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Growth of E-Sports in India: Awareness and Impact amongst the New Generation

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Abstract

This paper investigates the rapid growth of e-sports in India, with a particular focus on awareness, perceptions, and its impact on the new generation. Using a mixed-method approach, the study draws on survey data (n=120), correlation and regression analyses, and secondary sources including Newzoo reports and academic literature. The findings reveal a positive perception of e-sports as a legitimate career option, particularly due to its role in improving problem-solving, teamwork, and career aspirations. Regression analysis identifies significant predictors such as cognitive benefits, legitimacy, and career influence. Concerns about academic impact exist but do not significantly reduce overall support. The study highlights opportunities for integrating e-sports into education, career development, and regulatory frameworks. Future implications include addressing gaming addiction risks and promoting balanced engagement.

Keywords: E-sports, gaming industry, youth awareness, career opportunities, India, digital economy.

1. Introduction

E-sports, or organized competitive video gaming, has evolved from casual competitions to a global multi-billion-dollar industry. Games such as *League of Legends*, *Dota 2*, and *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* have driven this growth, supported by streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube Gaming (Taylor, 2012) [10]. According to Newzoo (2023) [6], global e-sports revenues are projected to exceed $1.8 billion, reflecting its increasing cultural and economic importance.

In India, the proliferation of affordable smartphones, high-speed internet, and mobile-focused titles such as *Battlegrounds Mobile India (BGMI)* have accelerated adoption. This growth has prompted discussions on the positive impacts of e-sports (skill development, teamwork, and career opportunities) alongside negative concerns such as gaming addiction, academic disruption, and mental health.

This study examines the awareness and impact of e-sports among Indian youth, exploring its potential as a legitimate sport and career option.

Research Objectives

i). To analyze the growth and awareness of e-sports in India among youth.
ii). To evaluate positive and negative impacts of e-sports on social, cognitive, and academic domains.
iii). To assess perceptions of e-sports as a legitimate sport and career pathway.
iv). To propose recommendations for policy, education, and industry stakeholders.

2. Literature Review

Scholz (2020) [9] emphasized e-sports as an emerging entertainment medium with its own management structures. Saiz-Alvarez *et al.* (2021) [8] highlighted knowledge management and sustainability in the industry. Abbasi *et al.* (2021) examined how consumer engagement with e-sports translates into consumption behaviors. Trotter *et al.* (2022) [11] linked school e-sports programs to student development.

Health-related impacts have also been studied. Palanichamy *et al.* (2020) [7] identified stress implications, while Kelly & Leung (2021) [5] reviewed health research agendas. Gary *et al.* (2022) found correlations between gaming and lifestyle behaviors in youth. Despite concerns, Jenny *et al.* (2017) [4] noted opportunities for integrating e-sports in higher education, framing it as a viable career path.

This research builds on these insights by focusing specifically on India's youth perceptions, a relatively underexplored area in global e-sports research.

3. Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale, while qualitative insights were drawn from interviews with gamers and industry professionals.

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Sampling
The target population included Indian gamers aged 15–30, encompassing casual players, competitive gamers, and e-sports enthusiasts. A sample size of 120 was used, applying random sampling to ensure representation.

Data Collection
Surveys were distributed online, covering awareness, participation, cognitive impacts, and perceptions of e-sports legitimacy. Secondary data from reports (Newzoo, NASSCOM) and peer-reviewed articles were also used.

Analytical Tools
Descriptive statistics summarized perceptions, while correlation and regression analyses examined relationships between awareness, perceptions, and career support.

4. Results and Analysis
i). Descriptive Statistics
Respondents expressed strong agreement with statements such as *"E-sports should be promoted as a career option"* (Mean = 4.04) and *"E-sports should be considered a legitimate sport"* (Mean = 3.99). In contrast, fewer preferred e-sports over traditional sports (Mean = 2.33), indicating coexistence rather than replacement.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Aware of e-sports and it	E-sports should be considered	Actively follow e-sports to	Spend a significant amount of	Prefer e-sports	Engage in online dis	E-sports has improved r	Playing e-sports has helped	E-sports has positively if	Excessive gaming can	E-sports should be promote	The government
Mean	3.464912281	3.99122807	2.675438596	2.956140351	2.333333333	2.552631579	3.421052632	3.131578947	2.280701754	2.596491228	4.043859649	3.719298246
Standard Error	0.11087423	0.088542174	0.119835066	0.093567656	0.092126516	0.142663088	0.088013789	0.102380574	0.10755412	0.108424303	0.067550059	0.102377249
Median	4	4	2	3	2	2		3		3	4	4
Mode	4	4	2	2	2	1		3	2	2	4	5
Standard Deviation	1.183812833	0.945371716	1.27948838	0.999029183	0.983642019	1.523224951	0.939730114	1.093125404	1.14836376	1.157654772	0.721237271	1.093089896
Sample Variance	1.401412824	0.893727682	1.637090514	0.998059308	0.967551622	2.320214252	0.883092687	1.194923149	1.318739326	1.340164571	0.520183201	1.194845521
Kurtosis	-0.655957162	-0.105585523	-1.253791952	-1.221875224	-0.285678846	-1.521232002	-0.412752046	-0.741671735	-0.831418434	-1.028499913	0.29715655	-0.804320527
Skewness	-0.484992904	-0.685956974	0.245206114	0.143179479	0.477430885	0.288220325	-0.288283493	0.065101472	0.463884337	0.144045475	-0.498040608	-0.412281577
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1		1			2	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Count	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
Confidence Level (95%	0.21966184	0.17541801	0.237414872	0.185374396	0.182519238	0.282641298	0.174371185	0.202834377	0.213084104	0.214808094	0.133828847	0.202827788

ii). Correlation Analysis
Awareness was strongly correlated with active participation (r = 0.66) and career support (r = 0.53). Cognitive benefits (problem-solving and strategic thinking) correlated with legitimacy (r = 0.64) and career aspirations (r = 0.58). Concerns about academic impact showed weak negative correlations, suggesting limited deterrence.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	Aware of e-sports and it	E-sports should be considered	Actively follow e-sports to	Spend a significant amount a	Prefer e-sports	Engage in online dis	E-sports has improved r	Playing e-sports has helped	E-sports has positively	Excessive gaming can	E-sports should be promote	The government
Aware of e-sports and	1											
E-sports should be con	0.446492909	1										
Actively follow e-sport	0.655543951	0.480491365	1									
Spend a significant am*	0.279289785	0.365020032	0.674162028	1								
Prefer e-sports over tr	-0.065864824	0.117371417	0.002343834	0.204123952	1							
Engage in online discus	0.558052602	0.495033557	0.837516995	0.620870104	0.141752811							
E-sports has improved	0.33954913	0.641717118	0.431145274	0.4440273	0.143606004	0.522246818	1					
Playing e-sports has he	0.533592389	0.523497458	0.644547307	0.451024537	0.106993612	0.646867996	0.583090268	1				
E-sports has positively	0.560631132	0.450622653	0.755187266	0.535359274	0.292483771	0.709879405	0.39793877	0.56954346				
Excessive	-0.28163441	-	-0.39390189	-	-	-	-	-	-	1		

gaming can		0.302449054		0.267947677	0.160611209	0.414426757	0.297985399	0.223412564	0.466557247			
E-sports should be pro	0.525240091	0.636539606	0.46628031	0.420277673	-0.045738061	0.444946907	0.690641564	0.531399296	0.423078172	-0.179996819	1	
The government shoul	0.457362622	0.374400357	0.23800126	0.118286715	-0.167354419	0.093991225	0.202229166	0.164495696	0.162025227	0.140480887	0.397405452	

iii). Regression Analysis

Key predictors of career support included: - Problem-solving skills (+0.44, $p < 0.001$) - Legitimacy perception (+0.27, $p < 0.001$) - Career influence (+0.19, $p = 0.003$) - Awareness (+0.14, $p = 0.006$)

Concerns about academic disruption surprisingly had a slight positive influence (+0.10, $p = 0.026$), possibly reflecting advocacy for structured regulation.

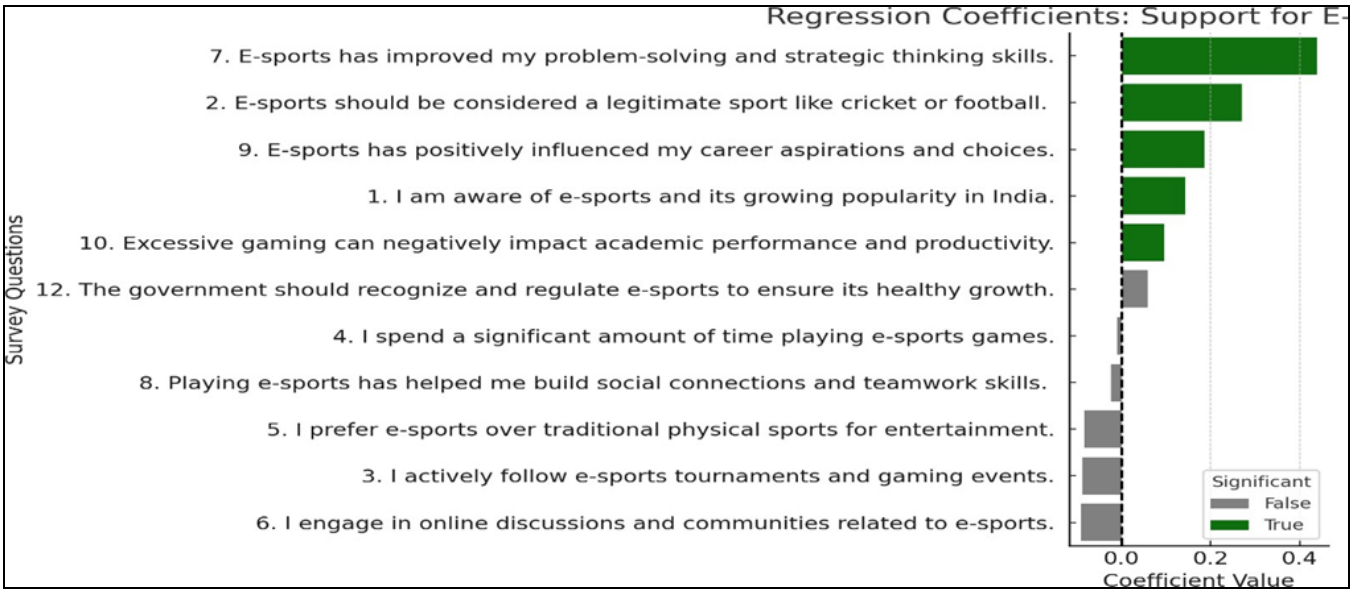

Fig 1: Regression Coefficients: Support for E-

iv). Hypothesis Testing

- **H_0:** No significant relationship between awareness/perceptions and career support.
- **H_1:** Significant positive relationship exists.

Findings rejected the null hypothesis, confirming that awareness and perceptions significantly influence youth support for e-sports careers.

5. Discussion

The results demonstrate that Indian youth widely recognize the legitimacy of e-sports and its career potential. Skill development, cognitive benefits, and community engagement emerged as strong motivators. While concerns over excessive gaming exist, they do not undermine overall acceptance.

These findings echo Jenny *et al.* (2017) [4] and Hamari & Sjöblom (2017) [3], who highlighted the growing institutionalization of e-sports. The coexistence of e-sports and traditional sports indicates an evolving entertainment ecosystem rather than direct competition.

6. Implications and Limitations

Implications:

i). Policy: Recognition of e-sports as a legitimate sport could open funding and regulatory frameworks.

ii). Education: Schools and universities may integrate e-sports into extracurricular or vocational programs.

iii). Industry: Stakeholders can leverage youth support to expand investments, sponsorships, and infrastructure.

Limitations: Limited sample size and online data collection may not fully represent India's diverse youth population. - Cross-sectional design restricts longitudinal analysis. - Potential response bias due to self-reporting.

7. Conclusion

This study confirms a strong positive perception of e-sports among India's youth, particularly as a career and legitimate sport. Key predictors include skill development, legitimacy, and career influence, with awareness playing a central role. Although concerns about excessive gaming persist, they do not significantly reduce support. Future research should expand sample diversity, employ longitudinal designs, and investigate parental and institutional perspectives.

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