The Impact of the Interaction Effect of Gender and Genre on the Drivers Behind Esports Gameplay Intention

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In line with the growing interest in esports, Jang and Byon (2020a) developed the Esports Consumption (ESC) model examining factors associated with esports gameplay. The model includes six determinants: hedonic motivation, habit, price value, effort expectancy, social influence, and flow. Recently, studies investigating the relative impact of these determinants on esports gameplay intention by moderators such as genre (i.e., imagination, physical enactment, and sport simulation; Jang & Byon, 2020b) and gender (Jang & Byon, in press) further lent credence to the utility and applicability of the ESC model as a useful framework to understand esports gameplay behavior. Although gender and genre have been a significant focus in esports gameplay intention and its drivers, there may be a need to examine their interactive effects. These effects help to establish specific boundary conditions for esports consumer behavior. For instance, the interaction effect allows a comparison between male fans who play the physical enactment genre and female fans who play the imagination genre in terms of the relative influence of the drivers on gameplay intention. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the interaction effects of gender and genre and drivers behind esports gameplay intention.

A total of 20 items adopted from the ESC model were used to measure the six constructs. A two-way MANOVA was conducted to determine the impact of six groups (male-imagination (MI), male-physical enactment (MP), male-sport simulation (MS), female-imagination (FI), female-physical enactment (FP), and female-sport simulation (FS)) on the drivers. Participant requirements included experience with consuming esports gameplay. One hundred cases from each group (N = 600) were collected from M-Turk. There was no issue with multivariate normality and homogeneity of covariance matrices. According to Pillai’s trace, there was a significant effect on the interaction of gender and genre on the drivers, $V = .26$, $F (100, 2895) = 1.59$, $p < .001$.

As a follow-up, a discriminant function analysis was examined to break down the linear combination of outcome variables (the six drivers) in more detail. The findings presented five discriminant functions. The first discriminant function (49.5% of the variance) distinguished MI, MP from FP, FS. The second function (21.7%) distinguished MS, FI from MI, MP, FP, FS. FI (third function, 12.5%), MP (fourth function, 11%), and FP (fifth function, 5.3%) were distinguished from other groups. Effort expectancy (loaded the highest on the first discriminant function), followed by hedonic motivation (second), habit (third), flow (fourth), price value (fifth), and social influence weighted on the first, second, and third functions. In terms of the combination of the functions, all five of them statistically differentiated the six groups. By testing the interaction effects of gender and genre, we empirically uncovered the differences in triggers of esports gameplay intention, broadening our understanding of different types of esports consumers. The findings would help practitioners better segment esports consumers, which would be of value to esports marketers. With this segmentation, esports marketers provide more tailored marketing strategies to appeal to esports consumers.