

Chapter 15

Gaming, eSports, and Spanish Consumer Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Over the last few years there has been an increase in the number of video game players. This breaks with the stereotypes of negative video game players who rejected their growth as an entertainment industry. The opposite is now the case due to the positive effects of playing video games on gamers, when it is done in a balanced way. To find out the current associations of the word video game as well as its perception among young Spaniards and the skills they develop, a study was carried out by means of a survey in which 530 young Spaniards between the ages of 18 and 30 took part. The results show that they play for fun, that they develop cognitive skills such as reasoning or improvements in the power of concentration and even that they manage to socialise by valuing and knowing how to collaborate in a team.

INTRODUCTION

In the age of online leisure activities, over-information and over-stimulation are so prevalent that the question of knowing how many types of advertising currently exist and their impact on a young population conditioned to find all their answers on the Internet, claims as to reach for a bottom ground in the effects of media on mental health effects and gaming perceptions.

The aim of this study is to analyse, by means of quantitative tools, the reality of the neo-advertising that sneaks into the controls of video games (Bacovsky, 2021). It's a new way of socializing and iden-

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tifying with a tribe that many brands are encapsulating so followers not only relate but create their own responses to frame their way of thinking around a core style, happening in video games, such as the iconic Animal Crossing.

Social Networks and communication, on the other hand, are also affected by the effect of gaming. Of course, there is the example of Twitch, whose evolution has been remarkable and very significant (Woodcock, J. & Jhonson, M., 2021). Many users/gamers and non-users know Ibai, who started timidly and whose way of expressing himself is part of the slang of many people in Spain and Spanish-speaking countries. For this reason, there are many brands that seek, just as the player identifies with the best-known gamers and with the most followers, to generate a powerful and lasting engagement with players over time. The openness of this new connection creates a natural effect, that differs from the tone and expressions of traditional advertising, makes this exchange more natural, consolidated and without the artifice or bombardment as striking as before.

As a result of all these changes that have occurred in recent times, due, first, to ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and new forms of entertainment, advertising has been reinvented in advergaming and in-game advertising. Because of this, the behavior of the consumer, whose leisure is based on video games, has changed and has little or nothing to do with that of the traditional consumer focus platforms, in terms of digital acculturation (Dey et al., 2020).

All the above makes us rethink some of the most important questions about why young people consume video games, what skills they develop with them, what associations they make through video games and the values they perceive from the position of eSports viewers. Consumer behavior began to be analysed by authors such as Acar et al. (2007), Parreño (2010) and Chang et al. (2013) in relation with the impact of video games, just barely a decade ago. For this reason, there are not many detailed studies as of present year, 1924, after the studies carried out by Ríos and Almeida (2019), Martínez and Vizcaíno (2021) and Vourre et al. (2022).

Therefore, with the aim of enriching the somehow scarce information offered in recent studies, the present study investigates new factors that are directly affecting consumer behaviors and purchaser decision-making, through a process of interviewing users; the results obtained after the survey (530 young people between 18 and 30 years of age) are localized to Spain, featured as a pioneering country and one of the leaders in the video game sector. This information provides to this book a rich and solid perspective about consumer behaviour in new digital platform boosting the transfer of knowledge from researching to business world, which along the previous literature has not been treated in deep.

BACKGROUND

While 2023 is being the year of artificial intelligence and 2022 was the year of the metaverse (Ruiz et al., 2023), the video game industry has been developing and growing for more than a decade, but it has not been until the COVID19 pandemic that its importance has begun to emerge from isolation due to Generation Z and streaming platforms such as Twitch. Due to the rebound of gamers of all ages, but especially the new generations, both men and women during the pandemic and seeing the existing business potential, video games are included within the entertainment industry.

The COVID19 brought a boom to video games and eSports, in response to the confinement phase, reaching the highest figures in terms of viewers and revenue in the new normal, surpassing other industries within the entertainment sector, such as, music and film that had traditionally led this sector. According

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