports Are Regarded as Different From Each Other: Parental Influence on Aspiring E-sports Players: The Perception Gap, Implications, and Management Strategies

Parents' role in shaping their children's future transcends disciplines, acting as a key influencer in their career decisions. This holds true in the realm of e-sports, where their support extends to areas such as financial assistance, emotional encouragement, and time investment. However, the perception gap regarding e-sports as a legitimate profession, especially among parents less familiar with the digital era, poses a significant barrier for young e-sports aspirants, impacting various facets of e-sports management.

Often, parents from pre-digital generations regard e-sports as mere time-consuming video games, undermining the professional and economic potential of the industry. This view influences their children's dedication towards e-sports, with a supportive environment fostering talent development, and conversely, an unsupportive one potentially stifling it.

A. The Role of Parental Support in Human Resources Management within E-sports

Within the rapidly expanding domain of electronic sports, a notable correlation can be established between the talent development pipeline in this world and that of conventional sports. Similar to aspiring athletes in traditional sports such as football or basketball, emerging e-sports athletes also necessitate a conducive environment that fosters the cultivation of their skills. The significance of parental support becomes crucial in this context.

The provision of parental support can play a substantial role in the development of a talent pipeline for professional e-sports teams through various means.[68] Firstly, the topic at hand pertains to the allocation of time that parents permit their children to devote to engaging in video gaming activities.[69] The pursuit of professional gaming entails more than just inherent talent; it necessitates a substantial commitment of time towards honing skills, comprehending game mechanics, devising strategic plans, and fostering effective teamwork.[70] Facilitating an environment where children are afforded the opportunity to engage in these pursuits without experiencing feelings of guilt or stress represents a significant form of parental support.[71]

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[68] CHRISTOPHE F. STEPHAN & DAWN L. BREWER, The Roles of Parental Influence and Athlete Motivation in the Initial and Ongoing Involvement in Soccer, https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsep/40/s1/article-pS1.xml
[69] Id.
[70] KNIGHT, C. J. Parenting in youth sport: A position paper on parenting expertise, https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-14541-001
[71] Tundra E-Sports. Meet Veno: An FNCS Documentary. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmoYHMZJF8U

Equally significant is the emotional support rendered by parents. The provision of encouragement and belief in a child's capabilities has the potential to significantly enhance their self-assurance and drive.[72] The recognition by parents of e-sports as a legitimate activity has the potential to cultivate a favorable atmosphere that supports the psychological welfare of adolescent gamers. The possession of emotional resilience is of paramount significance within the highly competitive sphere of electronic sports.

Financial assistance is an additional crucial aspect. Although the initial expenses for entry-level gaming are relatively affordable, aspiring to compete at more advanced levels may require financial investments in superior equipment, professional coaching, tournament registration fees, and potentially even travel expenses.[73] The financial assistance provided by parents can effectively eliminate a substantial obstacle for emerging e-sports athletes.

The combination of these elements results in a substantial storage of talent that e-sports teams can access. Through the cultivation of skill development and the provision of emotional and financial support, parents play an indirect role in the Human Resource Management[74] of e-sports organizations. An illustrative instance highlighting the influence of parental support on the cultivation of talent in the realm of electronic sports can be observed in the trajectory of Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf, a prominent figure in the competitive Fortnite gaming scene. The early achievements of Bugha, which reached their pinnacle with his victory in the Fortnite World Cup in 2019, can be attributed to a significant extent to the support provided by his father. Acknowledging his son's aptitude and enthusiasm for gaming, Bugha's father granted him the necessary time and resources to actively pursue a career in competitive Fortnite.[75] This contributed to his progression as a proficient player, garnering the interest of Sentinels, a renowned professional e-sports organization. Bugha's father's support played a significant role in facilitating his progression towards a professional gaming career, thereby highlighting the crucial influence of parental support on the talent pipeline within the realm of e-sports.

In summary, the provision of parental support holds considerable influence in shaping the talent pipeline within the context of electronic sports. This facilitates the allocation of time and resources towards gaming activities, thereby promoting the cultivation of skills and the formation of a talent

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[72] *Id*.

[73] STOTER, I. W. G., ELFERINK-GEMSER, M. T., DOOLAARD, S., & VISSCHER, C. Talent identification and development in the context of growing up, https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315668017-11/talent-identification-development-context-growing-robert-malina-sean-cumming-manuel-coelho-silva-antónio-figueiredo

[74] Human Resource Management is defined by Edwin Flippo as "planning, organizing, directing, controlling of procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of human resources to the end that individual, organizational and social objectives are achieved."

[75] Rishabh B., "Fortnite Pro calls World Cup Winner Bugha's father a leech for prying off his son's success," Sportskeeda, https://www.sportskeeda.com/fortnite/fortnite-pro-calls-world-cup-winner-bugha-s-father-leech-prying-son-s-success .

pool for professional e-sports entities. The significance of comprehending and leveraging talent development in the e-sports industry will progressively escalate, thereby necessitating the adoption of effective Human Resource Management practices. This requires a change in parental perspective, recognizing e-sports as a legitimate professional trajectory and comprehending their crucial role in fostering their child's ambitions.

B. Parental Perception of E-sports and Its Implications for Marketing Management

As stated already, the e-sports industry has experienced significant expansion, resulting in the emergence of a vibrant market that capitalizes on the technological proficiency of the younger demographic. Despite experiencing a surge in popularity and demonstrating significant economic prospects, the domain of electronic sports encounters the obstacle of societal acceptance and comprehension. This phenomenon is particularly evident within the parental demographic, where there is a tendency to view e-sports as a recreational pursuit rather than a viable professional vocation or a legitimate domain within the scope of sports.

The examination of parents' perspectives on e-sports holds significant importance within the field of Marketing Management[76]. Parents play a crucial role in influencing the development of their children's interests and recreational pursuits. If parents adopt a skeptical attitude towards e-sports, it has the potential to restrict the participation of young individuals in this activity.[77] Consequently, this could potentially impede the expansion of the industry's consumer demographic, as the magnitude of participants and enthusiasts may fail to attain the maximum potential due to limited parental approval.[78]

Conversely, parents who possess comprehension and endorse e-sports have the potential to cultivate a nurturing environment, thereby facilitating their child's progression from a recreational participant to a committed enthusiast or even an ambitious professional.[79] Parents have the potential to foster their child's involvement in e-sports, thereby enhancing both the level of participation and the size of the spectator base. The heightened level of engagement would enhance the industry's existing audience, thereby fostering growth, and increasing profitability.[80]

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[76] Marketing management is the process of planning, executing, and tracking the marketing strategy of an organization. This includes the marketing plan, campaigns and tactics used to create and meet the demand of target customers to drive profitability.
[77] ANDERSON, R. T. eSport vs. sports: eSports and its place within sport, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321850348_eSport_vs_Sport_A_Comparison_of_Spectator_Motives
[78] Id.
[79] See supra note 78
[80] BURTON, N., & FEINBERG, F. M. Understanding consumer e-sports experiences: a netnographic approach, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15295036.2021.2015131?journalCode=rcsm20

In light of these factors, it is imperative for e-sports marketers to develop strategies that effectively cater to both the players and their parents. One potential approach could entail presenting the accomplishments of professional players as a means of emphasizing the various career prospects available within the territory of e-sports. Promoting the availability of electronic sports scholarships offered by various universities may contribute to the legitimization of e-sports in the perspective of parents. Parent-focused informational events present a valuable platform for spreading knowledge to parents regarding the e-sports industry, its inherent possibilities, and strategies for maintaining a healthy equilibrium between gaming and other facets of life.[81]

An outstanding illustration of this methodology can be observed in the marketing strategy employed by Riot Games for its widely acclaimed video game, League of Legends.[82] The company has developed a collection of videos targeted towards parents with the objective of providing them with information regarding the game's strategic intricacies, the significance of collaborative efforts, and the international tournaments that the game proudly showcases.[83][84] The implementation of a campaign with a focus on parents contributed to the improvement of comprehension and approval of League of Legends among this demographic, resulting in an indirect increase in the game's player population and viewership.

In a nutshell the existence of a perception gap among parents presents both a challenge and a potential path for exploration within the field of e-sports Marketing Management[85]. By addressing this deficiency, there is potential to expand the audience base and improve their level of engagement, thereby facilitating the growth of the industry. Hence, it is imperative for marketers to actively involve parents in their marketing approaches, with the objective of enhancing their comprehension of the potential of electronic sports and acknowledging it as a valid and beneficial pursuit for the next generation.

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[81] *See supra* note 78

[82] "League of Legends Explained for Parents". Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9QTD3gzsCE

[83] SCHOLZ, T. M. eSports is Business, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331238311_eSports_is_Business_Management_in_the_World_of_Competitive_Gaming

[84] BURTON, N., & FEINBERG, F. M. Understanding consumer e-sports experiences: a netnographic approach, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15295036.2021.2015131?journalCode=rcsm20

[85] *See supra* note 80

C. Parental Perception Gap and Its Implications for Strategic Management within E-sports Organizations

The increasing difference between the rapid expansion of e-sports and the sceptical perception of it, especially among parents, poses a stimulating challenge for strategic management[86] within e-sports organizations. These organizations function within an industry that is distinguished by digital innovation, a vibrant and energetic atmosphere, and a worldwide target audience. Nevertheless, the persistent doubt expressed by parents, who frequently act as the primary decision-makers regarding their children's pursuits, introduces an additional level of intricacy to the strategic planning processes employed by these institutions.

The strategic operations of e-sports organizations, such as player recruitment, sponsorship acquisition, and fan engagement, are heavily dependent on societal acceptance. The essence of these organizations relies on the collective of players and the fan base that provides support. If parental attitudes towards e-sports are unfavourable, there is a potential decrease in the number of young individuals permitted to engage in this activity, which can have repercussions on both the pool of players and the audience size.[87]

The process of player recruitment holds significant importance within the arena of strategic management for e-sports organizations. A larger and more proficient player pool has the potential to enhance team performance and yield a competitive edge. Nevertheless, if parents exhibit reluctance to endorse their children's work to establish a career in e-sports owing to perceived uncertainties or misconceptions surrounding the industry, the pool of talented individuals accessible to these organizations may experience a reduction in size.[88]

The acquisition of sponsorships, which is a crucial aspect of strategic management in the field of e-sports, is significantly impacted by the reputation of the industry.[89] Sponsors seek to align their brand with activities that demonstrate success, popularity, and social acceptance.[90] The existence of a perception gap regarding the classification of e-sports as a legitimate sport has the potential to dissuade potential sponsors, thereby impacting the financial stability of e-sports organizations.[91]

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[86] Strategic management is the ongoing planning, monitoring, analysis, and assessment of all necessities an organization needs to meet its goals and objectives.

[87] BOWMAN, N. D., & CRANMER, J. D. Understanding the eSports experiences of eSport participants and spectators, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321850348_eSport_vs_Sport_A_Comparison_of_Spectator_Motives

[88] *See* Pryor, M. (2022, February 21). Fortnite Pro Calls Father "Unsupportive" on Twitter, His Mother Responds. ESTNN. Retrieved from https://estnn.com/fortnite-pro-calls-father-unsupportive-on-twitter-his-mother-responds/

[89] ZHONG, Y., GUO, K., SU, J., & CHU, S. K. W. The impact of esports participation on the development of 21st-century skills in youth: A systematic review, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360131522002111

[90] *Id*.

[91] *Id*.

In addition, the level of fan engagement plays a crucial role in generating revenue and fostering the expansion of e-sports, and is closely tied to the degree of societal acceptance of this emerging form of competitive gaming.[92] Parents who hold a positive perception of e-sports are more inclined to support and authorize their children's participation, either as active participants or passive observers, consequently contributing to the growth of the e-sports audience.

Epic Games, the developer of the popular video game Fortnite, serves as an illustrative case of an organization effectively tackling this strategic challenge. Strategically, they allocate substantial funds towards prize pools for tournaments, effectively demonstrating the game's lucrative nature, its potential for triumph, and consequently drawing the interest of aspiring young individuals with talent. This particular approach demonstrates efficacy in establishing e-sports as a viable occupational trajectory for players and an exhilarating form of entertainment for enthusiasts.[93]

Nevertheless, in the absence of parental support, these endeavours may fail to achieve the intended outcomes. The parental perspective holds considerable influence over a substantial segment of the e-sports demographic, thus necessitating its careful consideration as a crucial determinant.[94] Therefore, it is imperative for e-sports organizations to integrate the task of addressing this disparity in perception into their strategic management planning. This may entail cultivating improved communication and transparency within the industry, or formulating initiatives that emphasize the favourable aspects of e-sports, such as cognitive advantages, collaborative skills, and potential professional prospects.[95]

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[92] BARNEY, J. Understanding the Motivations of Esports Fans: The Relationship Between Esports Spectator Motivations and Esports Fandom Engagement,
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5123&context=thesesdissertations

[93] As written in the early pages of this paper, Fortnite offers to its player base daily cash cups, season grand finals (FNCS) as well as LAN events with millions of dollars at stake.

[94] ĐURIŠIĆ, M., & BUNIJEVAC, M. Parental Involvement as an Important Factor for Successful Education,
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1156936.pdf

[95] Id.

D. A Change Management Challenge in E-sports

The effective management of the inequality in parental perceptions regarding e-sports is a critical concern within the field of Change Management[96]. The objective is to shift prevailing perspectives of e-sports from being merely regarded as recreational activities to being acknowledged as a legitimate and feasible professional trajectory.

The successful implementation of this change necessitates the adoption of a comprehensive approach. Educational initiatives have the potential to provide accurate and objective information regarding the future prospects of the e-sports industry, thereby aiding in the clarification and understanding of e-sports among parents.[97] Engaging in dialogues among parents, players, and organizations can serve as a means to debunk misconceptions and cultivate a more constructive comprehension.

A boost of media exposure pertaining to professional electronic sports can potentially produce an impact on individuals' perceptions. The media can showcase accomplished e-sports professionals, the lucrative rewards associated with tournaments, and the rigorous training regimens that players undertake, thereby embodying the professionalism within the industry.[98]

The potential of electronic sports is substantial. The e-sports industry is anticipated to witness substantial growth, with projected global market revenue expected to reach $1 billion by the year 2021.[99] Additionally, the audience for e-sports is estimated to approach 500 million individuals.[100] Consequently, this rising sector offers considerable prospects for career development and advancement. Additionally, they facilitate the formation of crucial soft skills such as collaboration, critical analysis, and stress management.[101]

The increasing acceptance of e-sports is evident through the industry's professionalization, which is proven by the establishment of structured leagues, professional teams, and sanctioned tournaments. Hence, directing attention towards altering parental perspectives can facilitate the expansion of e-

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[96] Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with the transition or transformation of an organization's goals, processes or technologies. The purpose of change management is to implement strategies for effecting change, controlling change and helping people to adapt to change.

[97] SCHOLZ, T. M. E-Sports is Business, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331238311_eSports_is_Business_Management_in_the_World_of_Competitive_Gaming

[98] BRANDT, J. R., ALSBO, G., & IBSEN, B. Traditional sport managerial structures are challenged by digital, eSport and virtual sport in the Danish sport scene, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1555412019840892

[99] *See* page 18-19.

[100] *See* page 18-19.

[101] Stress Management serves in the realm of Fortnite as a crucial soft skill which aids and assists players during the final zones of every match. Remember that in this battle royale modality, the safe zone (i.e. the playable map) becomes smaller and smaller every minute of the game that passes, therefore professional players are obliged to develop, formulate and eventually apply their strategies in moments where you can die in game in a matter of seconds.
Obviously these are stress-filled moments that happen every game and these very instances turn even harder to manage in seasonal grand finals where life changing amounts of cash is at stake.

sports into a broader demographic, thereby making a significant contribution to the growth of the industry.[102]

This chapter highlighted the vital role of parents in the e-sports career progression, using Fortnite as a case study. It underscored the challenges arising from the gap between traditional parental views and the evolving e-sports environment.

These challenges intersect with areas of management such as HR, Marketing, Strategic, and Change Management. Solutions involve strategic efforts like educational initiatives and increased media visibility.

As e-sports grow, aligning this growth with a shift in parental perceptions is crucial. Acceptance of e-sports as a career can greatly benefit aspiring gamers and the industry. The next chapter will explore strategies for this perceptual shift.

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[102] CARTER, M., BERGSTROM, K., & APPERLEY, T. Understanding eSports: An Introduction to the Global Phenomenon, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08838151.2021.1950156

V. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, we have traversed the intersecting worlds of traditional sports and e-sports, explored the dynamics of career transitions, and investigated the profound influence of parental perceptions on e-sports as a career path.

Firstly I presented a comprehensive comparison of the traditional sports and e-sports realms. It highlighted the striking similarities and differences, from the talent required to the structural organization of each industry. Despite their different origins, both have emerged as impactful industries commanding vast audiences and generating substantial economic value.

Chapter 2 delved into the complexities of career transitions, analysing different models that elucidate this challenging process. It demonstrated that transitions, while certainly fraught with difficulties, are an inherent part of any athletic journey, be it traditional sports or e-sports. The ability to navigate these transitions effectively can significantly influence an athlete's career longevity and success.

Finally, the last part of this thesis focused on the pivotal role of parental perceptions in shaping the e-sports career trajectory. It emphasized the challenges stemming from the discordance between traditional parental views and the rapidly evolving scope of e-sports. Parental acceptance and support, combined with strategic efforts like educational initiatives and increased media visibility, were identified as crucial for bridging this perception gap.

Collectively, these three dimensions, namely the comparative analysis, the career transitions, and parental influence, create a holistic view of the e-sports ecosystem. They reflect its intricacies, challenges, and opportunities.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the growing significance of e-sports, its alignment with traditional sports, the importance of managing career transitions, and the profound impact of parental perceptions. As we progress further into the digital age, it is crucial to continue exploring, understanding, and embracing the transformative world of e-sports. The future of this industry hinges on the acceptance and support of stakeholders - parents being a key group among them. As this understanding grows, so too will the opportunities for athletes, audiences, and businesses within the dynamic e-sports arena.

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