

DIE-HARD FANS OR DOUBLE AGENTS?

**A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON ESPORTS FANDOM IN
COUNTER-STRIKE: GLOBAL OFFENSIVE (CSGO)**

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Die-Hard Fans or Double Agents? – A Quantitative Study on Esports Fandom in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)

Abstract:

Esports has during the 21st century developed from an overlooked subculture into a billion-dollar industry. Across the globe, teams are competing in tournaments with large prize pools, cheered on by devoted fans. Despite this impressive scenery, there is still little knowledge on these teams and their fans. Empirical evidence suggests esports fandom is characterized by connections to multiple teams and players, however, no previous study has investigated the topic. Within traditional sports, the notion of fans as fans of a single, favorite team, which they identify with to various degrees, has been the norm. Over decades of research, scholars have discovered the origins of sports fans' team identification, and connected it to concepts such as loyalty and psychological well-being. Esports share many common characteristics with traditional sports, however, it is unknown whether the theories on sports fandom also hold up in esports. This study empirically investigates esports fans through the lens of traditional sports fans. A quantitative survey was distributed to 210 Swedish fans of the sport Counter-Strike Global Offensive (CSGO). The results showed these fans considered themselves fans of multiple teams, but they still had one favorite team. Identification with this favorite team was positively correlated with both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, similarly to traditional sports fans. This study shows theories on traditional sports fans can be successfully applied to esports. Furthermore, the findings of this first study on esports fans provide a map of their fandom. This map has relevance for both researchers and esports teams developing their team brands.

Keywords:

Esports, Esports fans, Team identification, Fan loyalty, Sports marketing

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Definitions

Esports: Esports is commonly defined as competitive video gaming (Thiborg, 2011). This can occur both at an amateur and a professional level, however, this study focuses only on professional esports. Within the social sciences, a lot of attention has been given to the question whether esports is a sport or not (Cunningham et al., 2018; Funk, Pizzo, & Baker, 2018; Heere, 2018; Rosell Llorens, 2017; Thiborg, 2011). The discussion is still ongoing, however, this study does not aim to contribute to it. Sports management scholars have argued that their field should embrace esports since it exhibits a lot of similarities with traditional sports (Cunningham et al., 2018; Funk et al., 2018; Heere, 2018). This view seems to have gained acceptance in the field and therefore motivates the application of theories from traditional sports on esports and comparisons between the two phenomena.

Esports title: Not all video games are per definition esports titles. Esports titles are games which are fundamentally constructed for competition, where there is a definitive end to the game, a ‘final victory’ (Rosell Llorens, 2017). In other words, the game should be played in discrete matches where the objective is to beat the opponent. A majority of the most popular esports titles in terms of viewership are team-based, such as *League of Legends*, *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* and *Dota 2*. However, there are some notable single player titles, such as *Fortnite* and *Hearthstone* (Newzoo, 2020).

Traditional sports: In this thesis, traditional sports refer to what is commonly known simply as sports. The addition of traditional is only made to easier compare and contrast between sports and esports. This rhetorical play is common within the world of esports (Rosen, 2017). Again, this should not be seen as a claim that esports is a sport, but only as a tool to facilitate comparisons.

Fan: To provide a rigid definition of what constitutes a ‘fan’ is difficult and should perhaps be avoided since it “often draws on highly subjective distinctions of what makes a ‘real’ fan” (Crawford, 2004, p.161). Instead Crawford defined a fan as an individual with a large interest in a particular topic, in that case sports. Other researchers have viewed fans as spectators that are committed or devoted to the sport in general and/or to a specific team (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000), or an “enthusiastic devotee of some particular sports consumption object” (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999). These definitions are believed to be interchangeable, and will be used in this study, for both esports and traditional sports.

CSGO: Abbreviation of *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*, the esports title that is the focus of the study. For additional information on this sport, see 1. Introduction and Appendix A.

1. Introduction

This section introduces the esports subject, the subsequent theoretical and empirical problematization regarding esports fans, as well as the purpose and expected contribution of this thesis.

1.1. Background

In January 2020, the American esports organization Dignitas shocked the world of *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* (CSGO) by signing the Swedish players Patrik "f0rest" Lindberg, Christopher "GeT_RiGhT" Alesund, Richard "Xizt" Landström and Adam "friberg" Friberg together with the new coach and general manager Robin "Fifflaren" Johansson (Dignitas, 2020). Although the team also included a fifth player, Norwegian rising star Håkon "hallzerk" Fjærli, the discussion was focused on that the five former members of the team Ninjas in Pyjamas (NiP), famously known for achieving an 87-0-map win streak on LAN¹, were reunited after several years apart. The news resulted in a dilemma for many fans of Ninjas in Pyjamas; should they stick with their original team, or switch their allegiance to this new team made up of their favorite players, who had laid the foundation of their original team's success? Overall, this new roster added to an already existing discussion within the CSGO community, and within esports as a whole; what are esports fans actually fans of?

During spring 2020 and the ongoing 2019-20 coronavirus pandemic, esports has, unlike traditional sports, not shut down completely (Heinrich, 2020). Although competitions have switched to solely online play, the world of esports is going strong. With the absence of traditional sports, many people look to esports to fill the competitive void (Gault, 2020). Even some traditional sports have transitioned their competitions into esports, with Formula 1 as the prime example (Formula 1, 2020). Although traditional sports will eventually return as the pandemic ends, esports is still viewed as 'the next big thing'. Even before the pandemic, esports had during the 21st century developed from an overlooked sub-culture to a mainstream activity (Taylor, 2012). In fact, during the last decade, esports has grown into a global, billion-dollar industry (Goldman Sachs, 2018; Newzoo, 2020). Audience figures and prize pools are equal to or higher than several traditional sports, and esports' growth predictions for the coming years are in the double-digits. All of this contributes to esports receiving attention worldwide from investors, sponsors and media companies. Unlike many traditional sports, the esports audience is young, global and digital (Goldman Sachs, 2018; Scholz, 2019). However, esports is still

¹ Abbreviation of Local Area Network. Within esports, LAN denotes tournaments that are played offline in stadiums in front of an audience. Most large tournaments are run this way (Scholz, 2019).

in many cases described as ‘the Wild West of sports’ since it has lacked the organization, structure and revenue streams of traditional sports (Goldman Sachs, 2018).

Similar to traditional sports that comprise a large number of different activities, esports also consists of competitions in not one, but several different games. Just like in traditional sports, these games are different, both in terms of how they are played, and in how they are organized. One of these games is *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* (CSGO), a first-person shooter (FPS) game, where two teams of five players compete for different objectives. CSGO is the fourth version in the *Counter-Strike*-series, with the first version of the game being published in 1999. Immediately recognized as a highly competitive game, the *Counter-Strike*-series remains after twenty years, one of the largest and most popular esports. Despite being one of the oldest, CSGO was the second most viewed esports title in 2019 (Newzoo, 2020) and it is also the second largest esports in terms of prizemoney (Esports Earnings, 2020a).²

In contrast to most other esports titles, CSGO has historically not been very popular in Asia (Gonzales, 2017). Instead, it draws its popularity from North America, Europe, Brazil and Australia where 29 of the world’s 30 best teams are based (hltv.org, 2020a). The Nordic countries in particular are, and have been, very successful throughout the game’s history. Currently, eight of the world’s 30 best teams only field players from the Nordic countries (Dignitas is not one of them as they are outside of top-30) and six additional teams have one to three players from these countries (hltv.org, 2020a). Sweden is a key part of this success, with Swedish teams winning or placing high in big tournaments since the early 2000’s. The CSGO-majors, the semiannual tournaments hosted since 2013, which are considered to be the most prestigious within the game, have been won by Swedish teams four out of fifteen times (Liquipedia, 2020a). Furthermore, several Swedish players are considered to be some of the best players of all time, and Sweden is ranked third among all countries in terms of prizemoney won (Esports Earnings, 2020b).

For twenty years, CSGO teams have competed in leagues and tournaments across the globe. Some teams have been around since the game’s infancy, while other brands were established more recently. Regardless, CSGO teams as well as teams in other esports titles draw many viewers and have a lot of fans. However, the loyalty of these fans has been questioned, both within the esports community (En podd om e-sport, 2020) and industry reports (McKinsey & Company, 2019; Rosen, 2017). Compared to teams in traditional sports, esports teams have not had time to cultivate their brand (Rosen, 2017). This could be one explanation to why many esports fans have a stronger connection to their favorite players, and not their teams (Ashton, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2019). The player-centric nature of the industry, coupled with frequent player transfers and overall roster

² For additional background and information on CSGO, see Appendix A.

instability contribute to this conventional wisdom within the world of esports; that fans follow players, not teams (Ashton, 2020).

1.2. Problem statement

Despite this conventional wisdom, there is in fact little knowledge on esports fandom. There is no previous research on the subject³, and there are no publicly available reports that discuss it, except one by McKinsey & Company (2019) which merely states that fan loyalty is split among several players and teams. This report implies that more avid fans follow their favorite players, not teams. Overall, neither researchers nor practitioners truly know what esports fans are fans of, since the topic has not been studied. This is a problem for the whole esports industry, but in particular the esports teams. For teams to build their brand, gain fans and keep them, they need to understand them.

Besides the sport-simulation esports titles⁴, esports teams are in general endemic to esports, i.e., they are not traditional sports teams that have ventured into esports. There are exceptions, such as European football clubs FC Schalke 04 and Beşiktaş JK who both have prominent teams in *League of Legends* (Beşiktaş, 2020; FC Schalke 04, 2020) and Paris Saint-Germain who have the *Dota 2*-team PSG.LGD through a partnership with Chinese esports organization LGD (Stubbs, 2018). Furthermore, there are a few examples of organizations in traditional sports acquiring existing esports teams, such as NBA team Philadelphia 76ers acquiring aforementioned Dignitas (Rovell, 2016), or the owner of NFL team Dallas Cowboys acquiring American esports team Complexity Gaming (Wolf, 2017). However, in these latter cases, the esports brands are separate from the traditional sports brands. In conclusion, most esports teams are esports teams only, created by players or early investors in the industry. Since esports teams are not brand extensions of traditional sports teams, they cannot leverage existing fanbases from traditional sports. This further emphasizes the importance of esports teams understanding their fanbases, to be able to build brand equity and maintain long-term relationships with their fans.

Furthermore, localization does not exist in esports as it does in traditional sports. In other words, teams do not represent a specific city or region. This means that esports fans are not true local fans like most fans of traditional sports. However, some local ties to teams may still exist in esports. Esports teams are based in one country, and the nationality of the players on the team can also result in geographical ties. For example, Dignitas are likely to attract many Swedish fans since four out of five players are Swedish. Moreover, teams do not have a home stadium where they play their games, but instead they play online or in different stadiums across the globe, similar to the tours in individual sports such as tennis and golf. This makes it difficult for teams to develop brands based on the

³ Keywords such as “esports fans” and “esports fandom” retrieve no relevant results in neither Scopus nor Google Scholar.

⁴ Esports titles that are virtual simulations of traditional sports, such as the *FIFA*-series (football) and the *NBA2K*-series (basketball).

local community, which is historically what teams in traditional sports have done (Wann, 2006; Wann & James, 2019).

Within traditional sports, team fandom has for the past thirty years received a lot of attention from researchers within sports marketing and sports psychology (Lock & Heere, 2017; Wann & James, 2019). Several different reasons for why people become fans of teams have been identified, across multiple sports and contexts. The psychological effects of fandom on the individual fan as well as the behaviors fandom results in have also been researched thoroughly (Wann, 2006; Wann & James, 2019). Multiple measurements have been developed to find out how strongly fans identify with their favorite team. Favorite team is a key word here. Within this research field, and the whole world of traditional sports, the historical view is that individuals are fans of a single team, their favorite team. These individuals usually become fans at a young age, and they follow their favorite team due to one or more of the following three reasons; 1) it is their local team; 2) their family or friends are fans of the team, or lastly, 3) they like a particular player on the team. Most importantly, they stick with this team through thick and thin and do not switch allegiances due to player transfers or decreased success. This view has historically dominated the world of sports, and most readers of this thesis probably intuitively acknowledge it too.

To some extent, this view is still true. However, later developments in sports and in sports research during the 21st century have resulted in additional views on fandom in sports. Commercialization and globalization have changed traditional sports over the last few decades (Giulianotti, 2002; Guttman, 2004). Due to satellite television, internet and social media, people can follow sports far away from their own region. Sports teams in the big leagues in Europe and North America have fans from across the globe, and these teams' strategies focus on the distant fans (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Wilson, 2017). The last decade, Asia has been the focus of many teams and leagues. For example, China is the second largest market for NBA outside North America (Pu & James, 2017). In other words, sports fans do not only follow their local team but may also be fans of teams abroad. The behaviors of these distant fans and the psychological benefits they receive by being fans of their favorite team are very similar to local, traditional fans. However, their reasons for being fans of their team are slightly different, where the media plays a more important role than family and friends (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr, Smith, & Anderson, 2011).

Most research on distant sports fans still has a traditional view, emphasizing the notion of the favorite team. However, the commercialization and globalization of sports has also led to it being commodified (Giulianotti, 2002). This has made some fans develop a detached, consumer-oriented approach to sports, resulting in them switching allegiances between multiple teams and players. This development is interesting but has unfortunately not been followed by additional research in the 2010's. In other words, there is not much knowledge on modern sports fans in 2020 (Wann & James, 2019), especially not the fandom of millennials and Gen Z, who have been left out of most

previous studies due to their age. This is true for both traditional sports and esports. Regarding the latter, however, there is no knowledge at all on the dimensions of fandom. Previous research on esports consumption has showed a lot of similarities, but also some differences, in the motives for watching esports and traditional sports (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Pizzo et al., 2018; Qian, Zhang, Wang, & Hulland, in press; Qian, Wang, Zhang, & Lu, in press; Sjöblom, Macey, & Hamari, in press; Xiao, 2020). How this comparison holds up with regards to fandom is still unknown.

1.3. Purpose, expected contribution and research question

As the supposedly first study on esports fandom, the purpose of this study is to provide a first map of esports fans through research. More precisely, this study aims to empirically investigate esports fans; what they are fans of, what the origins of their fandom are, and how their loyalty is associated with their fandom. Many dimensions of the world of esports are still to a large extent unknown for both researchers and practitioners, and every attempt to improve our understanding of it can be valuable. This implies that the nature of the study is exploratory, which is to some extent true. In contrast to previous research on sports fandom, this study will not use deducted hypotheses to answer the research questions. However, the thesis is still grounded in existing theories on traditional sports fans. Previous research on fandom in traditional sports provides a foundation for the study, with theories and models developed over the last three decades (Wann & James, 2019). These frameworks will be used to deduct research propositions instead of hypotheses. While the research propositions are deducted and formulated similarly to hypotheses, they are less certain in terms of their claims. Using research propositions instead of hypotheses is motivated by the lack knowledge on esports fans, both from empirics and research. In other words, it is not motivated to make the required assumptions for deducting hypotheses on esports fans. These research propositions will still be tested similarly to hypotheses, and the study will follow the existing research tradition in terms of methods employed.

This thesis aims to investigate whether esports fans can be described using these frameworks on traditional sports fans, and how esports fans may differ from traditional sports fans. It is worth emphasizing that esports should not be viewed as a new empirical material within sports, but a new phenomenon. This phenomenon shares certain characteristics with, but is separate from traditional sports (Heere, 2018; Thiborg, 2011). Since it shares several characteristics with traditional sports, esports exists, regardless of its status as a sport, within the sports domain (Cunningham et al., 2018). Therefore, the study aims to contribute to the existing field of research on modern sports fandom within sports marketing and sports psychology. Finally, the thesis expects to give a notable empirical contribution, where it can guide practitioners, especially esports teams, in what drives their fanbase. Hopefully, these organizations can use the findings and conclusions from this study as a tool when developing their brands and fan relationship strategies.

Based on the background, problematization and purpose, the research questions of the study are:

RQ1: What characterizes esports fandom with regard to esports teams?

RQ2: What is the relationship between fandom and loyalty in esports?

1.4. Delimitations

As previously mentioned, esports consists of competition in several different titles, with their own ecosystems, infrastructure and practices. Moreover, empirical evidence suggests most esports fans do in fact only follow one game (Pannekeet, 2019). This implies that the different esports titles operate separately, and that there are possible differences between the titles and their fanbases. Although this is no different from traditional sports, it is worth highlighting since esports is often viewed as one, common activity. This united view is appropriate in some contexts, but not for this study. Therefore, this study is delimited to esports fans in one esports title. The chosen esports title is, as indicated by the background, CSGO. Most previous studies on sports fandom are also limited to one sport, which further motivates a similar delimitation in this study.

Furthermore, this study is limited to Swedish CSGO-fans. Although a global study on all CSGO fans, or a comparative study between fans of different nationalities, would be interesting, the thesis is delimited to the Swedish context due to practical reasons and in order to ensure data quality. Similar to possible differences between sports, there are also possible differences between different countries and cultures. Moreover, there are obvious difficulties in finding representative samples of adequate size in studies that include multiple countries. This delimitation is also in line with previous research in the field, where most studies on sports fandom are limited to a single country.

1.5. Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into five sections: 1) Introduction, 2) Theory, 3) Methodology, 4) Results and analysis, and lastly, 5) Discussion. The next chapter, Theory, will present a review of previous research that will be relevant for the research propositions. The third chapter, Methodology, will outline the scientific approach and the methods used to conduct the study. The fourth chapter, Results and analysis, will test the research propositions previously presented and analyze the results. Under Discussion, conclusions of the study will be presented and discussed. Furthermore, this section presents the theoretical contributions of the study and discusses its limitations as well as suggestions for future research.

2. Theory

This chapter begins with a presentation of recent studies on motives for esports consumption. Thereafter, previous research on sports fandom is discussed and the theoretical framework is presented. Finally, the theoretical framework is used to develop several research propositions, which are presented at the end of the chapter.

2.1. Motives for esports consumption

Previous esports research within sports marketing has addressed consumer motivations for watching esports. This has been done by applying frameworks and models from research on consumption in media, such as the uses and gratification theory (UGT) (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973) as well as traditional sports, such as the motivation scale for sports consumption (MSSC) (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002). A first study by Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) on esports consumers worldwide used the MSSC to find that escapism, acquiring knowledge about the games being played, novelty and esports athlete aggressiveness positively predicted online esports spectating frequency. Using a similar framework, another study compared live, offline spectator motives in football and two different esports titles in South Korea (Pizzo et al., 2018). This study found that 11 out of 15 motives were similar across the three contexts, which indicates motives for consuming esports is similar to those for traditional sports. Furthermore, these motives impacted attendance in a similar way across the three contexts. Differences were manifested in that e.g., football spectators put more emphasis on family bonding and players' physical attractiveness, whereas esports consumers rated appreciation of players' skills higher (Pizzo et al., 2018). However, this study also found that vicarious achievement, drama and social opportunities, all salient consumption motives for traditional sports, were salient motives for both esports contexts. This diverged from Hamari & Sjöblom (2017), which might be explained by the studies' different contexts, i.e., online vs. offline spectatorship (Pizzo et al., 2018).

Sjöblom, Macey and Hamari (in press) investigated this further by looking at differences in motives for online and live consumption of esports. The socialization aspect and players' physical attractiveness were rated higher for live consumption of esports, whereas online spectators deemed drama, acquisition of knowledge, appreciation of skill, novelty, aesthetics and enjoyment of aggression more important. Other global studies (Qian, Zhang, Wang, & Hulland, in press; Qian, Wang, Zhang, & Lu, in press; Xiao, 2020), found motives for online esports consumption to be similar to motives for traditional sports consumption. Unique motives for esports were skill improvement and vicarious sensation as well as characteristics of the stream⁵, such as chat room, stream quality and virtual rewards (Qian, Zhang, Wang, & Hulland, in press). In contrast to

⁵ The stream refers to the broadcast of an esports game.

Sjöblom, Macey & Hamari (in press), socialization and skill appreciation were believed to be important motives for online esports consumption, although these were manifested differently compared to traditional sports. (Qian, Wang, Zhang, & Lu, in press). In conclusion, these previous studies on esports consumption showed that the motives for watching esports is, with some differences, similar to the motives for consuming traditional sports.

2.2. Sports fandom and loyalty

Sports play an important role in modern society and a large proportion of the population is involved, at least as spectators (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann & James, 2019). Because of this, it might not come as a surprise that a lot of attention has been given to the functions that sports may serve for spectators. One area of this research addresses sports consumption in general and looks at different motives for and benefits of consuming sports (e.g., Fink et al., 2002). This has resulted in, among other things, the frameworks mentioned in the previous section on esports consumption.

Another field of research within sports consumption treats a specific group of spectators, i.e., sports fans. There are at least two different reasons for studying sports fans within sports marketing. One is to investigate what unique functions sports serve for fans compared to casual spectators. Another, which is a result of the commercialization of sports, is to connect fandom to loyalty. This can be used to understand why and how fandom is created, why fans follow specific teams and which attitudes and behaviors fandom results in (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

2.2.1. Overview of theoretical framework

Figure 1 shows the different theories and concepts that are presented in this chapter and used as the theoretical framework of this thesis.

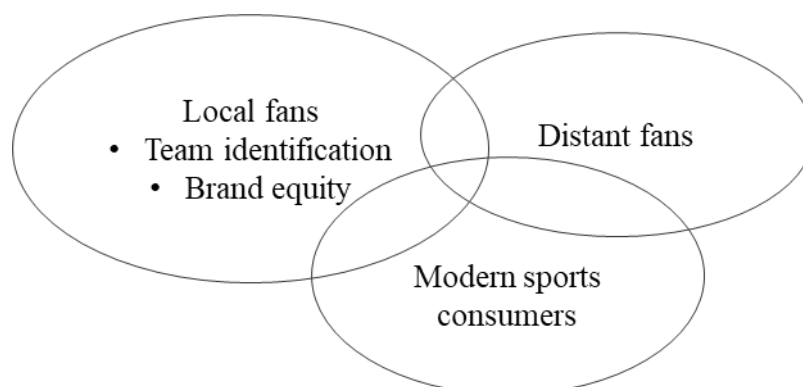


Figure 1. Visual representation of the theoretical framework

Historically, sports fandom has existed in a local context. Most of the research on sports fans has therefore been conducted within this context. Local fans have mostly been

studied through two different frameworks: team identification and brand equity. Some later studies have looked at another segment of sports fans, i.e., distant fans, which are similar to but also different from local, traditional fans. Lastly, the framework includes a taxonomy of ‘modern sports consumers’. This is a framework from sports sociology, which is believed to be relevant in the modern world of sports. Before the three parts are presented, some attention is given to two fundamental concepts that are connected to these frameworks. These two concepts are the general process of becoming a fan, as well as the notion of loyalty within the context of sports fandom.

2.2.2. The process of becoming a fan: The Psychological Continuum Model

The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) is a framework developed to understand the psychology of sports fans, particularly their involvement and connection with a sports object (Funk & James, 2001; Wann & James, 2019). A sports object could be a sport, a team, a player, etc., The first two are the most researched and will be used for this study. The PCM consists of four different stages that each represent a different degree of attitude formation and involvement toward a sports object: Awareness, Attraction, Attachment and Allegiance. Table 1 shows the different stages and their respective key characteristics.

Table 1. The Psychological Continuum Model

Stage of Connection	Key Psychological Characteristics
Awareness	Knowledge that a team (or sport) exists, but no particular interest; distinguishes between different teams (or sports), but no particular interest; knowledge influenced by socializing agents and media
Attraction	Selection of a favorite team (or sport); interest in team (or sport) impacted primarily by situational influences or dispositional influences
Attachment	Formation of a strong, positive attitude to a team (or sport); emotional complexity to a team (or sport); team (or sport) has personal importance and meaning
Allegiance	Commitment to a team (or sport); persistent (positive) attitude toward a team (or sport); attitude resistant to change; attitude impacts cognition; intrinsic influences most important

Adapted from Wann & James (2019)

The PCM provides a valuable overview of the process of becoming a fan and a basic taxonomy for different types of fans. Both researchers and practitioners can use it as a guide in their work. For example, a large share of the work in sports marketing focuses on consumers at the Attraction stage and the ability to move people to this stage, since it is here fans form a connection to a specific team, i.e., become fans (Wann & James, 2019). However, it is not until the Attachment stage the connection between a fan and a team becomes meaningful (Funk & James, 2006). Unsurprisingly, it is research connected to these two stages that have received the most attention from scholars.

2.2.3. Fan loyalty within the context of sports

A concept related to the connection between a fan and a team is the notion of loyalty. Within the context of sports, loyalty is most often defined as a two-dimensional construct, behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Mahony et al., 2000). Behavioral loyalty refers to team-related behaviors which fans exhibit, such as attending games or watching them on television, purchasing merchandise etc. Attitudinal loyalty, on the other hand, captures the fans' feelings towards the team, such as intentions of future attendance or consumption. Although early studies focused mostly on behavioral loyalty, Mahony et al. (2000) highlighted the importance of attitudinal loyalty, which has since been included in later studies (e.g., Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). Despite this, behavioral loyalty and especially consumption related to fandom remains the most commonly used in research.

2.3. Fandom through customer-based brand equity

The first major traditional perspective on fandom uses marketing frameworks from brand loyalty research, such as the customer-based brand equity framework (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993), and apply them in a sports team setting. In other words, this perspective implies that sports marketers should drive fans' preferences and loyalty by building strong, positive and unique consumer beliefs about the club (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008). Researchers in this field therefore try to understand how strong brands are created in sports. They do this by creating frameworks on brand associations, a major contributor to the creation of brand equity (Gladden & Funk, 2002). Table 2 provides a summary of three prominent studies and the dimensions of brand associations they studied.

Table 2. Overview of studies of fandom through brand associations

Study	Dimensions of brand associations (brand image) studied
Gladden & Funk (2002)	<i>attributes</i> (success, head coach, star player, management, stadium, logo design, product delivery, and tradition), <i>benefits</i> (identification, nostalgia, pride in place, escape, and peer group acceptance), and <i>attitudes</i> (importance, knowledge and affect)
Ross et al. (2006)	nonplayer personnel, team success, team history, stadium community, team play characteristics, brand mark, commitment, organizational attributes, concessions, social interaction, and rivalry
Bauer et al. (2008)	<i>product-related attributes</i> (success, star player(s), head coach, team, team performance), <i>non-product-related attributes</i> (management, logo and club colors, stadium, club history and tradition, club culture and values, fans, sponsor or owner, regional provenance), <i>benefits</i> (pride in place, fan identification, peer-group acceptance, nostalgia, escape, socializing, emotions, entertainment), and <i>attitudes</i> (affect)

Gladden and Funk (2002) developed the Team Association Model (TAM), a scale which through 16 different constructs identifies dimensions of brand associations in team sports, a major contributor to the creation of brand equity. Ross, James & Vargas (2006) criticized certain aspects of TAM. They believed previous research had not in fact used wordings and items from brand equity research, but from other areas. Moreover, they argued motives for being a fan of a team might be related, but is not equal, to brand associations (Ross, James, & Vargas, 2006) and created their own framework called Team Brand Association Scale (TBAS) from a free-thought listing technique. The relationship between a strong team brand and fan loyalty was further investigated in a later study (Bauer et al., 2008). Bauer et al. (2008) looked at brand image, i.e., the cumulative product of brand associations in the consumer's mind, and then modified the models of two previous studies. In contrast to Gladden & Funk (2002), they distinguished between product-related and non-product-related brand attributes, and some of the constructs were different. The product-related attributes are characteristics of or contributors to actual team performance whereas the non-product-related attributes do not directly affect performance. Non-product-related attributes have a significantly larger impact on brand benefits. Brand benefits result in brand attitudes, which results in attitudinal loyalty or psychological commitment to the team. This commitment then results in behavioral loyalty (Bauer et al., 2008).

2.4. Team identification

Team identification is the other major perspective, and it is the perspective within sports fandom that has received the most attention from scholars (Wann & James, 2019). Team identification is based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), which views group identification as the extent to which a social category is relevant and important to an individual, i.e., a central component to their social identity. Translated into the world of sports, team identification is then defined as “the extent to which a fan feels a psychological connection to a team and the team's performances are viewed as self-relevant” (Wann, 2006, p. 332). Connected to the PCM model, team identification should be viewed as the two later stages, Attachment and Allegiance, where a meaningful connection between a fan and a team has developed (Wann & James, 2019). It is important to note that one does not have to be an active participant in group activities to feel connected to the group (Wann, 2006). In other words, fans do not have to be team members to identify with the team.

2.4.1. Measuring team identification

Early studies focused on creating measurements for team identification (Mahony et al., 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1990; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) as well as understanding consumer behavior related to it (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Mahony et al., 2000). Mahony et al. (2000) developed a psychological commitment to team (PCT) scale to be

used in segmenting sports consumers based on loyalty. Tests also showed this scale predicted fan behavior such as attendance and viewership. A scale that has been used more extensively is the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The SSIS has been used in dozens of studies (Wann, 2006) and been translated into several different languages (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Theodorakis, Wann, & Weaver, 2012; Wann, 2006). Both these measures have been criticized for their unidimensional construct (Dimmock, Grove, & Eklund, 2005; Heere & James, 2007; Lock & Heere, 2017), however, the developed multidimensional scales (Dimmock et al., 2005; Heere & James, 2007) have not been used extensively in the field. Many researchers still prefer the unidimensional scales due to brevity and practical utility (Lock & Heere, 2017).

2.4.2. The origins of team identification

The origins of team identification have received attention in several studies from different contexts (Wann, 2006). Briefly described, this research aims to find factors explaining why people identify with a particular team. There is a large amount of potential causes for team identification in sports (Wann, Tucker, & Schrader, 1996; Wann, 2006; Wann & James, 2019). For example, Wann et al. (1996) found through a free-thought listing survey of 100 students 42 different categories of reasons for becoming a fan of the favorite team. However, over 90% of reasons were listed by fewer than 10% of the participants. Despite this, Wann (2006) in his review of previous research divided the causes for team identification into three types of origin: psychological, environmental and team-related origins (see Table 3). Studies on sports team identification as well as other areas of group psychology were included in this review (Wann, 2006). Environmental and team-related causes have received the most attention from researchers, and these two are also the focus of this thesis.

Table 3. Origins of team identification

Type of origin	Origins
Psychological	Need for belonging and affiliation, desire to feel part of distinctive groups, impact of death salience
Environmental	Socialization process (family, friends, media etc.), geographical proximity, fan-to-player contact, salience of outgroup (rival team), team stadium
Team-related	Organizational characteristics, team performance, player attributes

Adapted from Wann (2006)

Environmental origins of team identification

The environmental origins of team identification are antecedents that lie in the environment surrounding the fan. One of these origins is the socialization process, where

identification is created through interactions with different socialization agents, such as exposure to the sport, friends and other fans of the team, family members and media (Funk & James, 2001; Greenwood, Kanter, & Casper, 2006; Spaaij & Anderson, 2010; Wann et al., 1996; Wann, 2006). Most studies have looked at adult fans, which means that the factors related to the socialization process are discovered many years after the fans begun to identify with their favorite team. However, a study on underage sports fans in Australia found that children's team identification was strongly influenced by fathers and other male role models (Spaaij & Anderson, 2010). The socialization process is not required for identification to develop, but it is a powerful force (Wann, 2006). Wann (2006) especially mentioned geography as an important factor on the socialization process. Living or growing up near a team is an important factor in the origination of a person's team identification since it leads to increased opportunities for socialization to occur. In the study by Wann et al. (1996), geographical reasons such as "I live in or around the area" were some of the most common reasons for fans to become fans of their team. Another environmental origin is fan-to-player contact, such as autograph sessions or photo-day opportunities (Wann, 2006). Finally, the team's stadium and the salience of an outgroup, which in sports translates to the rival teams, are two other environmental origins (Wann, 2006).

Team-related origins of team identification

Team-related origins can be categorized into three types: organizational characteristics, team performance, and player attributes. Organizational characteristics refers to e.g., team history and rituals (Wann et al., 1996; Wann, 2006). Sport teams may be able to increase the identification of their fans by reminding them of their history and past success (Wann, 2006). Team performance can be a relevant cause for some fans, while irrelevant for others (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Wann et al., 1996). Fisher and Wakefield (1998) investigated how fans of unsuccessful teams continue to identify with their team. They found the involvement with the group, i.e., the other fans, was important for these fans, and not the performance of the team. On the other hand, for fans of successful teams, team performance was viewed as an important factor. Although most studies have focused on established teams with a tradition and history of either good or bad performances, two Australian studies investigated how team identification developed in teams without either of these two team-related origins (Lock, Darcy, & Taylor, 2009; Lock, Taylor, & Darcy, 2011). Through surveys on members of Australian football teams in the newly formed A-league, the researchers found the fans' team identification was mainly driven by a desire to support the sport of football in Australia.

Regarding player attributes, player attractiveness and player similarity to the fan are the two traits that have received the most attention from researchers (Wann et al., 1996; Wann, 2006). In the study by Wann et al. (1996), one of the most common reasons for fans to originally become fans of their favorite team was the fans' favorite players playing on the team. However, another study found player identification had a minor effect on

team identification (Wu, Tsai, & Hung, 2012). This study suggested that sport organizations should focus on building long-term relationship between the fans and the team, rather than on short-term strategies such as attracting star players. In conclusion, the importance of team-related causes of team identification for local fans is not clear-cut and varies a lot between different studies and contexts.

Summary of the origins of team identification

As presented above, there are a wide range of potential origins of team identification, and which factors are more common than others are unclear. However, there is a lot of evidence suggesting that for fans of local or domestic teams the socialization process is powerful, with family and friends as the most prominent socialization agents (Wann, 2006). This is the traditional view on the origins of sports fandom, i.e., fans are fans of their local team or another team in the country because their friends and family also are fans of that team. For some groups of fans, team-related origins such as team performance are also important.

2.4.3. Stability of team identification

Team identification is relatively stable over the course of a season (Lock, Funk, Doyle, & McDonald, 2014; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann, 2006). According to Wann and James (2019), it is also a stable trait from season to season. In fact, they claimed identification with a team usually is “a lifelong love affair that fans take to their graves” (Wann & James, 2019, p. 5). However, few studies have directly challenged fans’ team identification. One exception is the PCT scale (Mahony et al., 2000) which included several items that addressed this, such as “I could easily be persuaded to change my favorite team preference”. A similar question was asked in another study, which found that young respondents are more likely to remain loyal and loyalty is steady declining with age (Lock et al., 2009). Furthermore, Wann et al. (1996) asked fans to state a team they were no longer following and then give reasons for why they had stopped following that team. The most commonly reported reasons were that (1) the team was no longer successful, (2) the fans lost interest or simply did not have the time to follow the team, (3) the loss of certain players, (4) geographical reasons, and (5) the fans’ friends and family no longer followed the team. In conclusion, the stability and longevity of team identification is somewhat seen as conventional wisdom. Fans are believed to stick with their team for the rest of their lives, despite limited evidence confirming this belief.

2.4.4. Consequences of team identification

Wann (2006) also described consequences of team identification with regards to affective responses, behavioral responses and psychological well-being. In general, responses of highly identified fans are more intense than those of less identified fans (Wann, 2006). Although affective response and psychological well-being have received the most

attention from researchers (Wann & James, 2019), behavioral responses are the focus of this thesis, and consumption in particular. There is a strong correlation between team identification and game consumption (i.e., attendance and viewership), merchandise consumption as well as perceptions and patronage of sponsors' products (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Theodorakis et al., 2012; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann, 2006). In other words, these studies show that there is a positive correlation between team identification and behavioral loyalty. In fact, team identification is not only a significant independent predictor, but it may well be the most powerful factor (Wann, 2006; Wann & James, 2019). Furthermore, previous research has also found a positive correlation between team identification and attitudinal loyalty (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). In a study on French ice hockey fans Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2011) found that team identification predicted attitudinal loyalty in terms of intention to attend the team's future games.

2.5. Distant sports fans

As previously mentioned, the two previous sections consist of the historical view of sports fandom, which focus on domestic or local fans. One group of fans that was consistently excluded from early studies is distant fans. While this exclusion was sometimes conscious (Wann, 2006), in fact, domestic local fandom seemed to be simply assumed in most studies and frameworks. This is for example visible through the heavy emphasis on game attendance as a predictor of behavioral loyalty (Mahony et al., 2000), which obviously discriminates against distant fans. The assumption of fans as merely fans of local teams is not surprising, since the socialization process and geographical proximity to the team is seen as powerful factors in the origins of team identification. In addition to that, the psychological origins of team identification, such as the need for belongingness and being part of a distinctive group, are also facilitated in a local context (Wann, 2006). Historically, it has been more difficult for distant fans to connect to other fans and feel like they are part of a distinct group. Because of this, early studies of team identification claimed distant fans do not gain the same psychological benefits as fans of local teams (Wann, 2006).

During the last 15-20 years, the world of sports has drastically changed due to globalization, and so has sports fandom (Giulianotti 2002; Guttman, 2004). The prominent leagues in all big team sports in North America and Europe have in various ways increased their presence in foreign markets (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017). This has been done to cater to existing fans abroad but also to grow the team or league brand in these foreign markets. In countries in Europe or Asia, where the domestic leagues are not necessarily perceived to be as competitive as leagues abroad, there are many fans of foreign teams (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Pu & James, 2017). In conclusion, sports fandom in the 21st century transcends geographical boundaries and research on sports fans should cater to this reality. There are some studies that have looked

at distant fans, especially the work by Kerr and colleagues (Kerr & Emery, 2011a, 2011b; Kerr et al., 2011). Although these studies have focused on team identification, they have also included some concepts from the brand equity perspective, since the two perspectives are believed to share common antecedents (Kerr et al., 2011).

2.5.1. Origins of team identification for distant fans

In a study on distant fans of the Dutch football team Ajax FC, Kerr et al. (2011) found that the origins of team identification in highly identified distant fans were similar to the ones of local fans. Team-related origins, such as team reputation and tradition, the presence of certain (star) players on the team, as well as team performance were rated as the most important reasons for fans to become fans of the team. Further studies on distant fans of the English football team Liverpool FC (Kerr & Emery, 2011a, 2011b) reinforced this view. As previously mentioned, the importance of team-related origins of team identification for local fans is ambiguous. However, in the case of distant fans, these origins seem to be highly relevant.

The major difference between distant and local fans lies in the environmental factors, and particularly the socialization process. Whereas local fans are affected by the team identification of their family and friends, media is a more important socialization agent for distant fans (Kerr & Emery, 2011a, 2011b; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017). One explanation for the minor role of families the socialization process could be that many of these distant fans are 'first generation fans', i.e., their parents and other close relatives do not follow the sport (Pu & James, 2017). The 'local' aspect still has some relevance for distant fans. The importance of fellow countrymen playing on the team was highlighted by Pu and James (2017). Kerr and Emery (2011a) as well as Kerr et al. (2011) also mentioned this factor, however, not as one of the most important origins for team identification. It seems that the importance of fellow countrymen playing on the team may be as ambiguous to distant fans as the importance of team-related factors among local fans.

2.5.2. Consequences of team identification for distant fans

The behaviors of distant fans are obviously different compared to local fans, as the possibility to attend games is limited and sponsor products may not be available in foreign markets. However, distant fans still engage with the team through media by visiting different websites and regularly watching the games on television (Kerr & Emery, 2011a, 2011b; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017). In other words, the correlation between team identification and behavioral loyalty seems to work similarly for traditional and distant sports fans.

As previously mentioned, earlier studies of team identification claimed distant fans might not gain the same psychological benefits from identifying with their favorite team

compared to local fans (Wann, 2006). This difference was explained by the limited possibilities to engage with other fans as distant fans cannot attend games, or in other ways cannot get together with fellow fans. However, Kerr and Emery (2011a, 2011b) found distant fans regularly got together with fellow fans to watch the games, either at a local pub or at home. In addition to that, most distant fans interacted with fellow fans online through unofficial fan websites and websites for video highlights. The possibilities of internet and social media have created opportunities for distant fans to engage with each other and receive similar psychological benefits as local or domestic fans. When the early studies of team identification in the 1990's and early 2000's were published, the world looked different, and it is no surprise these studies were unaware of the power of the internet. Given that the development of internet and social media has continued since the studies by Kerr and his colleagues, it is likely that the importance of these communications channels have further increased.

2.5.3. Stability of team identification for distant fans

Given the absence of geographical ties, one may expect the team identification of distant fans to be lower and less stable compared to local fans. However, the connection between distant fans and their favorite team seems to be as strong and stable as local fans' identification (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011). The same studies also asked fans if they could abandon their club, to which a low number of fans agreed. Moreover, younger fans were the most likely to remain loyal and loyalty steadily declined as age increased. This is in line with the previous study on local fans by Lock et al. (2009).

It should be noted that the studies by Kerr and colleagues to a large extent consisted of highly identified distant fans. Although this was not different from other studies on fandom (e.g., Bauer et al., 2008; Lock et al., 2009; Lock et al., 2011), it does not provide the perspectives of fans with lower levels of identification. However, accessing many of these fans is seen as a great challenge (Kerr & Emery, 2011a).

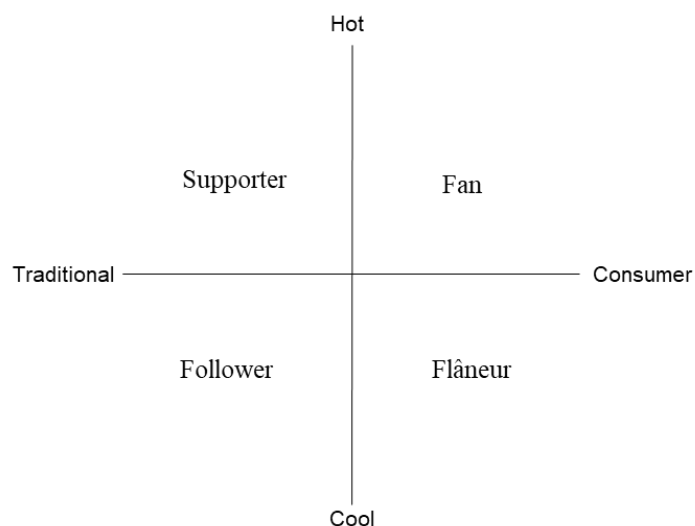
2.6. Modern sport consumers

In addition to several previous studies on sports fandom only including highly identified fans, there are other drawbacks in previous research. Most importantly, most previous studies implicitly assume, regardless of sport, that team sports fans have one single favorite team. Although Branscombe & Wann (1991) differ between identifying with the sport in general and identifying with a particular team, it is only the latter group that has been studied extensively for the past thirty years. Implicitly, fans with low or moderate levels of identification are believed to not be as invested in the sport (Wann & James, 2019). None of the studies within this field really discuss the possibilities of fans having more than one favorite team, or simply no favorite team at all. However, researchers in

other fields have looked at sports consumers and fans from other perspectives, and their conclusions differ somewhat from what has been presented up until this chapter.

2.6.1. The four types of modern sport spectators

In a groundbreaking study, Giulianotti (2002) put forward a taxonomy of four different spectator identities in football. Although his initial paper only discussed football, this taxonomy has later expanded to other modern team sports. Giulianotti (2002) looked at which different types of spectators exist in the modern world of football, which has experienced commercialization and commodification the last few decades. Commodification refers to the “process by which an object or social practice acquires an exchange value or market-centered meaning” (Giulianotti, 2002).



Adapted from Giulianotti (2002)

Figure 2. The four types of modern sport spectators

As seen in Figure 2, there are four ideal-type categories of sports spectators that differ regarding what kind of identification they have toward specific teams. Two binary oppositions underpin this model: hot-cool and traditional-consumer. The traditional-consumer axis represents the basis of the individual’s investment in a specific club. According to Giulianotti (2002), traditional spectators have a longer, more local and popular cultural identification with the team, whereas consumer-fans’ relationships to teams are more market-centered. The hot-cool axis reflects the degree to which the club is central to the individual’s project of self-formation. Hot forms of identification emphasize intense kinds of identification and solidarity with the team, whereas cool forms imply the opposite. Although Giulianotti (2002) did not refer to the team identification research himself, the hot-cool opposition could be viewed as the degree of team-identification, albeit described slightly different.

Supporters could be seen as the ‘classic fans’, and they have long-term personal and emotional investments in their favorite team. Team identification scholars would call these the highly identified fans. Followers follow teams, but they also follow players, managers, and other sports personalities. In contrast to the supporter, the follower is not bound to one team but instead switches their interest throughout the years. However, the follower understands the cultural politics of the sport and would not cheer for two rivals, e.g., Liverpool and Manchester United in football. Furthermore, the follower is not as interested as the supporter to be a part of a distinct group, i.e., the team and its surrounding community. Fans in Giulianotti’s (2002) taxonomy lean more toward having a favorite team and have a high identification with the team and its players, particularly the star players. Compared to followers, fans have a more distant, and market-driven relationship with their team and its players. Fans are likely to be distant fans, and resemble fans of leading musicians, actors and media personalities. Lastly, flâneurs similarly to followers show interest in several different teams, players and personalities, but similar to fans have a market-driven relationship to these objects. The flâneur adopts a detached relationship to teams and window-shop around clubs, which means they could simultaneously cheer for two rivaling teams. Even national allegiances may be exchanged on the grounds of competitive success or identification with star players (Giulianotti, 2002).

Giulianotti (2002) adopted a critical approach, where fans and flâneurs are the result of the commercialization and commodification of football. He believed all football spectators were moving toward becoming flâneurs, an alarming development which threatened the sport at its core (Giulianotti, 2002). Whether his views on the future of football were correct or not has been addressed by later sociologists (cf. Giulianotti, 2005; Moor, 2007; Williams, 2007) but is also outside the scope of this study. However, this taxonomy offers a great overview of sport spectators in the 21st century. The research on sports fandom presented earlier in this chapter has mostly focused on the hot/traditional spectators, i.e., supporters. The studies on distant fans, which are a few years younger, lean more toward the direction of hot/consumer spectators, i.e., fans. However, the cool types of spectators have been consistently overlooked, despite flâneurs being the type that to a large extent drives the development of modern sports (Giulianotti, 2002).

2.7. Esports fans and research propositions

As previously mentioned, what characterizes esports fandom is unknown, and it is the purpose of this study to provide a map of these fans. Since there is no knowledge on esports fans, it is difficult to deduct hypotheses based on the theoretical framework presented above. On one hand, it is possible that esports fans are similar to sports fans in regard to their fandom and its associated behaviors. This can be explained by the motives for consuming esports in general being similar to the motives for consuming traditional sports. On the other hand, the world of sports has changed a lot over the last twenty years, and many dimensions of sports fandom are still unknown (Wann & James, 2019). Most

importantly, the little existing empirical evidence about esports fans suggests that the core assumption that fans have a favorite team does not necessarily hold up in esports. This makes many aspects of the theoretical framework difficult to use, as it has this core assumption. All this together advocates for a more careful approach, which is manifested in the use of research propositions instead of hypotheses, as mentioned in the introductory chapter. While these research propositions are deducted from the theoretical framework and will be tested similarly to hypotheses, they remain open to the possibility of the data yielding results that foil some core aspects of the theoretical framework. Because of this uncertainty, additional analysis will be conducted to complement the research proposition depending on what their tests result in.

Since most esports fans are millennials or Gen Z (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017), it is likely that they exhibit a lot of the traits and attitudes of modern sports fans. The modern world of sports described by Giulianotti (2002) is the only reality esports fans have experienced themselves, since they have grown up in the commercialized and hypercommodified sports ecosystem. In addition to that, esports has developed within this world, and has been commercialized from its inception (Scholz, 2019; Thiborg, 2011). This suggests that esports fans have detached, market-oriented relationships to the sport objects they have connections to. Moreover, it also implies that esports fans consider themselves fans of multiple teams. Despite this, the traditional view of fans having a favorite team is still prevalent in society, and it has likely also transcended into esports. If asked to pick out a favorite team, esports fans would still be able to name one that stands out, which they identify with more than the others. This results in the following first two research propositions:

RP1: Esports fans consider themselves to be fans of multiple teams

RP2: Esports fans have one favorite esports team

Since localization does not exist in esports, the environmental origins should not be the main causes for esports fans' team identification. Similar to distant sports fans, friends and family do not act as socialization agents because there is no team which they identify with. Furthermore, given esports short history of existence, the esports fans are like many distant sports fans also believed to be first-generation fans. Instead, the team-related origins of team identification should be the most important origins for esports fans' team identification. This is motivated by esports fans' market-oriented relationship with the teams, including their favorite team. Furthermore, the importance of fellow countrymen playing on the team was highlighted in some of the studies on distant sports fans. This 'local' aspect is believed to be important for esports fans in terms of their origins for team identification. In conclusion, the two following research propositions regarding the origins of esports fans' team identification will be empirically evaluated:

RP3: Esports fans state team-related origins as the most important reasons for becoming fans of their favorite team

RP4: Esports fans state fellow countrymen playing on the team as an important reason for becoming fans of their favorite team

RP2 suggests that esports fans have a favorite team similar to traditional sports fans. Provided that this proposition holds up, the consequences of team identification should also work in similar ways for esports fans and traditional sports fans. In other words, esports fans' level of team identification should correlate with the level of behavioral loyalty. Highly identified esports fans should exhibit higher behavioral loyalty to their favorite team compared to lowly identified fans. This relationship should also be true for attitudinal loyalty. Connected to this loyalty is the notion of how many teams the fans consider themselves fans of (RP1). Highly identified fans should, since they exhibit high loyalty to their favorite teams, be fans of fewer teams compared to lowly identified fans. Overall, this results in three final research propositions:

RP5: Fans with high identification to their favorite team exhibit higher behavioral loyalty to their favorite team compared to lowly identified fans

RP6: Fans with high identification to their favorite team exhibit higher attitudinal loyalty to their favorite team compared to lowly identified fans

RP7: Fans with high identification to their favorite team consider themselves fans of fewer teams compared to lowly identified fans

In addition to the evaluation of RP1-7, some complementary analysis will be conducted. If fans state that they do not have a favorite team, several factors will be investigated to explain that absence of a favorite team. Furthermore, the fans' knowledge on esports teams will be analyzed. Finally, reports on esports fans show that most of them are also fans of traditional sports (Goldman Sachs, 2018). Therefore, some investigations will be done regarding the sports fandom among esports fans and how it may affect their esports fandom.

3. Methodology

In this chapter the chosen method of the study is presented. Starting with the scientific approach of the study, it is then followed by research design, procedure, sampling, survey design, variables and statistical methods. Finally, the data quality of the study is discussed.

3.1. Scientific approach

This study follows an existing body of research from sports marketing and sports psychology, which for the last thirty years has studied sports fans (Wann & James, 2019). Although this study focuses on a new phenomenon that is in some regards different from traditional sports, the study is still rooted in the existing research field and its practices. Therefore, this study has a deductive approach. This is in line with the purpose of the study, i.e., to investigate whether esports fans can be described with the frameworks on traditional sports fans. In general, esports fans are believed to share several common characteristics with traditional sports fans, which advocates for the use of existing theory, and negates an inductive approach. The research propositions have been deduced from the empirics as well as the existing body of research. Furthermore, they are constructed in a way that seeks to provide a map of esports fans and find correlations between certain variables. These propositions are evaluated through observations of esports fans, which are independent to the researcher and viewed objectively. This reflects the study's position within the positivist paradigm.⁶

3.2. Research design

For the purpose of collecting data on esports fans and their fandom, a cross-sectional quantitative method was chosen. This design follows the research tradition within the field. A qualitative or mixed method would have been interesting to get a deeper understanding of the motives and behaviors of esports fans, however, this is not the purpose of the study. Since there are existing reliable and validated measures on team identification, a quantitative method was further believed to be the most appropriate for this study. A longitudinal quantitative method would also have been interesting to investigate esports fandom over time. However, this was deemed impossible given the time frame of the study.

⁶ Given the exploratory nature of the thesis, an inductive study would have been possible instead of the chosen approach. However, the existing research on sports fandom in the field of sports marketing and sports psychology, where most of the theoretical framework derives from, uses a deductive approach rooted in the positivist paradigm. Since the thesis aims to follow the tradition within this field, the above described approach was chosen over any alternatives.

To quantitatively test the research propositions, an online, self-completion survey was believed to be the most suitable method. Self-completion surveys have been extensively used in previous studies in the field, and it is the most common method to collect data in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since esports to a large extent takes place online, it was deemed favorable for the survey to appear in the same context. Furthermore, an online survey enables data collection from a large area during a short time period. Given the sampling method presented below, this further advocated for online survey as a suitable way of collecting data in this study.

3.3. Procedure

Before the main survey was distributed, several drafts of the survey were tested on a convenience sample of students at Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), which were familiar to me and known to have an interest in CSGO esports. Although a more rigid pilot study was desirable, this was believed to be the only way to pre-test the survey without using the same distribution channel as the main survey, which would risk lowering the number of responses gathered in the main survey below a satisfactory level. The main survey was distributed online between March 10, 2020 and April 2, 2020. The survey was distributed in two different Facebook groups. Facebook groups are the main community hubs for Swedish CSGO fans and were therefore deemed appropriate as distribution channels. Other social networks and forums, i.e., Reddit, includes fans of other nationalities, and were therefore considered unfit for this study. Several previous studies on sports fandom (e.g., Bauer et al., 2008; Kerr et al., 2011; Kerr & Emery, 2011; Pu & James, 2017) have used online community hubs, such as forums and websites, which makes it a common way of collecting data in this field. Attempts were made to also distribute the survey through a few specific community personalities within Swedish CSGO, however, the responses from these influencers were negative.

3.4. Sampling and sample

Since esports fans is a difficult group to reach (Elder, 2017; Goldman Sachs, 2018), there was a need for a convenient sampling method that simultaneously ensured high quality. However, this does not imply that the sample of the study is a convenience sample. The group members of the two Facebook groups were unknown to me, and I had no ability to control which group members saw the post about the survey and in turn responded to it. In other words, all members of these two Facebook groups could answer the survey, but who was reached by it was dictated by the Facebook feed algorithm. It should be noted that there are new posts every hour in these groups, so to reach the members is not easy. Despite these difficulties, the posts about the survey generated far more interactions than the usual posts in these groups during the same time period.

In total, 520 responses were gathered, of which 210 individuals fully completed the survey. Respondents ranged in age between 14 and 51, with the average age being 22.3 years and the median age 21 years⁷. Only twelve respondents were 30 years or older. The gender distribution in the sample was 90% male (189) and 3.8% (8) female⁸. There are no available global estimates for age and gender distributions among CSGO fans, let alone for Swedish fans. However, the distribution in the sample is quite in line with global estimates of the general esports fanbase (McKinsey & Company, 2019), although a slightly larger share of female respondents could have been expected.

3.5. Survey design

The survey consisted of eleven blocks of questions. In total, there were 41 questions of different structure and length. To give an overview of the study, the different blocks are presented in Table 4. For the complete survey in Swedish, see Appendix C.

Table 4. Overview of the questionnaire

Block	# Questions	About
1		Introduction
2	3	General questions regarding the respondent's interest and skill in the game CSGO ⁹
3	1	First control question
4	4	Questions regarding the esports CSGO, including knowledge test as well as assessing the respondent's attachment to the esports
5	11	Questions regarding which CSGO teams the respondent consider themselves fans of, including which team is the favorite team, and measuring team identification if the respondent chooses a favorite team
6	7	Origins of team identification, behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty
7	1	Reasons for not having a favorite CSGO team
8	1	General CSGO behaviors
9	3	Interest and potential favorite teams in traditional sports
10	1	Individualism ¹⁰
11	9	Demographics. The respondent also got a second control question and the opportunity to rate the comprehensiveness of the study

Note: Only respondents that did not select a favorite team answered the question in Block 7.

Block 6 and the latter half of Block 5 were only for the participants that chose a favorite CSGO team.

The survey contained two different control questions, one in the beginning of the survey and one in the end. The first one was an instrumentational manipulation check (IMC) (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009) and the other one checked whether the

⁷ 15 respondents did not state their age.

⁸ 13 respondents did not state their gender.

⁹ Game skill was found to strongly deviate from global estimates of skill levels among CSGO players. This variable was subsequently excluded from further analysis.

¹⁰ The reliability for this variable was found to be below satisfactory levels. Furthermore, no correlation was found between this variable and others, and it was therefore excluded from further analysis.

respondents had understood what topic the survey concerned. Unfortunately, the answers from the IMC had to be disregarded due to a mistake in constructing the item¹¹. All 210 respondents answered the second control question correctly.

Since all respondents were believed to have Swedish as their native language, it was the chosen language for the survey. This required several existing measures on sports fandom to be translated into Swedish, but it was deemed necessary. An English survey could be perceived as confusing and overwhelming for the respondents, which in turn could affect the data quality and in general complicate the data collection process. Translation obviously risks altering the validity and reliability of these recognized measures. However, it was impossible to not change the wording of the measures to fit the context of esports. In conclusion, there was a need to adjust the measures on sports fandom to fit the context of the study, and translations were made simultaneously. To avoid misunderstandings, the survey was, as previously mentioned, pre-tested on selected individuals.

3.6. Variables

Below is a presentation of all the variables in the study and the scales used to measure these variables. Number of teams, behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, general fan behaviors and knowledge were used as dependent variables. Team identification was used both as an independent and a dependent variable. The other variables were independent variables.

Fans' connection to the esports CSGO

The fans' connection to the esports CSGO was measured using the PCM. An operationalization of the PCM from previous studies (Beaton, Funk, & Alexandras, 2009; Doyle, Kunkel, & Funk, 2013) was used. This operationalization measures the PCM through three different constructs: pleasure, centrality and sign. Each construct was measured through three different items, which used 7-point Likert-scales. All nine items were translated into Swedish, but no other alternations were required. Cronbach's Alpha for the three constructs pleasure, centrality and sign was 0.83, 0.80 and 0.73 respectively. To place respondents in one of the four PCM stages, the average score for each construct was used. Each construct average was scored as low (<4.5), medium (4.5-5.65) or high (>5.65). Depending on the score of the specific constructs, the PCM stage was then assessed according to a pre-determined decision tree (Doyle et al., 2013). For example, a medium, low, medium score in the three constructs pleasure, centrality and sign corresponded to the Attachment stage.

¹¹ Several respondents mentioned that the IMC was not optimized for answering the survey on mobile phones, but instead caused confusion.

Number of teams

The respondents were initially asked to mention all CSGO teams they considered themselves fans of. In the following question, the respondents were presented with the world's top 30 ranked CSGO teams as of March 9, 2020 (hltv.org, 2020b). They could then mark all teams they considered themselves fans of. In addition to the top 30 list, the respondents could also list additional teams which they considered themselves fans of or choose the option "I am not a fan of any CSGO team".

Favorite team

After the respondents had chosen all the teams which they considered themselves fans of, they were given a list of all these teams. Now, they were asked to among these teams pick out, if possible, the team which they considered to be their favorite team. This question also functioned as a screening question for the following questions on team identification and other variables related to the favorite team.

Team identification

Team identification was measured using two separate measures, the PCM (Funk & James, 2001) and the SSIS (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The PCM was used for comparisons with the fans' connection to the esports CSGO, and the SSIS was used to enable further analysis. Although the two measures are constructed differently, including both was believed to increase data quality. Since neither of these measures had been previously used in the esports context, it was deemed positive to be able to compare them. Regarding PCM, the same method and measure was used as in the fans' connection to the esports CSGO. The only difference was that 'CSGO' was replaced with 'favorite team' to only refer to the favorite team, and not the esports in general. Cronbach's Alpha for the three constructs pleasure, centrality and sign was 0.70, 0.93 and 0.69 respectively.

The SSIS is a unidimensional measure of team identification and it was chosen over multidimensional scales since it was believed to better fit the purpose of the study. Unidimensional measures are preferable when the goal is to investigate whether there is a psychological connection, and if so the strength of that connection (Wann & James, 2019). Moreover, the SSIS was chosen over other unidimensional measures because it is the most used measure in the field (Wann & James, 2019). Originally, the SSIS consists of seven items measured on 8-point Likert-scales. For this study, 7-point Likert-scale items were used instead, to be in line with most other scales of the survey and to ensure a distinguished mid-point. These items were translated into Swedish and slightly altered to fit the context of esports. Moreover, all points were anchored, which did not seem to be common practice for this measure in previous studies. Cronbach's Alpha for the seven item-SSIS in this study was 0.80. However, the two last items, "How much do you dislike your favorite team's rivals?" and "How often do you display your favorite team's name or symbols (e.g., logo) at work, in your home and/or on your clothes?", raised some

concerns. First, they stood out compared to the other five items as they were phrased differently. Second, in retrospect, they did not fit the context of esports. Third, reliability analysis showed an improved alpha if these items were removed. In conclusion, this led to these two items being excluded, which resulted in a new Cronbach's Alpha of 0.85 for the five-item SSIS. This five-item SSIS was subsequently used in analysis.

Origins of team identification

This variable consisted of twelve 7-point Likert scale items. One item, "I learned a lot about the game by watching the team play", was derived from previous research on motives for esports consumption (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). The other items, such as "I liked one or more players on the team" and "Friends were fans of the team" were derived from previous research on team identification (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Wann et al., 1996; Wann, 2006).

General fan behaviors

General fan behaviors or activities related to CSGO esports were measured through seven items, all using 7-point Likert scales. These items were derived from previous research (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011) and altered to fit the context of esports and CSGO. Examples of items included were "Visit online forums" or "Follow my favorite players on social media". Cronbach's Alpha for these items was 0.85, and the measure was subsequently indexed.

Behavioral loyalty

Fan behaviors connected to the respondents' favorite teams, i.e., behavioral loyalty, were measured using seven 7-point Likert scale items. Four items were similar to the items for general fan behaviors, albeit phrased differently to include only behaviors related to the favorite team. The other three items were retrieved from previous studies (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011). Examples of items included were "Watch team highlights on YouTube" or "Buy team merchandise". Cronbach's Alpha for these items was 0.78, and the measure was subsequently indexed.

Attitudinal loyalty

Attitudinal loyalty was measured through eight items, all using 7-point Likert scales. These items concerned factors that could potentially make the fans stop being fans of their favorite team. Examples of items used were "My favorite player(s) leaves the team" or "The team stops being successful". These eight items were derived from previous research (Wann et al., 1996) and largely mirror the origins of team identification. However, attitudinal loyalty has not been measured in this way in previous studies. Previous studies have for example used single item measures (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011) or repurchase intent (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011). However, these were believed to not fit the context of esports or to have limited validity. In other words,

this measure was believed to better capture the construct for the esports context. Cronbach's Alpha for these eight items was 0.76, and the measure was subsequently indexed.

Years as fan

This variable captured for how many years the respondents had been fans of their favorite team. This was measured using a single item. Fans that had been fans of their favorite team less than one year were coded as zero years.

Absence of favorite team

This variable only treats respondents that chose the option "I am not a fan of any team" when asked about which CSGO teams they considered themselves fans of, or that chose "I do not have a favorite team" when asked to pick out their favorite CSGO team. These respondents were asked about why they did not have a favorite CSGO team. Seven different factors were listed, and the respondents could mark multiple factors. To some extent, these items mirrored the items included in origins of team identification and attitudinal loyalty. Examples of items included were "I am more interested in the players" or "I support multiple teams equally". The respondents also had the option to list additional factors.

Knowledge

The respondents were given a list of half of the teams from the world's top 30 ranked CSGO teams as of March 9, 2020 (hltv.org, 2020b). The teams included both teams at the top and the bottom of the rankings. The respondents then assessed how well they knew about these teams in terms of players, coach, logo, playstyle, history, tournament wins, etc. These items were measured using a 7-point Likert-scale. Cronbach's Alpha for these fifteen items was 0.94, and the measure was subsequently indexed.

Interest in traditional sports

A list of thirteen different traditional sports was given to the respondents. These sports were arbitrarily chosen based on their popularity in terms of viewership among the supposed demographic, i.e., Swedish adolescents and young adults. The respondents also had the possibility to add other traditional sports they were interested in, or state "I am not interested in traditional sports". Interest was only measured binarily, i.e., respondents simply marked the different sports they were interested in.

Favorite team in traditional sports

For the respondents that stated their interest in any team sports, a follow-up question captured which team(s) was their favorite team(s) in that sport (those sports).

Demographics

The demographic variables measured in this study include age, occupation, education level, monthly income and if the respondents had any children. Gender was also measured but excluded from further analysis given the unequal gender distribution in the sample (see 3.4 Sampling and sample).

3.7. Statistical methods

The data from the survey was processed and analyzed using the statistical analysis software IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Before statistical analysis was conducted, data checks were done on all variables. This resulted in e.g., the variable game skill being excluded (see 3.5 Survey design), but no cases were excluded from further analysis. The aim of the analysis was to test the research propositions, as well as conduct the additional analyses mentioned in 2.7. Esports fans and research propositions. Descriptive statistics were also assessed for most variables. Parametric tests (Independent samples t-test) were used to test several research propositions. Although one could argue for the use of non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U-test) for variables derived from Likert scales, initial analysis showed no difference when using these tests instead of parametric tests. Furthermore, given the sample sizes, normality tests were not deemed necessary. However, one non-parametric test (Wilcoxon Signed Rank test) was used on one occasion.

3.8. Data quality

Within quantitative research, data quality concerns are assessed through the three constructs reliability, validity and replicability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). These three constructs are addressed below.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Two prominent factors of reliability are stability and internal reliability. Stability assesses whether a measure remains stable over time, i.e., if two observations of the same sample in the same context, but on different occasions, yield the same result. As mentioned in 2. Theory, previous research on team identification has proved it to be a stable trait (Lock et al., 2014; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann, 2006). Regarding the two loyalty measures, several studies have yielded similar results regarding the relationship between these two variables and team identification (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Wann & James, 2019). This indicates at least moderate stability for these measures.

Internal reliability is used to determine whether multiple-indicator measures are consistent in measuring the same variable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To ensure internal reliability within this study, the measures were tested using Cronbach's Alpha and a

general rule of 0.70 was used as acceptance level. Cronbach's Alpha for each relevant variable is presented above in 3.6 Variables.

Validity

Validity concerns the integrity of the conclusions drawn (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since the research design of this study was not experimental, and therefore not concerned with causality, the validity criterion in focus is measurement validity. Two major aspects of measurement, or test validity are content validity and construct validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Content validity reflects to which extent a measure represents all aspect of a given construct or domain (Markus & Smith, 2012). Since esports is a new phenomenon, and there is minimal knowledge on esports fans, assessing content validity is no simple task. On one hand, esports is believed to be similar to traditional sports. This implies that the well-established measures used in this study, with previously proven validity, should capture the intended constructs. On the other hand, there are differences between esports and traditional sports, and how they differ in the context of fandom is unknown. Furthermore, to use the judgment of SMEs (subject matter experts), which is a common method for assessing content validity, is difficult in this context. Since there are no previous studies on esports fans, arguably no one can claim to be an expert on esports fandom. Sports fandom researchers have great knowledge on these measures in the context of traditional sports, but their knowledge on esports is believed to be limited. In conclusion, the content validity of the measures used in this study is believed to be fair given the context of a new, previously unstudied phenomenon. However, as this field of research develops, future studies should have a more rigorous approach in assessing content validity.

Construct validity refers to if a test measures what it claims to be measuring (Markus & Lin, 2012). Usually, this is assessed through statistical methods such as factor analysis. Since the purpose of this study is not to develop new measures on fandom, the value of performing these methods was not believed to justify the work required to conduct them. Furthermore, this study used measures which have been developed through at least two decades of research, and previously established validity. Therefore, the measures used in this study are believed to have captured the intended concepts.

Replicability

Replicability concerns the process of replicating a study in order to disprove or support its findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To ensure the replicability of this study, the methods used as well as the data analysis were documented in detail. Furthermore, this study used well-established measures from the field of sports fandom research. In conclusion, the study is believed to ensure sufficient replicability.

4. Results & analysis

In this chapter, the collected empirical data is presented and analyzed.¹² Each research proposition is investigated. The chapter ends with additional observations which are not covered by the research propositions

4.1. Fans' connection to the esports CSGO

As shown in Table 5, the respondents varied in their connection to the esports CSGO according to the PCM, denoted PCM_{CSGO} . A majority of respondents belonged in the two lower stages, which implied they were lowly to moderately invested in CSGO. However, looking at other measures paints a slightly different picture. The respondents exhibit great knowledge of the top CSGO teams ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.18$). This contradicts the results from PCM_{CSGO} , as one would expect less involved fans to exhibit less knowledge on the teams. Moreover, the respondents regularly take part in fan activities related to CSGO ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.87$). Descriptive statistics for each behavior are shown in Table 6.

Table 5. Respondents' connection to the esports CSGO (PCM_{CSGO})

PCM stage (N = 210)	Frequency	%
Awareness	44	21.0
Attraction	74	35.2
Attachment	57	27.1
Allegiance	35	16.7

Table 6. Descriptive statistics on respondents' general CSGO fan behaviors

Behaviors (N = 210)	Mean	SD
Watch highlights	3.42	1.10
Read general news about CSGO esports	3.32	1.22
Follow my favorite players on social media	3.31	1.48
Watch games online	3.27	0.99
Watch other players or personalities streams	3.17	1.11
Watch my favorite player(s) stream(s)	3.03	1.06
Visit online forums	2.52	1.24

Note: Scale 1-5 for each item (1 = Never, 5 = Daily).

4.2. Fans' connections to multiple teams

Figure 3 shows frequencies for the number of teams the respondents consider themselves fans of. On average, the respondents consider themselves fans of 2.89 teams ($SD = 2.14$). The three most popular teams were Fnatic (112 fans), Ninjas in Pyjamas (110) and

¹² The presentation of the results in this section follows the APA-format.

Dignitas (72). It should be noted that, despite being a new team and outside the top 30 rankings, Dignitas had the third most fans in the sample. For frequencies of all teams, see Table B1 in Appendix B. Out of the 210 respondents, there were 46 respondents who considered themselves fans of only one team. In addition to that, 13 respondents did not consider themselves fans of any team. In total 71.9% of respondents considered themselves fans of two or more CSGO teams, as visualized in Figure 3. This provided support for RP1, in other words, esports fans consider themselves fans of multiple teams¹³.

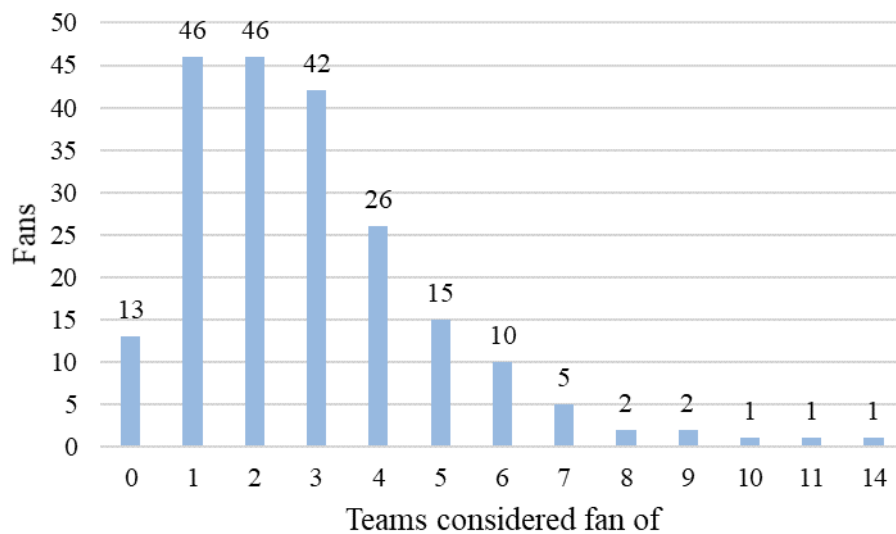


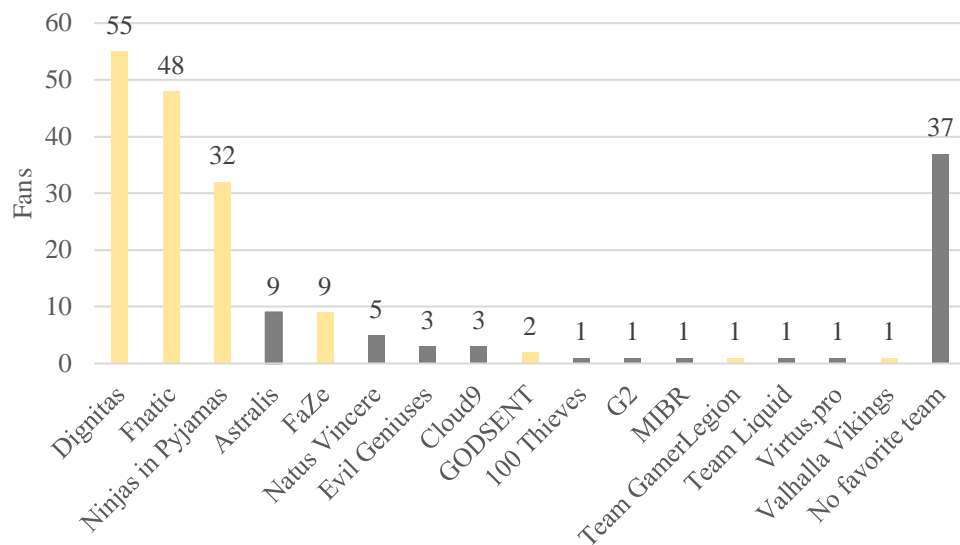
Figure 3. Frequencies for the number of teams that fans considered themselves fans of

4.3. Favorite teams

4.3.1. Selecting a favorite team

When the respondents chose their favorite team, the top three teams remained the same, albeit in a different order (Figure 4). Overall, the distribution of favorite teams mirrored the distribution of which teams the respondents considered themselves fans of. The major difference was that most teams with few fans had no fans that considered this team to be their favorite team. In addition to the 13 respondents which did not consider themselves fans of any team, 24 additional respondents could not pick out a favorite team among the teams they chose earlier, resulting in 37 (17.6%) respondents with no favorite team. These respondents were excluded from further analysis. The fact that 174 respondents (82.4%) had a favorite CSGO provided support for RP2, i.e., esports fans have a favorite esports team.

¹³ The term ‘multiple’ is obviously ambiguous in terms of which numbers it represents. However, here ≥ 2 teams were deemed as an adequate representation of multiple teams.



Note: Light bars denotes teams that had at least one Swedish player

Figure 4. Frequencies for the respondents' favorite CSGO teams

The respondents have been fans of their favorite team for an average of 3.34 years ($N = 169$, $SD = 3.43$). However, this average is heavily deflated by the 55 Dignitas fans who have only been fans of that team for less than one year¹⁴. Excluding these fans paints a slightly different picture ($N = 114$, $M = 4.95$, $SD = 3.03$). Most Dignitas fans also stated that they previously had Ninjas in Pyjamas as their favorite team when the current Dignitas players were playing for that team.

4.3.2. Team identification

Table 7 shows the respondents connection to their favorite team according to the PCM, denoted PCM_{TEAM} . There was a significant correlation ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$) between PCM_{CSGO} and PCM_{TEAM} . Furthermore, the distribution among the different stages did not differ between PCM_{CSGO} and PCM_{TEAM} . A Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test showed no significant difference between the two measures ($Z = -0.955$, $p = 0.368$).

Table 7. Respondents' connection to their favorite team (PCM_{TEAM})

PCM stage (N = 173)	Frequency	%
Awareness	31	17.9
Attraction	64	37.0
Attachment	48	27.7
Allegiance	30	17.3

¹⁴ This is a consequence of the team only having been in existence since January 2020, see 1. Introduction.

In addition to PCM_{CSGO} , the respondents' team identification was also measured through the SSIS. Similar to PCM_{TEAM} , the respondents exhibited varied identification with their favorite team according to the SSIS ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.24$). There was a positive correlation between SSIS and PCM_{TEAM} ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). However, as Figure 5 shows, the variabilities in the three first stages were very similar. Furthermore, there were respondents with very high SSIS scores at all PCM stages. Since SSIS is a continuous variable, it was deemed more suitable for further analysis. Therefore, team identification refers to SSIS for the rest of this chapter if not stated otherwise.

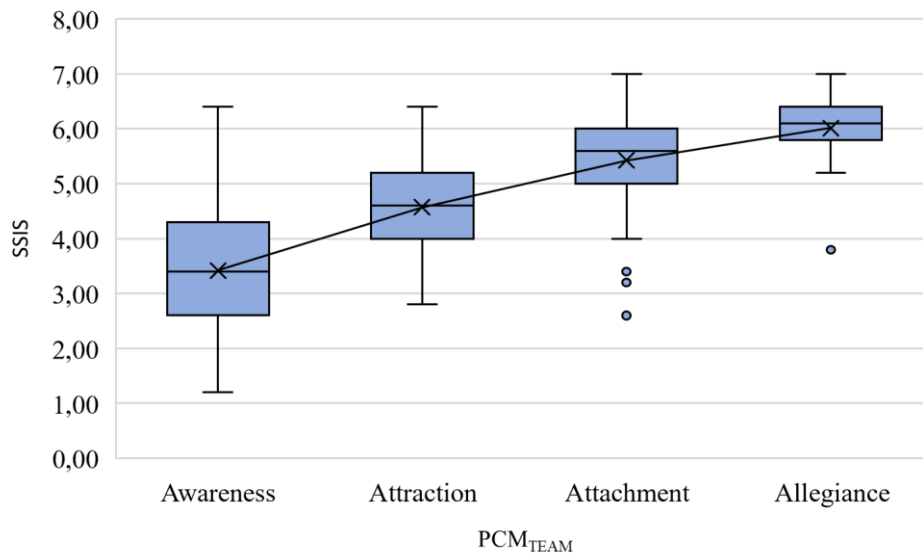


Figure 5. Boxplot of SSIS by PCM_{TEAM}

4.3.3. Origins of team identification

Table 8 lists the twelve items regarding the reasons for why the respondents became fans of their favorite team, i.e., the origins of team identification. Several different origins were deemed important by the respondents. Team-related origins, such as liking one or more players on the team as well as team's playstyle were rated highest. Other team-related origins, such as team coach, logo, and partners seemed to have low to moderate impact. Team success and history, two other team-related origins, was ranked somewhere between these two groups. In conclusion, two of the team-related origins were rated highest overall. Although some other team-related origins received low scores, the findings proved support for RP3, which suggested esports fans state team-related origins as the most important factors for becoming fans of their favorite team.

Furthermore, the respondents on average rated a Swede playing for the team as the third most important factor. This provided support for RP4, i.e., esports fans rate fellow countrymen playing on the team as an important origin. In addition to that, the origin team representing my country was also rated on a similar level.

Table 8. Respondents' reasons for originally becoming a fan of their favorite team

Origin (N = 173)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
I liked one or more players on the team	91.4	7.5	6.2	1.51
I liked the team's playstyle	83.8	6.4	5.94	1.54
A Swede played for the team	80.9	16.8	5.86	2.15
I learned a lot about the game by watching the team play	82.1	9.8	5.68	1.74
The team represents my country/region	76.9	19.1	5.65	2.28
The team was successful	76.3	16.8	5.29	1.91
Team history and reputation	72.3	16.2	5.45	1.92
I liked the team's logo	52.6	30.1	4.47	2.18
I liked the team's coach	39.3	32.4	4.08	2.14
My friends were fans of the team	35.3	50.9	3.25	2.13
The team had well-renowned partners	24.3	52.6	3.16	2.25
My family were fans of the team	6.4	89.0	1.47	1.28

Note: Scale range 1-7 for each item. Agree equals 5-7 and Disagree 1-3.

4.4. Team identification and loyalty

4.4.1. Highly and lowly identified fans

A median split of team identification, with regards to SSIS (Mdn = 5.00) was performed to generate a low identification group (N = 86, M = 3.83, SD = 0.85) and a high identification group (N = 87, M = 5.86, SD = 0.54).

4.4.2. Behavioral loyalty

Similar to the items regarding general CSGO fan behaviors, the respondents received seven items on activities or behaviors related to their favorite team. In any case, most of these items were difficult to gain high scores on compared to the general fan activities. Regardless, descriptive statistics for each item in the two fan groups are shown in Table 9. For descriptive statistics on the full sample, see Table B2 in Appendix B. The indexed measure, i.e., behavioral loyalty, was 2.65 (N = 173, SD = 0.65) for the sample as a whole, and 3.05 (N = 87, SD = 0.46) and 2.24 (N = 86, SD = 0.53) for the highly and lowly identified fans respectively.

There was a significant correlation ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$) between team identification and behavioral loyalty. An independent sample t-test between the highly and lowly identified groups was conducted to investigate RP5. On average, the highly identified fans exhibited higher behavioral loyalty compared to the lowly identified group ($t(171) = 10.781$, $p < 0.001$), which provided support for RP5.

Table 9. Respondents' behaviors related to their favorite team

Behaviors	High group (N = 87)		Low group (N = 86)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Follow the team on social media	4.53	0.73	2.88	1.35
Read news about the team online	3.97	0.88	2.85	0.95
Watch the team's games online	3.72	0.61	3.09	0.88
Watch team highlights	3.72	0.76	2.81	0.95
Meet other fans of the team	1.91	1.10	1.36	0.72
Buy products or services from team partners	1.76	0.85	1.33	0.66
Buy team merchandise	1.67	0.71	1.33	0.74

Note: Scale 1-5 for each item (1 = Never, 5 = Daily).

4.4.3. Attitudinal loyalty

For attitudinal loyalty, the respondents received eight different items regarding what could make them stop being a fan of their favorite team. Table 10 shows descriptive statistics for each item in both fan groups. For descriptive statistics of the entire sample, see Table B3 in Appendix B. Please note that a low number denotes agreeing with that factor making the fans abandon their favorite team. For example, favorite players leaving the team has the lowest average in both groups. This means that most fans think this factor could make them stop being fans of their favorite team. In other words, a high number indicates attitudinal loyalty, similarly to behavior loyalty. The average attitudinal loyalty, i.e., the indexed measure, was 4.82 for the entire sample (N = 173, SD = 1.17), and 5.11 (N = 87, SD = 1.10) and 4.54 (N = 86, SD = 1.17) for the highly and lowly identified fans respectively.

Table 10. Potential reasons to stop being a fan of the favorite team

Reasons to stop being a fan	High group (N = 87)		Low group (N = 86)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
My favorite player(s) leave the team	3.20	2.29	3.34	2.11
I lose my interest in CSGO	4.29	2.17	3.02	2.07
I get less time to follow the team	4.67	2.02	4.14	2.04
The team is affected by scandals	4.84	1.91	4.36	1.96
Controversial partners get linked to the team	5.47	1.82	5.08	1.86
The team stops being successful	5.84	1.77	4.91	1.91
The team becomes less successful	6.01	1.67	5.13	1.80
My friends stop being fans of the team	6.55	1.13	6.36	1.25

Note: Scale range 1-7 for each item. Agree equals 1-3 and Disagree 5-7.

There was a significant correlation between team identification and attitudinal loyalty ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$). An independent sample t-test between the highly and lowly identified groups was conducted to investigate RP6. On average, the highly identified fans exhibited higher attitudinal loyalty compared to the lowly identified fans ($t(171) = 3.264$, $p = 0.001$), which provided support for RP6.

4.4.4. Number of teams

As mentioned in 4.2 Fans' connection to multiple teams, the average fan in the entire sample considered themselves to be fan of 2.89 teams ($N = 210$, $SD = 2.14$). For the highly and lowly identified fans, the averages were 3.08 teams ($N = 87$, $SD = 2.08$) and 2.81 teams ($N = 86$, $SD = 1.86$) respectively. In other words, fans who had a high identification considered themselves fans of more teams compared to the lowly identified fans. However, this difference was not found to be significant ($t(171) = 0.890$, $p = 0.375$). Furthermore, the correlation between team identification and number of teams was not significant at the 0.01 level ($r = 0.17$, $p = 0.022$). These results did not support RP7, i.e., fans with higher identification considered themselves fans of fewer teams.

4.5. Other observations

4.5.1. Further comparisons between highly and lowly identified fans

Table 11 lists additional variables and tests that were performed between the two fan groups but lie outside the research propositions. Regarding knowledge and general CSGO fan behaviors, significant differences were found between the two groups. On average, the highly identified group had more knowledge and exhibited these behaviors more often compared to the lowly identified fans. For number of years as a fan as well as age, no significant differences were found. However, as mentioned in 4.3.1 Selecting a favorite team, the variable number of years as a fan was heavily affected by the large number (55) of Dignitas fans in the sample. Regardless, an independent sample t-test where the Dignitas fans were excluded still did not show a difference between the highly and lowly identified fans ($t(112) = 1.688$, $p = 0.094$).

Table 11. Independent sample t-tests between highly and lowly identified fans

Variable	High group	Low group	t	df	p
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Knowledge	5.73 (0.90)	5.16 (1.19)	3.612	171	<0.001*
Years as fan	3.19 (3.53)	3.49 (3.53)	-0.575	167	0.556
General CSGO fan behaviors	3.74 (0.65)	2.71 (0.70)	10.094	171	<0.001*
Age	22.21 (4.68)	22.51 (5.54)	-0.375	164	0.708

Note: Knowledge and general CSGO fan behaviors are indexed measures of 7-point Likert scale items, i.e., range from 1 to 7. Years as fan and age are denoted in years.

The nominal demographic variables occupation, marital status, education level and if the respondents had any children were also compared between groups, however, none of these variables could be tested. Since none of them upheld the assumption of 80% of expected frequencies > 5 , χ^2 -tests were impossible to execute. Crosstabulations between these variables and the two fan groups also did not indicate differences that suggested

alternation of the categories to fit the assumption of χ^2 -tests. In conclusion, the sample seemed to be homogeneous in terms of demographics.

4.5.2. Absence of a favorite team

As mentioned in 4.3. Favorite teams, 37 respondents (17.6%) stated that they currently had no favorite CSGO team. Table 12 shows the respondents reasons for not having a favorite team. Although the sample size for this question was small, there were some insights. Fans without a favorite team seemed to be split in their fandom between multiple teams and players, or not that involved in CSGO esports.

Table 12. Reasons for not having a favorite team

Reasons for not having a favorite team (N = 37)	Frequency
I support multiple teams equally	14
I am more interested in the players	13
I do not follow CSGO intensively	12
I am just interested in the actual games	9
I just want to see nice plays	9
I am more interested in another esports/a traditional sport	5
I am not interested in the CSGO teams	2
Other	3

Note: Respondents could fill in 1-8 reasons, M = 1.81 reasons.

4.5.3. Esports fans' interest in traditional sports

Table 13 shows the respondents' interest in different traditional sports. Respondents could state interest in multiple sports. 188 out of 210 respondents were interested in at least one traditional sport (M = 2.51, SD = 1.80). In total, 31 different sports were listed. More than half of the respondents stated interest in either football or ice hockey. Of these 188 sports fans, there were 169 respondents who stated interest in at least one team sport. Twelve of these team sports fans did not have any favorite team. Out of all 210 respondents, 53 lacked a favorite team in traditional sports for various reasons. Table 14 shows a crosstabulation of favorite team in CSGO and traditional sports. The numbers in parentheses denote the share within each group and should only be read horizontally. In other words, the share of fans that had a favorite team in traditional sports was roughly the same in the group with a favorite CSGO team and the one without a favorite CSGO team. This implied that favorite team in traditional sports was not correlated with favorite team in CSGO.

Table 13. Frequency table on respondents' interest in traditional sports

Sports	Frequency
Football	123
Ice hockey	110
Mixed martial arts (MMA)	51
Skiing (alpine, biathlon, cross-country)	35
Boxing	31
Basketball	27
American football	24
Golf	17
Handball	17
Tennis	15
Bandy	16
Track & Field	14
Floorball	13
Motorsports	9
Equestrian sports	2
Other*	25

Note: Floorball, motorsports, and all sports in 'Other' were not listed but filled in by the respondents. The 'Other' category includes 16 different sports with 1-3 fans per sport.

Table 14. Crosstabulation between favorite team in traditional sports and CSGO

		Favorite team in traditional sports		
		No	Yes	Total
Favorite team in CSGO	No	11 (29.7)	26 (70.3)	37
	Yes	42 (24.3)	131 (75.7)	173
Total		53	157	210

5. Discussion

The conclusions of the study are presented in this section, summarizing key points related to the purpose of the thesis. The chapter then presents a discussion on the findings, which is divided into different themes corresponding to the results section and the research propositions. The section highlights the theoretical contribution of the thesis and its implications for practitioners. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed as well as suggestions for future research.

5.1. The map of esports fans

The purpose of this study was to empirically investigate esports fans. As the first study in this area, the main contribution was expected to be an initial map of the fans within this new phenomenon. Previous research on traditional sports fans served as a theoretical framework. However, given the lack of existing knowledge on esports fans, research propositions were used instead of hypotheses to analyze and test the collected empirical data. As shown in the previous section, six out of seven research propositions were supported by the data. These findings contribute to the map of esports fans and are discussed below. Furthermore, the study also sought to investigate whether the frameworks on traditional sports fans could be applied to esports fans to understand their fandom. The findings indeed showed that these concepts derived from traditional sports could be applied in an esports setting. In other words, it is possible to study esports fans using similar frameworks as in traditional sports, although the findings and derived conclusions may differ. Although it is still unknown whether other aspects of these frameworks apply to esports, the findings of this study are good first steps in trying to understand esports fans through the team identification perspective and its related concepts.

In addition to these two overarching conclusions, there are several key findings, which provide a more detailed view of esports fandom. These key findings relate to the purpose of the study and in turn, the research propositions. All key findings are presented here and discussed in detail below.

- Esports fans consider themselves fans of multiple teams. This contradicts the traditional view of sports fans as fans of a single team (Wann & James, 2019). However, it also confirms previous empirical knowledge on esports fans and is in line with the conceptual view of modern sports fans as fans of multiple teams (Giulianotti, 2002).
- Esports fans have a favorite team. Despite esports fans considering themselves fans of multiple teams, the connection to one team stands out in some way. In other words, the notion about the favorite team has transcended from traditional sports into esports.

- Team-related origins are the most important origins for esports fans' team identification. This is in line with previous research on distant sports fans (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017).
- Fellow countrymen playing on the team is also rated as an important origin. Although this origin had an ambiguous role in previous studies (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017), it was rated highly in this study.
- Team identification predicts both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. In other words, fans with high identification to their favorite team exhibit higher behavioral and attitudinal loyalty compared to lowly identified fans. This is in line previous research on traditional sports fans (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann, 2006).
- The few fans without a favorite team were equally split in their allegiance to multiple teams, which also relates to the conceptual view of modern sports consumers (Giulianotti, 2002).
- Previously discovered flaws with the operationalization of the PCM (Wann & James, 2019) were confirmed in this study. The measure should be revised for future studies.

5.1.1. Fans of multiple teams and the notion of the favorite team

Although previous research on fandom in traditional sports was used to derive the research propositions, two of its core assumptions were challenged and investigated in this study. The first one concerned the notion of fans being fans of only one team, since sports fandom scholars traditionally, and still to a large extent, have thought of sports fans as fans of one single team (Wann & James, 2019). Recent developments in the world of traditional sports suggest that many modern fans consider themselves fans of multiple teams (Giulianotti, 2002), however, few studies have empirically investigated this matter. Regarding esports, the notion of fans being fans of multiple teams was believed to be the norm. This was motivated by the young fanbase in esports and the fact that it has been commercialized since its inception (Thiborg, 2011). The research proposition which suggested esports fans are fans of multiple teams (RP1) was supported in this study.

Since no recent studies on traditional sports have yet investigated this issue in a similar way, the findings of this study contrast the existing research on sports fandom. Despite the findings overall supporting the notion of multiple teams, no correlation between number of teams and team identification was found (RP7). This means that there was no significant difference between fans with high and low identification to their favorite team regarding how many teams they supported. In conclusion, esports fans overall consider themselves fans of multiple teams.

Fans being fans of multiple teams does not necessarily imply that these fans do not have a favorite team. Within sports fandom research, the notion of the favorite team has been,

and still to a large extent is, a core assumption (Wann & James, 2019). This was the other assumption which was challenged in this study. The limited existing theoretical and empirical knowledge on this matter in the esports context resulted in a careful approach throughout the study where this notion was not assumed. The research proposition suggested esports fans had a favorite team (RP2), but the study remained open to the possibility of the results pointing in a different direction. Regardless, the findings provided support for the notion of the favorite team within esports, since only a small minority of fans did not state a favorite team.

Similar to previous studies on traditional sports fans, the fans exhibited varying identification with their favorite team where some fans had a high identification to their favorite team, while others were lowly identified. No difference was found between these two groups in terms of how long they had been fans of their favorite team. Overall, the findings showed support for the notion of the favorite team within esports being similar to that of traditional sports. Furthermore, team identification was found to be an appropriate concept to measure esports fans' connection to their favorite team.

5.1.2. The origins of team identification

As mentioned in 2. Theory, previous studies on the origins of team identification have found many different causes for fans to identify with their team. The results have been contradictory, as some origins have been assigned different levels of importance in different contexts. Given the limited knowledge on esports fans, it was a difficult task to assess which origins would be rated important in this context. However, because esports fans, similarly to distant sports fans lack local ties to their favorite teams, environmental origins were believed to not be important. Instead, emphasis should be on the team-related origins (RP3). Indeed, the results indicated that some team-related origins, i.e., liking a particular player on the team and the team's playstyle, were rated as the most important reasons for the fans to originally become fans of their team.

These origins being highly rated is in line with previous studies on distant sports fans (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017). Similarly, environmental origins, such as family and friends being fans of the team, were not rated as important factors. As with distant sports fans, this is possibly explained by the lack of localization, as well as most esports fans being first-generation fans. Overall, the findings further suggest that in absence of local ties, some team-related origins will be the most plausible reasons for fans to choose a favorite team.

A large majority of the fans stated one of the three big Swedish teams as their favorite team. This connects to the other research proposition on origins of team identification, which stated that esports fans would rate fellow countrymen playing on the team as an important origin (RP4). Since this origin was rated third overall, the findings indicate it is indeed important. It is, however, important to note that all origins are interconnected,

and this is not addressed in the study. For example, it is unknown why the fans like certain players on the team. It could be because they are Swedish, because they appreciate their skills, or because these players are among the best in the world, etc. This study has highlighted several origins that were believed to be important by the fans in this context. The relative importance between these origins, their interconnections and deeper meanings need to be addressed in future studies.

5.1.3. Team identification and loyalty

The research propositions suggested fans with high identification toward their favorite team would be more loyal compared to lowly identified fans, both in terms of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (RP5 and RP6 respectively). The findings provided support for both these propositions, which meant that there was a positive correlation between team identification and loyalty in esports, similarly to traditional sports. In other words, team identification can be used to predict both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in esports as well as in traditional sports. A significant difference between highly and lowly identified fans was found in the general fan behaviors. This is unsurprising, since the items included in this measure resemble or overlap with the items included in behavioral loyalty.

Previous studies on traditional sports fans have taken fandom for granted, i.e., assumed that fans stick with their team for the rest of their lives (Wann & James, 2019). This study challenged the fans on their attitudinal loyalty by conceptualizing it as likelihood to stop being fans of the favorite team. This generated interesting findings regarding which factors could make fans stop being fans of their favorite team. Favorite players leaving the team or the fan losing their interest in esports were the two reasons that stood out, which mirrors the origins of team identification. Although both groups exhibited relatively high attitudinal loyalty, the fact that the loss of certain players could make fans switch their allegiances is a worrying sign for practitioners. The case of Dignitas, with most fans in the sample, who also had Ninjas in Pyjamas as their former favorite team, shows that roster changes can result in fans choosing a new favorite team.

5.1.4. Absence of a favorite team

As previously mentioned, studies on traditional sports fans have assumed that sports fans have a favorite team. This may explain why no previous study has investigated fans without a favorite team. Although only one question in this study addressed this topic and the sample size was small, it contributes to the map of esports fans. The fans without a favorite team supported multiple teams equally or were more interested in the players. This reflects the views of Giulianotti (2002) with followers and flâneurs, the two ideal types of sports consumers without a favorite team. I, however, support the view of Wann and James (2019), which argues further research on these types of fans is required to better understand their motives.

5.1.5. Team identification measures

For this study, two measures on team identification were used, the PCM and the SSIS. The PCM was also used to measure the fans' connection to the esports overall. Since these measures neither had been tested on esports fans nor translated into Swedish, they carried some uncertainty. Therefore, both measures were used to ensure team identification was measured in an appropriate way. The findings showed that both measures captured the fans' team identification, but some concerns arose regarding the PCM. More than half of the fans with a favorite team were placed in the two lower stages of the model. According to theory, this should not be possible, since team identification only occurs at the two latter stages (Wann & James, 2019). Despite this, previous studies, which have operationalized the model have also placed fans with a favorite team in the two lower stages (Doyle et al., 2013; Pu & James, 2017). According to Wann and James (2019), up to 20% of respondents could be placed in the wrong stages. These scholars are also overall critical towards the operationalization and suggest that revisions should be made. In this study, there was a correlation between fans' scores on the PCM and the SSIS, however, respondents with high SSIS scores were found at all PCM stages. This suggests that one of the measures is worse at capturing team identification. Given that SSIS has been more extensively used in previous studies, and the recognized flaws with the operationalized PCM, it is likely the latter that could use some revisions in future studies.

5.2. Theoretical contribution and managerial implications

The theoretical contribution of this study arguably consists of four different parts. First, this thesis provides an empirical map of esports fans; what they are fans of, what characterizes their fandom and which behaviors are associated with it. Since this is the first study on esports fans, future research should be able to use the conclusions of this thesis as a foundation for their studies. Second, this study contrasts existing theory which states that traditional sports fans are fans of a single team. As previously mentioned, the esports fans in this study were found to be fans of multiple teams. If these findings are endemic to esports or could be found in traditional sports fans is unclear, however, for the time being this is supposedly a difference between the two phenomena. Third, this study shows that, despite fans being fans of multiple teams, the notion of the favorite team derived from traditional sports holds up in esports. Furthermore, identification with the favorite team was found to predict both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. In other words, at least this aspect of fandom works similarly in both esports and traditional sports. Fourth, this team identification has developed due to team-related factors such as liking a player on the team or liking the team's playstyle. This is in line with previous research on distant sports fans (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017) and strengthens the view that in absence of local ties, team-related factors will be the most important origins for team identification. The importance of fellow countrymen playing on the team was also highlighted in this study, which has had an ambiguous role in

previous studies (Kerr & Emery, 2011a; Kerr et al., 2011; Pu & James, 2017). Further studies on the origins of team identification are necessary to deepen our understanding of how identification forms in 21st century fans.

For managers and other practitioners within esports, the conclusions of this study have high relevance. As mentioned in 1. Introduction, esports teams need to understand their fanbase in order to create brand equity and build strong fan relationships. Given esports development over the last decade, and its expected growth in the 2020's, the importance of a strong fanbase will only increase. Although the average esports fan considers themselves a fan of multiple teams, there is still one team that is the favorite team. For the esports teams, this is good news, as it proves it is possible to build a fanbase around the team. In addition to that, the fans with higher identification to the team are more loyal to it. This accounts for team-related fan behaviors as well as likelihood of abandoning the team. However, team management should be careful when building the team brand since esports fans seem to be closely connected to their favorite players. This leaves the teams with two options, either hold on tight to their star players, or focus the team brand on other attributes. Which one of these two strategies is the most appropriate is not answered by this study, but requires future research.

5.3. Limitations

The main limitation of this study is its focus on Swedish CSGO fans. Although the thesis consistently refers to esports fans, the conclusions of this study and its implications are limited to the chosen population. Fans of other esports titles or CSGO fans in other countries may well exhibit different characteristics than the fans included in this study. Given the at times contradictory knowledge on traditional sports fans from different contexts, it is plausible that the same occurs in esports. Further studies should address this by conducting similar research in different contexts.

An additional concern is the size and representativeness of the sample. Since fandom is a complex issue with many possible differences within a population (Wann, 2006; Wann & James, 2019), it is necessary for studies on fans to have proper samples. There are no publicly available estimates on the population of Swedish CSGO fans, which makes it difficult to truly assess the size and representativeness of the sample in this study. Since esports still lacks a lot of the organization and structure that exists in traditional sports (Scholz, 2019), it is difficult to get an overview of the population, let alone access them. The Facebook groups used for sampling consist of fans of CSGO esports as well as individuals who are only interested in the game CSGO. This is obviously not optimal, however, no other plausible sampling method was deemed to be better than the one used in the study. While it is possible that a larger and more representative sample could be achieved, the sample in this study is believed to be of adequate size and representativeness.

5.4. Suggestions for future research

Since this study is the first on esports fans, there are many possibilities for future research. Connected to the limitations of this study, future studies should conduct similar investigations of esports fans in other contexts. Swedish CSGO fans are in general fans of the Swedish CSGO teams, which all have a history of success. Other countries, e.g., Germany, do not have single-nationality teams, let alone among the top teams of the world. Which teams the fans in these countries are fans of, and what the characteristics of those connections look like, is still to be discovered. Similarly, future studies on fans of other esports titles would be interesting to investigate if these fans are different compared to CSGO fans.

Future studies should also look closer at the origins of team identification to better understand how and why fans form a connection to their favorite team. As previously mentioned, the interconnections between the different origins were not addressed in this study. Swedish CSGO fans have the Swedish teams as their favorites, however; would the situation be the same if these teams did not have a history of success? Do the fans like the players of the team because of their skills, because they are Swedish or both? These questions should be addressed in future research to further develop our understanding of the origins of team identification.

5.5. Concluding remarks

On April 24, 2020, toward the end of this research process, Dignitas and Ninjas in Pyjamas (NiP) faced off in the qualification for the next CSGO major. This was the first encounter between these teams after Dignitas rebuilt their roster with the five former NiP-players. The current Ninjas in Pyjamas squad won the series convincingly 2-0 (Liquipedia, 2020b). In fact, Dignitas has not been very successful since the team's formation earlier this year, and the team is dead last in its qualification group. It is unknown whether the fans who switched favorite team from NiP to Dignitas regret their decision. Fortunately for Dignitas, the conclusions of this study suggest that they are unlikely to abandon their new team as a result of poor performance. Given the history of the Dignitas players and the fans' connection to them, the team will probably have a strong fanbase as long as the current roster remains intact.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)

As mentioned in 1.1 Background, CSGO is the fourth title in the *Counter-Strike* series. The first *Counter-Strike* game was originally released in 1999 as a community developed modification of the game *Half-Life*, which was in turn developed by Valve (Scholz, 2019; Wikipedia, 2020a). In 2000, Valve acquired the IP rights to *Counter-Strike* from the original developers and released the game as a standalone title (Scholz, 2019; Valve, 2017). This first game is commonly referred to as *Counter-Strike 1.6* (CS 1.6) to distinguish it from the other games in the series, where 1.6 denotes the last updated version to the game. The sequels *Counter-Strike: Condition Zero* and *Counter-Strike: Source* (Source) were both released in 2004 but did not receive as warm of a reception as their predecessor (Wikipedia, 2020a). In fact, the release of Source caused a divide in the competitive community as to which game to play. Many players still preferred CS 1.6 over Source, despite the latter being superior in terms of graphics (Scholz, 2019; Wikipedia, 2020b). In 2012, the fourth title of the series, CSGO, was released. Although initial reviews criticized several aspects of the game, after many improvements to the game were made by Valve, CSGO established itself as the prime *Counter-Strike*-title, both for casual and competitive play (Valve, 2017).

Throughout the series' two decades of existence, the fundamental aspects of the game have not changed (Valve, 2017). CSGO, as well as its predecessors, is a first-person shooter (FPS) game, where two teams of five players compete for different objectives (Wikipedia, 2020a). Several different maps are used to play on, all with different pathing and buildings. Within the competitive game mode, the two teams are called Terrorists and Counter Terrorists (Fandom, 2019; Mitchell, 2018). The Terrorists' objective is to plant and set off a bomb at one of two possible locations, and the Counter Terrorists need to defuse the bomb before it explodes. The team that completes its objective wins the round, although it is also possible to win by killing all members of the opposing team (Fandom, 2019). At the end of each round, players are granted rewards for their performance, which can be spent on weapons, grenades and armor. Teams must strategize about whether to upgrade their gear immediately or save money for future rounds (Mitchell, 2018). After the first fifteen rounds, the teams switch sides, i.e., within one game both teams play as Terrorists and Counter-Terrorists. The first team to win 16 rounds wins the game, however, similarly to many traditional sports, there is potential overtime. In the case of a tie after 30 rounds, overtime is played as best of six rounds (Fandom, 2019). Although the fundamentals of the game have not changed for twenty years and are easier to grasp compared to many other esports, the game requires immense skills. Furthermore, it is a complex game with a large focus on strategy, teamwork and coordination (Mitchell, 2018).

Immediately after its release in 1999, *Counter-Strike* was recognized as a highly competitive game, with tournaments being hosted since 2000. The first major tournament was Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL), which was held in Dallas, Texas with a \$150,000 prize pool. The winners of this tournament were the Swedish team Ninjas in Pyjamas (Wikipedia, 2020b). Throughout the 2000's, multiple tournaments and leagues were held, although CPL remained the most notable (Mitchell, 2018). After twenty years of competitions, CSGO remains, as mentioned in 1.1 Background, one of the largest and most popular esports titles. Multiple third-party organizations host their own leagues and tournaments with various formats and rules (Elder, 2017). In addition to that, there are two majors each year, which are tournaments sponsored by Valve. These semiannual tournaments are considered to be the most prestigious within CSGO (Liquipedia, 2020a). Each major is preceded by several Valve-sponsored minors, which act as qualifiers.

As previously mentioned, *Counter-Strike* has historically not been popular in Asia compared to other esports titles. This is reflected in which countries the successful CSGO teams and players originate from. One way to measure this is through prize money won, where no Asian country is found among the top ten countries (Esports Earnings, 2020b). Table A1 shows the countries with most prize money won in CSGO. Eight of the countries below are also found in the ten most successful countries in CS 1.6 (Esports Earnings, 2019), which show these countries' success throughout the history of *Counter-Strike*. The Nordic countries in particular are, and have been, very successful throughout the history of the game as shown in Table A1. During the CS 1.6 era, Sweden was the top country in terms of prize money won (Esports Earnings, 2019), and several Swedish players from that era, such as Emil "HeatoN" Christensen and Tommy "Potti" Ingemarsson, are still considered to be among the best players of all time (Liquipedia, n.d.a, n.d.b). During the early years of CSGO, the Swedish dominance continued with the Swedish teams Ninjas in Pyjamas and Fnatic winning many tournaments, including the first majors. The last few years, the Danish team Astralis has been very successful, e.g., by winning the last three majors (Liquipedia, 2020a).

Table A1. Top ten countries for CSGO in terms of prize money won

Country	Prize money (\$k)	# Players
Denmark	14,477	443
US	10,716	1908
Sweden	10,091	824
Brazil	7,736	569
France	6,632	633
Poland	5,754	475
Russia	4,272	606
Canada	4,077	463
Ukraine	2,823	160
Finland	2,627	160

Adapted from (Esports Earnings, 2020b)

Appendix B. Additional results

Table B1: Frequency table of which teams the respondents considered themselves fans of

Team	Number of fans
Fnatic*	112
Ninjas in Pyjamas*	110
Dignitas*	72
FaZe*	55
Astralis	48
Natus Vincere	45
Cloud9	22
Team Liquid	19
GODSENT*	16
ENCE	17
100 Thieves	12
G2	11
Mousesports	10
Vitality	10
Evil Geniuses	8
OG	7
Virtus.pro	7
CompLexity	6
North	5
MIBR	3
BIG	2
forZe	2
GenG	1
FURIA	1
MAD Lions	1
Renegades	1
Team GamerLegion*	1
Team Spirit	1
TYLOO	1
Valhalla Vikings*	1
No team	13

Note: Dignitas, Team GamerLegion and Valhalla Vikings were not listed alternatives but filled in separately by the respondents. Three teams, Heroic, HAVU and c0ntact, had no fans among the respondents.

*Denotes teams that have at least one Swedish player.

Table B2. Respondents' behaviors related to their favorite team

Activity (N = 173)	Often (%)	Rarely (%)	Mean	SD
Follow the team on social media	61.9	21.4	3.71	1.36
Read news about the team online	49.1	19.7	3.41	1.07
Watch the team's games online	48.6	11.6	3.47	0.87
Watch team highlights	44.5	20.2	3.27	0.97
Meet other fans of the team	6.4	79.8	1.64	0.97
Buy products or services from team partners	2.9	90.8	1.54	0.79
Buy team merchandise	2.4	93.1	1.50	0.74

Note: Scale 1-5 for each item (1 = Never, 5 = Daily). Often equals 4-5 and Rarely 1-2.

Table B3. Potential reasons to stop being a fan of the favorite team

Reasons to stop being a fan (N = 173)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
My favorite player(s) leave the team	62.4	27.1	3.27	2.20
I lose my interest in CSGO	57.8	33.0	3.66	2.21
I get less time to follow the team	39.9	43.9	4.40	2.04
The team is affected by scandals	30.0	46.7	4.60	1.94
The team stops being successful	20.2	70.5	5.38	1.89
The team becomes less successful	18.5	73.6	5.57	1.79
Controversial partners get linked to the team	16.8	62.3	5.28	1.85
My friends stop being fans of the team	3.5	89.6	6.46	1.18

Note: Scale range 1-7 for each item. Agree equals 1-3 and Disagree 5-7.

Appendix C. Copy of questionnaire

The questionnaire is presented here in its original disposition. Please note that the layout of most questions has been altered, but no revisions have been made to wording etc. This means that the number of questions per page does not correspond to how the survey was viewed by the respondents. Moreover, the layout of matrix questions has been altered, and here the scale points are presented first, with the questions or statement presented underneath. All matrix questions are marked with footnotes to highlight this change. Likert scale items are noted with the scale point numbers in parenthesis. Questions are bolded for the purpose of clarity.

Q1.1 Svenska supportrar i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)

Hej,

Syftet med denna undersökning är att få fördjupad kunskap och insikter om supporterskap i esporten Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). Formuläret ser kanske omfattande ut, men det tar inte särskilt lång tid att besvara; ca 15 minuter. Dina svar är helt och hållet anonyma och kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt.

Fundera inte alltför länge över frågorna. Om någon fråga tycks svår att besvara, försök ändå. Även ett osäkert svar är bättre än inget alls. Tre presentkort från Maxgaming kommer att lottas ut till deltagare som besvarat undersökningen. I slutet av undersökningen får du information om hur du deltar i lotteriet. Studier av detta slag är knappa så missa inte chansen att bidra. Tack på förhand för din medverkan! Jakob Hammarskjöld (23560@student.hhs.se)

Q2.1 Först kommer ett antal frågor om *spelet* Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). Välj det alternativ som stämmer bäst in på dig.

Q2.2 Jag har ett intresse för *spelet* Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)

- ☐ Stämmer absolut inte (1)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett inte (2)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen inte (3)
- ☐ Osäker (4)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen (5)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett (6)
- ☐ Stämmer absolut (7)

Q2.3 Hur ofta spelar du Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)?

- ☐ Varje dag (1)
- ☐ Ett par gånger i veckan (2)
- ☐ Ett par gånger i månaden (3)
- ☐ Ett par gånger om året (4)
- ☐ Aldrig (5)

Q2.5 Min nuvarande ranking i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO) är:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Silver 1 (S1) | <input type="radio"/> Master Guardian Elite (MGE) |
| <input type="radio"/> Silver 2 (S2) | <input type="radio"/> Distinguished Master Guardian (DMG) |
| <input type="radio"/> Silver 3 (S3) | <input type="radio"/> Legendary Eagle (LE) |
| <input type="radio"/> Silver 4 (S4) | <input type="radio"/> Legendary Eagle Master (LEM) |
| <input type="radio"/> Silver Elite (SE) | <input type="radio"/> Supreme Master First Class (SMFC) |
| <input type="radio"/> Silver Elite Master (SEM) | <input type="radio"/> Global Elite (GE) |
| <input type="radio"/> Gold Nova 1 (GN1) | <input type="radio"/> Jag har ingen rank |
| <input type="radio"/> Gold Nova 2 (GN2) | <input type="radio"/> Vet ej |
| <input type="radio"/> Gold Nova 3 (GN3) | |
| <input type="radio"/> Gold Nova Master (GNM/GN4) | |
| <input type="radio"/> Master Guardian 1 (MG/MG1) | |
| <input type="radio"/> Master Guardian 2 (MG2) | |

Q3.1 Vänligen klicka på det fjärde alternativet från vänster.

Klicka inte på något annat alternativ.

Denna fråga är enbart för att exkludera slumpmässigt ifyllda svar och för att säkerhetsställa att du har läst instruktionerna ordentligt.

- ☐ Stämmer absolut inte (1)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett inte (2)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen inte (3)
- ☐ Osäker (4)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen (5)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett (6)
- ☐ Stämmer absolut (7)

Q4.1 Nu följer ett antal frågor om *esporten* Counter-Strike:Global Offensive (CSGO).

Med *esport* menas organiserade tävlingar mellan lag. Att t.e.x. titta på streamers på Twitch räknas alltså *inte* som *esport* i detta sammanhang.

Q4.2 Jag har ett intresse för *esporten* Counter-Strike:Global Offensive (CSGO)

- ☐ Stämmer absolut inte (1)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett inte (2)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen inte (3)
- ☐ Osäker (4)
- ☐ Stämmer troligen (5)
- ☐ Stämmer i stort sett (6)
- ☐ Stämmer absolut (7)

Q4.3 Nedan listas ett antal *slumpmässigt* valda Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)-lag från hltv.orgs topp-30 världsranking. Organisationerna kan ha lag i andra esporter också samt välkända

streamers knutna till sig, men denna fråga rör enbart CSGO-lagen. Hur väl känner du till dessa organisationers CSGO-lag?¹⁵

Med "hur väl känner du till" menas hur väl du vet om lagets spelare, coach, logga, spelstil, historia, vilka turneringar de har vunnit etc.

Inte alls / Har aldrig hört talas om (1) Mycket lite (2) Ganska lite (3) Lite (4) Något (5) Ganska väl (6) Mycket väl (7)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Astralis | <input type="radio"/> ENCE (9) |
| <input type="radio"/> Mousesports | <input type="radio"/> Ninjas in Pyjamas (10) |
| <input type="radio"/> Fnatic | <input type="radio"/> GODSENT (11) |
| <input type="radio"/> Evil Geniuses | <input type="radio"/> Cloud9 (12) |
| <input type="radio"/> Natus Vincere | <input type="radio"/> FURIA (13) |
| <input type="radio"/> Vitality | <input type="radio"/> North (14) |
| <input type="radio"/> FaZe | <input type="radio"/> TYLOO (15) |
| <input type="radio"/> 100 Thieves | |

Q4.4 Nedan finns ett antal påståenden om ditt intresse för *esporten* Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). För varje påstående, välj det alternativ som stämmer bäst överens med dig¹⁶.

Stämmer absolut inte (1) Stämmer i stort sett inte (2) Stämmer troligen inte (3) Osäker (4) Stämmer troligen (5) Stämmer i stort sett (6) Stämmer absolut (7)

¹⁵ Matrix question.

¹⁶ Matrix question.

- Att titta på CSGO är något av det mest glädjande jag vet (1)
- Jag gillar att titta på CSGO (2)
- Jämfört med andra aktiviteter, är det intressant att titta på CSGO (3)
- Mycket av mitt liv är organiserat runt att följa CSGO (4)
- Att följa CSGO har en central roll i mitt liv (5)
- Mycket av min tid organiseras runt att följa CSGO (6)
- Att följa CSGO säger mycket om vem jag är (7)
- Man kan säga mycket om en person genom att se den titta på CSGO (8)
- När jag tittar på CSGO kan jag vara mig själv (9)

Q5.1 Vänligen lista alla Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)-lag som du håller på.

Q5.2 Nedan visas, i alfabetisk ordning, alla Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)-lag i hltv.orgs topp 30-världsränkning. Vilket eller vilka av dessa lag håller du på? Du kan ange ett eller flera lag

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 Thieves | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astralis | <input type="checkbox"/> Heroic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BIG | <input type="checkbox"/> MAD Lions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cloud9 | <input type="checkbox"/> MIBR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complexity | <input type="checkbox"/> Mousesports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c0ntact | <input type="checkbox"/> Natus Vincere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> Ninjas in Pyjamas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evil Geniuses | <input type="checkbox"/> North |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FaZe | <input type="checkbox"/> OG |
| <input type="checkbox"/> forZe | <input type="checkbox"/> Renegades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fnatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Liquid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Team Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GenG | <input type="checkbox"/> TYLOO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GODSENT | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FURIA | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtus.pro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAVU | <input type="checkbox"/> Annat |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> ☒ Jag håller inte på något lag |

Q5.3 Nedan listas alla lag du i förra frågan markerade att du håller på. Vilket av dessa lag är ditt absoluta favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Jag har inget favoritlag | |
| <input type="radio"/> 100 Thieves | <input type="radio"/> Heroic |
| <input type="radio"/> Astralis | <input type="radio"/> MAD Lions |
| <input type="radio"/> BIG | <input type="radio"/> MIBR |
| <input type="radio"/> Cloud9 | <input type="radio"/> Mousesports |
| <input type="radio"/> Complexity | <input type="radio"/> Natus Vincere |
| <input type="radio"/> c0ntact | <input type="radio"/> Ninjas in Pyjamas |
| <input type="radio"/> ENCE | <input type="radio"/> North |
| <input type="radio"/> Evil Geniuses | <input type="radio"/> OG |
| <input type="radio"/> FaZe | <input type="radio"/> Renegades |
| <input type="radio"/> forZe | <input type="radio"/> Team Liquid |
| <input type="radio"/> Fnatic | <input type="radio"/> Team Spirit |
| <input type="radio"/> G2 | <input type="radio"/> TYLOO |
| <input type="radio"/> GenG | <input type="radio"/> Vitality |
| <input type="radio"/> GODSENT | <input type="radio"/> Virtus.pro |
| <input type="radio"/> FURIA | <input type="radio"/> Annat |
| <input type="radio"/> HAVU | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Jag håller inte på något lag |

**Q5.4 Nedan följer ett antal påståenden om ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO).
Vänligen välj det alternativ som bäst överensstämmer med varje påstående.¹⁷**

Stämmer absolut inte (1) Stämmer i stort sett inte (2) Stämmer troligen inte (3) Osäker (4) Stämmer troligen (5)
Stämmer i stort sett (6) Stämmer absolut (7)

¹⁷ Matrix question.

- Att titta på mitt favoritlag i CSGO är något av det mest glädjande jag vet
- Jag gillar att titta på mitt favoritlag i CSGOs matcher
- Jämfört med andra aktiviteter, är det intressant att titta på mitt favoritlag i CSGO
- Mycket av mitt liv är organiserat runt att följa mitt favoritlag i CSGO
- Att följa mitt favoritlag i CSGO har en central roll i mitt liv
- Mycket av min tid organiseras runt att följa mitt favoritlag i CSGO
- Att följa mitt favoritlag i CSGO säger mycket om vem jag är
- Man kan säga mycket om en person genom att veta vilket favoritlag i CSGO hen har
- När jag tittar på mitt favoritlag i CSGO kan jag vara mig själv

Q5.5.1 Nedan följer ett antal frågor om ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). Vänligen välj det alternativ som bäst överensstämmer med varje fråga.

Hur viktigt är det för dig att ditt favoritlag i CSGO vinner?

- ☐ Mycket oviktigt (1)
- ☐ Ganska oviktigt (2)
- ☐ Något oviktigt (3)
- ☐ Varken viktigt eller oviktigt (4)
- ☐ Något viktigt (5)
- ☐ Ganska viktigt (6)
- ☐ Mycket viktigt (7)

Q5.5.2 Hur starkt ser du dig själv som en supporter till ditt favoritlag i CSGO?

- ☐ Inte alls (1)
- ☐ I någon liten mån (2)
- ☐ I viss mån (3)
- ☐ Varken mycket eller lite (4)
- ☐ I ganska hög grad (5)
- ☐ I mycket hög grad (6)
- ☐ I ytterst hög grad (7)

Q5.5.3 Hur starkt ser dina vänner dig som en supporter till ditt favoritlag i CSGO?

- ☐ Inte alls (1)
- ☐ I någon liten mån (2)
- ☐ I viss mån (3)
- ☐ Varken mycket eller lite (4)
- ☐ I ganska hög grad (5)
- ☐ I mycket hög grad (6)
- ☐ I ytterst hög grad (7)

Q5.5.4 Hur viktigt är det för dig att hålla på ditt favoritlag i CSGO?

- ☐ Helt oviktigt (1)
- ☐ Ganska oviktigt (2)
- ☐ Något oviktigt (3)
- ☐ Varken viktigt eller oviktigt (4)
- ☐ Något viktigt (5)
- ☐ Ganska viktigt (6)
- ☐ Mycket viktigt (7)

Q5.5.5 Hur nära följer du ditt favoritlag i CSGO via något av följande a) live (LAN) eller streams (t.ex. Twitch) b) nyhetssidor eller diskussionsforum online c) sociala medier?

- ☐ Aldrig (1)
- ☐ Några gånger om året (2)
- ☐ Flera gånger om året (3)
- ☐ Några gånger i månaden (4)
- ☐ Flera gånger i månaden (5)
- ☐ Några gånger i veckan (6)
- ☐ Dagligen (7)

Q5.5.6 Hur mycket ogillar du de största rivalerna till ditt favoritlag i CSGO?

- ☐ Ogillar inte alls (139)
- ☐ Ogillar i någon liten mån (140)
- ☐ Ogillar i viss mån (141)
- ☐ Ogillar varken mycket eller lite (142)
- ☐ Ogillar i ganska hög grad (143)
- ☐ Ogillar i mycket hög grad (144)
- ☐ Ogillar i ytterst hög grad (145)

Q5.5.7 Hur ofta visar du upp ditt favoritlag i CSGOs namn eller symboler (t.ex. logga) på din arbetsplats/skola, i ditt hem och/eller på dina kläder?

- ☐ Aldrig (1)
- ☐ Några gånger om året (2)
- ☐ Flera gånger om året (3)
- ☐ Några gånger i månaden (4)
- ☐ Flera gånger i månaden (5)
- ☐ Några gånger i veckan (6)
- ☐ Dagligen (7)

Q6.1 Hur många år har du hållit på ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)?

Q6.2 Nedan följer ett antal påståenden om varför du började hålla på ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). För varje påstående, välj det alternativ som bäst överensstämmer för dig.¹⁸

Stämmer absolut inte (1) Stämmer i stort sett inte (2) Stämmer troligen inte (3) Osäker (4) Stämmer troligen (5) Stämmer i stort sett (6) Stämmer absolut (7)

¹⁸ Matrix question.

- En/flera spelare jag gillar spelade i laget
- Laget var framgångsrikt
- Lagets rykte och historia
- Jag gillade lagets logga
- Jag gillade lagets spelstil
- En svensk spelade i laget
- Min familj supportade laget
- Mina vänner supportade laget
- Laget hade välkända sponsorer
- Jag gillade lagets coach
- Laget representerar mitt land/region
- Jag lärde mig mycket av spelet genom att titta på lagets matcher

Q6.3 Om du vet någon annan anledning till varför du började hålla på ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO) kan du ange den här:

Q6.4 Nedan följer ett antal anledningar som kan få en person att sluta hålla på sitt favoritlag. Vänligen ange hur väl dessa påståenden skulle kunna få dig att sluta hålla på ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO).¹⁹

Stämmer absolut inte (1) Stämmer i stort sett inte (2) Stämmer troligen inte (3) Osäker (4) Stämmer troligen (5) Stämmer i stort sett (6) Stämmer absolut (7)

¹⁹ Matrix question.

- Min(a) favoritspelare lämnar laget
- Laget slutar vara framgångsrikt
- Laget blir mindre framgångsrikt än vad det är nu
- Jag får mindre tid att följa laget
- Jag tappat intresset för Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)
- Mina vänner slutar hålla på laget
- Laget drabbas av skandaler
- Kontroversiella sponsorer kopplas till laget

Q6.5 Om du vet någon annan anledning som skulle kunna få dig att sluta hålla på ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO) kan du ange den här:

Q6.6 Nedan listas ett antal supporteraktiviteter kopplat till ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO). Vänligen ange hur ofta du vanligtvis deltar i dessa aktiviteter.

Aldrig (6) Några gånger om året (7) Några gånger i månaden (8) Några gånger i veckan (9) Dagligen (10)

- ☐ Tittar på mitt favoritlags matcher online, på t.ex. Twitch
- ☐ Läser nyheter om mitt favoritlag online
- ☐ Tittar på highlights om mitt favoritlag, på t.ex. Youtube
- ☐ Träffar andra supportrar till mitt favoritlag
- ☐ Köper merchandise från mitt favoritlag
- ☐ Köper produkter eller tjänster från mitt favoritlags sponsorer
- ☐ Följer mitt favoritlag på sociala medier

Q6.7 Har du sett ditt favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO) spela live, dvs. under en LAN-turnering?

- ☐ Ja, mer än en gång
- ☐ Ja, en gång
- ☐ Nej

Q7.1 Varför har du inte ett favoritlag i Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO)?

- ☐ Jag supportar flera lag lika mycket
- ☐ Jag följer inte CSGO intensivt
- ☐ Jag är inte intresserad av CSGO-lagen
- ☐ Jag är mer intresserad av spelarna
- ☐ Jag är mer intresserad av en annan esport/traditionell sport
- ☐ Jag är bara intresserad av själva matcherna
- ☐ Jag vill bara se snyggt spel
- ☐ Övrigt

Q8.1 Nedan följer ett antal supporteraktiviteter kopplat till esporten Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO) överlag. Vänligen ange hur ofta du vanligtvis deltar i dessa aktiviteter.²⁰

Aldrig (70) Några gånger om året (71) Några gånger i månaden (72) Några gånger i veckan (73) Dagligen (74)

- ☐ Tittar på matcher (med andra lag än mitt favoritlag) online, på t.ex. Twitch
- ☐ Besöker diskussionsforum
- ☐ Läser nyheter om andra lag än mitt favoritlag eller esporten CSGO i allmänhet
- ☐ Tittar på highlights (från andra lag än mitt favoritlag), på t.ex. Youtube
- ☐ Tittar på min(a) favoritspelares stream(s)
- ☐ Tittar på andra spelares eller personligheters streams
- ☐ Följer min(a) favoritspelare på sociala medier

Q9.1 Nu följer lite övriga frågor.

Nedan listas, i alfabetisk ordning, ett antal populära traditionella sporter. Markera de sporter du följer och/eller är intresserad av. Om du är intresserad av någon annan sport än de listade kan du ange den sporten under alternativet "Övrigt".

²⁰ Matrix question.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amerikansk fotboll | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bandy | <input type="checkbox"/> MMA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basket | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridsport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxning | <input type="checkbox"/> Skidsport (alpint, längdskidor, skidskytte) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fotboll | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friidrott | <input type="checkbox"/> Övrigt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jag är inte intresserad av traditionell sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handboll | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ishockey | |

Q9.2 Nedan visas alla sporter du i förra frågan uppgav att du är intresserad av.

För lagsporter: i vilken av dessa sporter har du ett favoritlag?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amerikansk fotboll | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bandy | <input type="checkbox"/> MMA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basket | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridsport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxning | <input type="checkbox"/> Skidsport (alpint, längdskidor, skidskytte) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fotboll | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friidrott | <input type="checkbox"/> Övrigt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jag är inte intresserad av traditionell sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handboll | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ishockey | |

Q9.3 Vilket eller vilka lag är dina favoritlag i traditionell sport?

Q10.1 Människor i vårt samhälle tenderar att ha olika uppfattning om i vilken utsträckning enskilda individer ska tillåtas ta beslut för egen del. Nedan följer ett antal påståenden om detta. Vänligen välj det alternativ som bäst överensstämmer med din uppfattning.²¹

Stämmer absolut inte (1) Stämmer i stort sett inte (2) Stämmer troligen inte (3) Osäker (4) Stämmer troligen (5) Stämmer i stort sett (6) Stämmer absolut (7)

²¹ Matrix question.

- ☐ Staten lägger sig i vårt vardagsliv alldeles för mycket (1)
- ☐ Ibland behöver staten stifta lagar som förhindrar folk från att skada sig själva
- ☐ Det är inte statens sak att försöka skydda folk från sig själva (3)
- ☐ Staten borde sluta tala om för folk hur de ska leva sina liv (4)
- ☐ Staten borde göra mer för att öka samhällsnyttan, även om det innebär att begränsa individens frihet och val
- ☐ Staten bör begränsa individuella val för att undvika att dessa kommer i vägen för samhällets bästa

Q11.1 Slutligen, några korta frågor om dig.

Jag är:

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Kvinna
- ☐ Annat
- ☐ Vill ej uppge

Q11.2 Jag är född år:

Q11.3 Jag är:

- ☐ Ensamboende
- ☐ Sambo
- ☐ Gift
- ☐ Frånskild
- ☐ Änka/änkling
- ☐ Inneboende hos föräldrar

Q11.4 Har du barn?

- ☐ Ja, tre eller fler
- ☐ Ja, två barn
- ☐ Ja, ett barn
- ☐ Nej, jag har inga barn

Q11.5 Vilken är din högst slutförda utbildning?

- ☐ Grundskola
- ☐ Gymnasiet
- ☐ Eftergymnasial utbildning, mindre än tre år
- ☐ Eftergymnasial utbildning, tre år eller mer
- ☐ Forskarutbildning

Q11.6 Vad är din huvudsakliga sysselsättning?

- ☐ Heltidsanställd
- ☐ Deltidsanställd
- ☐ Egenföretagare
- ☐ Arbetslös, söker arbete
- ☐ Arbetslös, söker inte arbete
- ☐ Pensionär
- ☐ Student

Q11.7 Vad är din månatliga inkomst före skatt?

- ☐ Mindre än 10 000 kr
- ☐ 10 000 – 20 000 kr
- ☐ 20 000 – 30 000 kr
- ☐ 30 000 – 40 000 kr
- ☐ 40 000 – 50 000 kr
- ☐ Mer än 50 000 kr
- ☐ Vet ej / Vill ej uppge

Q11.8 Vad handlade denna undersökning om?

- ☐ Counter-Strike:Global Offensive (CSGO) (1)
- ☐ Banklån (2)
- ☐ Hundar (3)
- ☐ Tågresor (4)

Q11.9 Avslutningsvis önskas du besvara följande frågor om enkäten och undersökningen.

	Nej, absolut inte (1)	Nej, i stort sett inte (2)	Tveksamt (3)	Ja, i stort sett (4)	Ja, absolut (5)
Var frågorna tydligt formulerade? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Var svarsalternativen tydligt formulerade? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anser du att frågorna försökte påverka dina svar i någon riktning (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11.10 Tack för att du deltagit i denna undersökning!

För att vara med i utlottningen av presentkort, **högerklicka** på denna länk och öppna i en ny flik. Länken tar dig till en ny undersökning där du ombeds fylla i din mailadress.

Anledningen till att detta görs i en separat enkät är för att garantera din anonymitet.

GLÖM INTE ATT KLICKA PÅ PILEN NERE TILL HÖGER FÖR ATT AVSLUTA UNDERSÖKNINGEN. Återigen, stort tack!