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스포츠 매니지먼트 석사 학위논문

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF  
ESPORTS AS A SPORT IN KOREA

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**Abstract**

# INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ESPORTS AS A SPORT IN KOREA

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South Korea is at the forefront of eSports. From StarCraft back in the

1990's to League of Legends in 2018, Korea is considered to be the center of eSports. With the rise of eSports comes the question of how it can be considered as a sport, and how can it be included in the Olympics. One aspect of sports, particularly those in the Olympics is institutionalization. This research attempts to understand how Korea is institutionalizing eSports as a Sport particularly in the aspects of a) development of rules and regulations b) development of expertise c) formalization of training and d) emergence of governing bodies. It also seeks to understand the success factors and challenges that is faced in the process of institutionalization of esports as sport.

Experts in the field of eSports were sought for their opinion on the matter. A series of interviews, document studies and a Delphi approach was used.

The results show that Korea is advancing considerably in the process. Korea is able to institutionalize eSports as a sport primarily because of a government mandate which gives legitimacy to the governing body the Korea eSports Association (KeSPA). Furthermore, with requirements already in place by international sports authority such as the Olympics, Korea is attempting to fulfill these requirements to it can finally become a full-fledged sport.

The study also showed the success factors which include a) strong

community, b) media adaption, c) commercialization, d) ubiquity of PC bangs and fast internet speeds e) popularity of games and f) government support.

However, road blocks to the process are also present, particularly a) the negative perception, b) conflicting company interests, c) politics, and d) the limited experience in running eSports as a sports.

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**Keywords:** Institutionalization, eSports, Olympics, Korea

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Esports is one of the fastest growing industry nowadays. Esports is a term that represents a variety of different game types and game titles. Esports is a catchall term for games that resemble conventional sports insofar as they have superstars, playoffs, fans, uniforms, comebacks, and upsets. But all the action in eSports occurs online, and the contestants hardly move” (Segal, 2014).

As esports grows, its acceptance as a traditional Sport event is being highly debated (Heere, 2018). It has been reported that in 2022 Asian Games, esports will be a medal event (Graham, 2018). In fact, there have been proposals to eventually include in the Olympics. But critics of esports point out several characteristics of esports that make it incompatible with the Olympics, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach calls it too ‘violent’, and the lack of values (Chakraborty, 2018). Furthermore, esports has been presented the problem of gaming addiction (Heaven, 2014), where players become dependent on games to experience immediate gratification. The World Health Organization has classified this as a mental

health problem (Ring, 2018).

Proponents of esports have pointed out that the lack of values and the lack of physicality are not always the case (Jonasson and Thiborg, 2010). Esports athletes require as much endurance as normal athletes, and there have been studies that point out esports also have values and benefits. Some studies have found positive effects on children and adults playing computer games, such as spatial skills, reaction time, family relationships, parental obedience, social network, school performance and abstinence from drinking alcohol and using drugs (Durkin and Barber, 2002).

Among the difficulty in considering esports as a sport is the lack of a generally accepted definition of sports. The European Union defines sports as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels” (European charter on sport for all, 1987). It should be taken into consideration however that the EU explicitly distinguishes sports from Physical Activity when it adapted the definition of Physical Activity as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure above resting level” (Euro.who.int, 2018). Although researches

have pointed out that within this definition, esports can be considered as a sports given the “expenditure above resting level”, it is still difficult to consider it as a sport.

The difficulty in defining what sport is also evident from the purpose statement of one of the most prestigious international association in sport management, the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), in which it is stated: “Members of the Society are concerned about the theoretical and applied aspects of management theory and practice specifically related to sport, exercise, dance, and play as these enterprises are pursued by all sectors of the population” (Nassm.com, 2018). In this statement, the founders of the organization commit to sport management as a broad field that embraces the subject of sport, exercise, dance, and play. Yet, at the same time, they differentiate sport by identifying exercise, dance and play separately. The European Association for Sport Management (EASM) also does not have a definition for sports, and has left the term sport undefined and merely acknowledged that scholarship should focus on sport management in “the broadest sense” (EASM - European Association for Sport Management, 2018). Thus, major continental associations have not taken a position on the definition of sport within sport management making it open

to debate. Heere (2017) contends that over the last few decades, these boundaries have even been further obfuscated by the enormous growth of the popularity of sport in our society, which has introduced a plethora of new activities that might qualify as sport. Moreover, society has been inundated with organizations that place non-sport activities in a sport format, even further obscuring the boundaries of sport.

The difficulty in having an exact definition of sports have long been predicted to be a problem by Sports philosophers. In fact, philosophers would caution others from engaging in such discussions, as sport itself is impossible to define. F. McBride argued “Philosophers ought not waste their time attempting to define ‘sport’” (McBride, 1975). He came to that conclusion based on his understanding of sport as an ambiguous phenomenon, and the realization that any attempt to do so would likely fail. He acknowledged that sport has many different meanings and usages, and as such, attempting to define sport might be an adverse exercise that limits understanding thereof. Thus, if sport represents an undefinable ambiguous construct, the debate of whether e-sports are a form of sport is a somewhat redundant exercise.

However, when McBride made this argument he was unaware of the astronomical growth of the professional sport industry (Milano & Chelladurai,

2011), nor did he foresee the emergence of an entire new academic discipline, called sport management, which originated to serve this growing industry, and made its purpose to manage this ambiguous term that carried different meanings to different populations. With the rapid rise of the sport industry, the question of whether something qualified as a sport was not merely an intellectual exercise, but also one that was important for the legislation of sport as a business activity (Holden, Kaburakis, & Rodenberg, 2017).

Sports historian, Gertrud Pfister has argued that modern sports has always been accompanied by the process of regulation and bureaucratization, which contributes to formation of sports institutions and organizations. (Pfister, 2007). Such development is considered to be the institutionalizing of sports which gives sports its stability (Suits, 2007).

Demonstrating stability requires time. Institutionalization refers to an activity having a long history in which: (a) rules are developed and standardized; (b) learning of the game becomes formalized; (c) expertise develops; and (d) coaches, trainers, officials, and governing bodies emerge (Drewe, 2003; Suits, 2007; Tamburrini, 2000). Suits (2007) argued that an activity having a long history lessens the chance of “fad” activities coming to vogue, acquiring attention and financial support, then fading into oblivion.

While the popularity of eSports is undeniable, stability in institutional organization and regulation are still understudied. The importance of the development and standardization of rules cannot be understated. The standardization of rules allows for competition to occur from across a region and literally throughout the world, as has been seen with traditional sports (Drewe, 2003). With traditional sports, the development, standardization, and implementation of rules falls within the oversight of the governing bodies.

As Korea has been at the forefront of eSports. (Jonasson and Thiborg, 2010). It has managed to establish the Korea eSports Federation, a government recognized federation, and the International eSports Federation. As such, it could be argued that Korea is institutionalizing

## **1.2 Rationale for Study**

Esports presents a problem. On one hand, it challenges the common definition of sports. On the other hand, it also presents an opportunity for the sports community to progress. To sport management scholars, the question whether something qualifies as sport is of crucial importance, as it is this term that is deemed to separate them from the parent discipline of management itself (Heere, 2018). According to Heere, sport management scholars are encouraged to position sport as an instrument for health (kinesiology), for



skill development (education), or for entrepreneurial opportunities (business) among others, in order to find synergies with their colleagues in associated programs or departments (Heere, 2018).

Historically, sports are evolving. Pfister argued that “in recent decades, a number of new sports have emerged, whilst other sports have undergone profound changes – changes that have been implemented in spite of considerable opposition and despite the fact that they have had a substantial impact on the character of the sport” (Pfister 2007).

Furthermore, if sports management is to remain relevant, scholars cannot afford to institutionalize perceptions of what sport is; instead, they need to continue to evolve and embrace new forms of sport or manifestations of sportification (Heere, 2018).

The decline of viewership in the Olympics also presents additional problems in the field of sports management. A February 2018 Gallup poll showed that 61% of Americans had no interest in watching the Olympics (Brenan, 2018). Actual data showed a decline of viewership in the 2018 Olympics by 8% compared to the 2014 Olympics (Deggans, 2018). The ratings of the Olympics, according to Nielsen in 2010, are clearly highest among older viewers. Ratings among teenagers are 57% lower than the

national average for this year's primetime Olympics broadcasts. Ratings among the 18-49 group are 20% lower than the national average, while ratings among those 55 and older are 82% higher (How Different Genders, 2018).

The examination of e-sports and its acceptance a sport particularly in the field of sports management thus becomes imperative as it presents an opportunity for sports scholars to touch base with the younger generation. Newzoo, a global market intelligence company records that in 2018, there are 222 million viewers of esports. The company further predicts the audience to increase by 316 million viewers by 2021 (Newzoo, 2018).

Questions such as are e-sports participants more likely to be inactive or obese, or do the sport games, such as the NBA 2 K, FIFA Football, and Madden Football, actually serve as gateway activities to get the youth more active (or become fans), can be utilized to expand the domain of sports (Heere 2018).

Scholars with a business can examine not only the emergence of e-sports itself, but also the effects on the overall sport industry. The rise of e-sports is connected to the fall of cable (Ananthkrishnan, Smith, & Telang, 2016), which might have deep effects on the sport industry in many different ways, ranging from media rights, to sponsorship and even attendance, if sport

stakeholders cannot develop revenue substitutes at equal value.

Scholars who are engaged with policy research (particularly those involved in Sport for Development) and working with young people might want to engage with e-sports as their sport to hook their population. Recently, Cohen and Ballouli (2017) showed the importance of providing a service that connects with a young audience in their examination of a sportified version of hip hop dancing in Harlem, New York. As they stated: This program scheme has seemingly begun to fulfill Coalter's (2008) "plus-sport" definition of SFD programs, as HHL utilizes elements of both sport and hip hop culture as a hook to introduce their participants to other HCZ offerings, such as tutoring, volunteerism, healthy cooking, and resume workshops." (Cohen & Ballouli, 2016) Their study is a nod to the concept that in certain cases traditional sport might no longer serve as the most effective hook, and activities such as video gaming, dance, and music might offer equally effective returns on their investment.

Considering esports as a sports has a lot of potential. A prerequisite of which, among others is institutionalization. Studying the institutionalization of esports in Korea, considered to be at the forefront of esports can be a useful study to other countries wishing to replicate Korea's

success in esports.

### **1.3 Research Purpose and Questions**

Following its impact and rising popularity, ‘e-sports’ has become a theme within the academic debate on sports. The current understanding is brought about by definitions of the philosophy and sociology of sports and how in turn, e-sports fits in in those constructs. The premise of this article is the analysis of ‘institutionalization’, which is claimed to be an element of modern sport. The process of institutionalization of e-sports in Korea will be the main focus, as Korea is the world leader when it comes to esports. In particular, it will address the following questions:

RQ1: How is esports being institutionalized in Korea?

RQ2: What are the key success factors in the institutionalization of esports in Korea?

RQ3: What are the challenges in the in the institutionalization esports in Korea?

### **1.3 Significance of this Research**

This research would address the limited research surrounding eSports as a sport. Although eSports has elements of Computer Science with regards to development of games, management and organization is similar to sports management. It will also attempt to address the growing debate as to whether eSports is a sport or not. Among the characteristics of sports is institutionalization, that is, how it is organized as a whole.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

This section will look at the current studies of esports. It will look at its history and get a current survey of where it currently stands in the sports community. It will then look at the current status of esports as a sport in terms of identified characteristics, particularly the institutionalization. Finally, it will look at the current state of esports in Korea, in particular, of its institutionalization in the country.

### **2.1 Definition of eSports**

Understanding eSports is complex because of the relative novelty of the industry as well as the convergence of culture, technology, sport, and

business (Jin, 2010). Unlike traditional sports such as hockey, baseball, and soccer, eSports is an interconnection of multiple platforms. eSports, which is also synonymous with gaming, is computing, gaming, media, and a sports event all wrapped up into one (Jin, 2010).

In 2006, Wagner argued that eSports is too narrowly defined if it is merely seen as “a competitive way of playing computer games within a professional setting” (Wagner, 2006). Instead, Wagner developed a definition for eSports as “An area of sport activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies”. Wagner’s expanded definition, though more encompassing, does not truly define eSports. One reason why the authors believe Wagner’s definition does not completely fit is because of the option of the sporting activity to be mental or physical. It is clearly accepted that one characteristic which separates a game from a sport is the physical application of skill (Coakley, 2008; Suits, 2007). For the sake of remaining analogies to the eSports industry, the authors will consider the definition of eSports to be physical. However, the use of physical skill in eSports is often questioned and will also be discussed later this article. Also, Wagner’s(2006) definition leaves ambiguity in how eSports are played. The statement that people

develop and train with the use of information and communication technologies in eSports leaves out the aspect of competition. Competition is important to include in the definition because the foundation of the eSports industry is centered on competition.

The Korea e-Sports Association as any “recreational activity involving competition using mental and physical abilities in a virtual online environment similar to the reality” and “various competitions and leagues involving network games” (Lee, An, & Lee, 2014).

## **2.2 History of Esports**

The origin of eSports relied heavily on the launching of the internet in 1989, and on the early 1990s software and hardware technologies with network and multiplayer functions (Jonasson & Thiborg, 2010). Esports eventually became more popular in the early 1990s and it is considered to be the start of the history of eSport. The late 1990s saw the modernization of the eSport system. Utilizing software for personal computers, developers released games catering specifically to eSport competition. Technology now allowed for simulations that included detailed 3D environments and numerous players, advancements that would allow for the creation of new genres of games, such as the first-person shooter or FPS (Jonasson & Thiborg,

2010).

In the 2000's competitions with cash prizes started becoming more popular. As of August 2018, the largest prize pool for esports is at \$100,000,000 for the game Fortnite by Epic Games (Thier, 2018).

### **2.3 Esports in Korea**

No country demonstrates the potential market for modern eSport competition greater than South Korea. The country accounted for \$1.4 billion, or 56% of the entire Asia-Pacific market for online gaming (Jin & Chee, 2009). Personal computers have been the focus of eSport competition in South Korea, as opposed to the console dominated play in the western hemisphere. Primarily the South Korean eSport system serves as a unique representation of the pinnacle of video game competition. Gamers earn six figure contracts while enjoying national recognition. Second, the South Korean eSport system sheds light on how social, political, and economic factors contribute to shaping the entertainment options present within a population. Tense foreign relations and a booming digital economy resulted in South Korea developing a unique mainstream eSport market focusing on the ultra-competitive titles developed for personal computers.

Historically, South Korea has not been receptive to Japanese culture.



Due to previous diplomatic tensions and a fear of cultural invasion, South Korea had effectively placed a ban on products representative of Japanese culture. Included in this ban, were Japanese game consoles like the ones created by Nintendo and Sega (Jin & Chee, 2009). The result was a lack of representation of console and games in the South Korean market. Following the lift of the ban in 1998, Japanese consoles finally hit shelves of South Korean stores.

The citizens were not very receptive to the products and after a period of failure it became apparent that Japanese consoles and games that had experienced success in the west would not be compatible with the South Korean market and culture. This left a void in the South Korean digital entertainment market, as well as an opportunity for software developers to capitalize on a basic consumer demand. Shortly after the failure of Japanese consoles in the late 1990s, the South Korean government rapidly developed a world-class infrastructure for information technology, making broadband internet an attainable option in everyone's homes (Jin & Chee, 2009). Additionally, talented South Korean start-ups were tirelessly developing computer gaming software that utilized the South Korean internet infrastructure. The swift development of internet technology and software

start-ups resulted in the production of quality video game software that would popularize internet-based games in South Korea.

Video game infatuation in Korea began with the popularization of “PC Bangs” (Huhh, 2009). PC bangs are arcade-like, internet cafes dedicated to computer gaming. Players spend time in the public facilities playing games with others in the cafe or over the internet. Rows of computers are situated in the form of stations, that can be used by visitors primarily for internet gaming. PC bangs are some of the most popular attractions in South Korea; they are even used as a popular destination for dates between young couples (Huhh, 2009). Though the physical structure of PC bangs are similar to arcades, PC bangs are not popular because of the lack of home entertainment options. PC bangs have remained popular despite the presence of at-home hardware and software due to the fact that they increase the amount of social interaction while playing video games. South Korean players enjoyed playing a variety of games together including genres less utilized for eSport competition, such as role-playing games and adventure games. However, following the creation and incredible reception of Starcraft in 1998, PC Bangs and the existing internet infrastructure would lead to massive participation resulting in the birth of modern eSport competition in South Korea.

By the year 2000, the Korean government through the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism approved the creation of the Korea eSports Association (KeSPA). The official goal of KeSPA is to make eSports an official sporting event, and to solidify the commercial position of eSports in all sectors. The organization manages the broadcasting of e-Sports, the formation of new events, and the conditions in which pro gamers work, as well as encourage the playing of video games by the general population.

Furthermore, on October 27, 2014 KeSPA, alongside Riot Games and Ongamenet, issued a press release stating new policies directed toward the welfare Korean professional eSports players. Some of the major changes include a minimum salary for professional eSports players that is competitive with popular traditional sports and setting a 1-year minimum for contracts between players and teams starting in the 2016 season. There were also many League of Legends specific changes that include limiting companies to have a minimum of one team with 10 players per team, and beginning a shift from tournament to league format for Korean Worlds qualifiers.

## **2.4 Characteristics of eSports as a Sport**

The debate whether competitive video gaming (i.e., eSports) can be considered sport dates back to at least 1999, when the Online Gamers

Association (OGA) was launched by Euro Gamer at the Sports Academy in London. Founder Mat Bettison was quoted as saying, “It won’t be that long before eSports are covered on television in the same way as traditional sports” (Gestalt, 1999). The dispute worsened, when, in the same year, the English Sports Council denied recognizing the United Kingdom Professional Computer Game Championships as a sport (Wagner, 2006). This research will identify the characteristics of sports as identified by Guttman(1978) and Suits (2007). In particular, sports must a) include play b) be organized c) include competition d) be comprised of skill as opposed to chance e) include physical skills f) have a broad following and g) institutionalization.

### **eSports and Play**

First, Guttman (1978) asserted that play forms the foundation for all sports. This includes voluntary, intrinsically motivated activity which is performed for fun or enjoyment. With this characteristic, play is considered make-believe. Certainly, eSport participants voluntarily play video games for enjoyment, fulfilling this characteristic of sport. Often associated with the term play are games. Games have been defined as structured play (Coakley, 2008), and the common connection between the terms video games and eSports continues to equate eSports with gaming—a word which can be

perceived to be on a lower level than sport. Moreover, a demarcation between virtual activity and sport are alluded to within day-to-day descriptions of video/computer games where even sport-themed video games are referred to as games, not sports (Hemphill, 2005). To further complicate things, play and games are often associated with unreal non-seriousness (Hemphill, 2005)—terms juxtaposition to sport and synonymous with the video game phrase virtual reality. Moreover, play and games are frequently correlated to childhood where sociological accounts “place play, game[s], and sport on a continuum, where the playful freedom of childhood gradually becomes restrained, structured, and codified as games and, when fully institutionalized, becomes sport” (Hemphill, 2005). If eSports are to be recognized as sport, competitive video gaming must be viewed beyond a juvenile game.

### **eSports and Organization**

Suits (2007) asserts that sports are all goal-directed activities adhering to rules. Likewise, Guttmann (1978) states sports are organized and are governed by rules. In typical eSports tournaments, teams of four to five players compete multiple rounds across a certain time period (e.g., 1 hour and 45 minutes), playing a selected video game (e.g., LoL), where detailed rules and regulations specify tournament and match regulations with detailed

instructions regarding game and server settings—teams play within a well-defined virtual environment. Players are required to adhere to these specific guidelines and structure of each video game in order to be successful. Undoubtedly, eSports are organized with rules.

### **eSports and Competition**

All sports involve competition. Sports must include competition resulting in a winner/s and loser/s (Guttman, 1978). In isolation, this may be termed a contest. “The only way of winning [an eSports] match is to find and execute strategies that outperform the strategies of the opposing team” (Wagner, 2006). eSports include competitive video gaming which eventually leads to a winner/s. Inherent within the concept of competition is the presence of an opponent, to which one will win, lose, or draw (Drewe, 2003). Without an opponent, there is no competition. Unquestionably, eSports involve competition, and often very intense competition. A noteworthy aspect of eSports is the ability to engage in competition with people throughout the world. While, at times, technical issues may hinder some participants from regions of the world with less developed computing infrastructures from successfully engaging in Internet-based competition, such issues will likely be overcome over time. Through the defining characteristic of competition,

justification is made that eSports are genuine sports and the participants are genuine athletes, not just players of a game (Electric Sports World Cup, 2015).

### **eSports and Skill**

According to Suits (2007), sports must involve skillful play where chance or luck is not the sole reason for winning. At a superficial level, it can be argued that it takes skillful coordination to play eSports as players manipulate buttons on a controller to effectively manage their on-screen avatar (i.e., an icon or figure representing the player in a video game). For example, when discussing the eSport game of Counter-Strike, Rambusch, Jakobsson, and Pargan (2007) noted: “a prerequisite for transforming it from a leisure activity to (semi) professional play is the design of the game; it affords competitive play by rewarding fast reflexes, good manual dexterity and excellent hand-eye coordination”. Still, Hemphill (2005) noted that skillful play in eSports should not be limited to technical dexterity utilized with a controller, but also includes sporting intelligence found in video gaming. Central to the notion of sport is to outsmart the competition—a component of eSports (Kates, 2015). To accomplish this, a successful eSports player must possess comprehensive knowledge and skills, “with game sense and (tactical and strategic) judgment to act effectively to settle the issue at

hand or help the [player] solve the game problem” (Hemphill, 2005). For instance, Heaven (2014) noted the skill necessary to play eSports when describing the video game StarCraft, where one tries to defeat the opponent’s army through “complex resource management in that you must continually generate the pieces at your disposal as you play”. He continues: To do as well as the pros, you must also achieve an extremely rapid rate of keyboard and mouse inputs. Some players carry out more than 300 such actions a minute, rising to 10 a second when up against it. Add in the need to think strategically and outwit your opponent by preempting their moves, and the top players start to look superhuman. (Heaven, 2014)

Historically, competitive gaming has involved first-person shooter games (e.g., Doom, Counter-Strike, etc.) or strategy war games (e.g., StarCraft) (Crawford & Gosling, 2009). More recently, eSports in North America utilize the strategy war games of Dota 2, Starcraft 2, Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare, and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (Major League Gaming [MLG], 2015). Arguably, these games encompass Kretchmar’s(2005) termed sport intelligence, where players solve problems and creatively perform. Hemphill (2005) coined this as “cyber-intelligent action” where eSport players exhibit game sense through skillfully linking avatar movement



actions to game-posed challenges. Wagner (2006) noted, “teams that train for eSports disciplines will increase their competency in making complex strategic decisions at a high speed”. Thus, many acknowledge that cerebral dimensions of skill acquisition and performance are necessary to perform eSports (i.e., play video games) at a high level. For example, a study investigating rapid perception, decision making, and motor responding of 854,064 online computer video game players found a lawful relationship between practice amount and subsequent performance, as well as practice spacing and subsequent performance, indicating skill acquisition is inherent within video gaming (Stafford & Dewar, 2014). Other empirical evidence exists related to the benefits of video games on improving cognitive functioning. Granic, Lobel, and Engels (2014), conclude that, in adolescents, “specific types of video games seem to enhance a suite of cognitive functions”, including enhanced creativity, problem-solving skills, and/ or spatial skills, depending on the type of video game being played. Moreover, Toril, Reales, and Ballesteros (2014) concluded, “the overall meta-analysis [of 20 experimental studies] unambiguously revealed that training older adults with video games improves cognition” as video game training was shown to improve reaction time, attention, memory, and global cognition. Moreover, sport-related video games have been suggested to be used in physical

education for their potential benefits of cognitive-skills training, increasing sport knowledge (i.e., regarding player positions, field layout, tactics and strategies, etc.), acquiring language of sports, and enhancing teamwork in multi-player games (Hayes & Silberman, 2007; Jenny & Schary, 2014). Additionally, Rambusch et al. (2007), when discussing the cognitive skill required for an individual to successfully play on an eSports team (i.e., “clan”), noted that:

Skills such as good communication and the ability to adapt to changes in the clan’s line-up and the opposing clan’s strategies and moves become increasingly important. . . . When a player joins a clan their individual playing style has to match the clan’s style as a whole. Players take on different roles with respect to the clan’s line-up and the agreed-upon strategies and tactics.

To that end, in attempt to understand more about the essential skills needed for success in eSports, Red Bull has established its High Performance eSports Lab in Santa Monica, CA, to analyze the effect of stress, competition, and fatigue on concentration, reaction time, precision, and anticipation (Gaudiosi, 2015). Nonetheless, while eSports do require skill, common definitions of sport contend that the skill involved in the activity must be

physical.

### **2.5.5 eSports and Physicality**

Suits (2007) believes a distinguishing characteristic of sports from games is that, while sports are games of skill rather than chance, the skill must be physical. Guttman (1978), Drewe (2003), and Tamburrini (2000) all concur and state that sport must consist of physical contests. It is clear sport is physical at its core. But what is the nature of that physicality? What elevates a game to the level of a sport? The comparison of the game of chess to the sport of basketball highlights the differences (Ousterhoudt, 1977). When playing the (traditional, non-digital) game of chess one must move a chess piece on the game board strategically to gain advantage over one's opponent. Because one physically grasps a chess piece and moves it to a chosen location, can the game therefore be considered a sport? Ousterhoudt (1977) contended it does not. Hemphill (2005) noted that due to the nature of sport, an essential characteristic is physical prowess, which distinguishes it from games. For a game to be elevated to the level of sport, the physical movement by the participant must be integral to the successful completion of the task. When playing basketball, the manner by which one performs a shot will have a direct impact on whether the shot is successful. A poorly executed jump shot

will likely end with a resultant miss. Great physical skill is needed to be successful in basketball. In chess, the manner of the physical execution of moving the chess piece is incidental to success of the move. As long as the chess piece is moved to the correct spot on the board, how the participant chooses to do so has no consequence on the outcome. Likewise, arguably, how a button is pushed on a controller has no consequence on the outcome of an eSport competition. Therefore, for a game to be considered a sport, physical skill(s) must be present, and the successful execution of those physical skills must have a direct impact on the successful completion of the task. Many games, however, even those of the table top variety, may require a precision of physical skill(s) for a player/s to be successful at the game. Consider the game of Jenga. During the game of Jenga, players take turns removing one block at a time from a tower built of 53 wooden blocks. The block, which was removed, is then placed on the top of the tower. As the game progresses, the tower becomes taller, but progressively weaker. Being a successful Jenga player requires great concentration, strategy, and precise fine motor coordination. Such precise physical skill can only be developed through months, even years, of practice. Is Jenga, then, a sport? Similarly, successfully directing an avatar through the mechanism of handheld controls, while engaging in eSports, requires precise physical skill. As with Jenga, to

be a successful participant in eSports requires months, and likely years, of practice.

## **2.5 Institutionalization as an element of sports**

Modern sport stands upon institutional stability. Institutions prescribe rules and the rules bring about bureaucratization in the shape of various processes, where the institution is directly involved in sanctioning the games, the competitions and their participants. Pfister (2007) states that from the nineteenth century onwards, the growth of sport was accompanied, and even shaped, by processes of regulation and institutionalization, contributing not only to the formation of sports organizations and institutions, but also to the development of different types of sport and sporting practices. Institutional theory holds the organization with its individuals together. It highlights values, norms, rules, beliefs, assumptions, formal structures and cultural influences on decision making (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). Institutionalization in sports refers to an activity having a long history in which (Drewe, 2003; Suits, 2007; Tamburrini, 2000):

- (a) rules are developed and standardized;
- (b) learning of the game becomes formalized;

(c) expertise develops; and

(d) coaches, trainers, officials, and governing bodies emerge

Suits (2007) contended that an activity having a long history lessens the chance of “fad” activities coming to vogue, acquiring attention and financial support, then fading into oblivion.

## **Chapter 3. Research Methodology**

This chapter details the research methodology the researcher plans to employ for this study. The chapter further gives a description of the logic for adopting a qualitative research approach. Data collection procedures and tools that will be utilized to collect data from part of this section and they will be discussed in sequence. This involves document analysis at the initial stage forming basis for semi- structured interviews with athletes who posts on social media. The next section that follows is a description of the qualitative research approach that will be used in the study.

### **3.1 Qualitative Research Approach**

Selecting a research approach towards the overall study is central, as it acts as a vehicle in responding appropriately to the research question.

Horgan et al. (2009) as critical in which a researcher must apply his/her mind correctly before deciding on the approach to use. Thus, after seriously considering the appropriate approach, a qualitative research approach is considered the most appropriate for collection and analysis of data. Qualitative research is described as a “multifaceted approach that investigates culture, society and behavior through an analysis and synthesis of people’s words and actions” (Horgan et al. 2009, p.3). Horgan et al advances their argument by indicating that qualitative research gives a researcher monopoly to make sense or understand behavior, beliefs and emotions of the group under study. Due to its flexibility, it allows research to be carried out in its natural setting and gives the researcher an opportunity to collection and analysis data based on the “participant views and the way in which they make sense of the world” (Hartley & Muhit, 2003, p.104). According to Horgan et al. (2009), the researcher’s interaction is also considered part of the “knowledge creation process”

### **3.1.1 Interviews**

The interview is described as a situation which questions are asked of an interviewee by the interviewer, but also involves listening to their responses (David & Sutton,2011). It may take a different form depending on

the aims and objectives of the study or research question. Interviews can either be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Di Cicco and Crabtree, 2006 and Saunder et al. 2009). However, interviews in qualitative research are not always the automatic methods necessitating consideration of the research questions and the rationale for conducting a research (Fadyl and Nicholls, 2012). The purpose of these interviews is to elicit data that will contribute to a body of theoretical knowledge as seen from lived experience of athletes (Dicicco-Bloem and Crabtree, 2006). Turner (2010) provide a further explanation to indicate that interviews provide in-depth information regarding the participants concerning the topic under investigation. A better understanding of the circumstantial issues facing inclusion of people with disabilities in developing countries will enable the compilation of functions and competencies that are central to this effect.

### **3.1.2 Document Analysis**

In order to respond to the first research questions, the researcher found it paramount to use document analysis to analyze the institutionalization of eSports in Korea. Saunders et al. (2009) indicates that it is very difficult to access some organizations' documents, but they could still be accessible through interaction. Documents analysis is mainly used



with another method but that does not rule out that it is sometimes used as a side method (David & Sutton, 2011).

There are various advantages of using document analysis in research as a source of data. According to (Bowen, 2009) it is advantageous to use document analysis as it possesses the following strong points:

- Documents can provide data in the context of the participants, thus helping the researcher to have a better understanding of issues raised. It is an important aspect of the development of occupational standards in the manner that it relates to skills and knowledge because they could be developed in a manner consistent with the context.

- Document analysis is less time consuming than other methods as it involves data selection, not data collection. Since many documents are found in the public domain, it is easier and less time consuming to access while participants are not always available.

- It is a less costly method since data has been collected; saving the researcher and allowing him/her to analyze it in line with the research question. However, it is paramount to evaluate the quality and reliability of the documents. This research's context is in post-conflict

countries making it expensive to travel and collect data as the researcher studies in a developed and stable country. The cost would include travel, boarding and lodging.

- Documents provide what Yin (1994) terms ‘exactness’.

Those include specifics such as names, places, references and other details of the programs. Therefore, they are considered to be providing a broad coverage.

### **3.1.3 Delphi Approach**

Delphi is a name of temple in ancient Greek, which is the origin of Apollo's divine inspirations, god of sun and music. Greeks and ancient nations came in Pythia, the goddess of Delphi temple to predict the future (Powell, 2003; Okoli & Pawlowsk 2004). The Delphi technique was originally proposed based on people's conjecture, judgment, and inspiration but gradually took the academic form. For the first time in the late 1950s, in a research by U.S. RAND Corporation, the Delphi was introduced for the scientific study of experts' opinions on military defense project. However, for the security reasons, this technique was not proposed over ten years and in 1963, Dalkey and Helmer introduced it (Kauko, Palmroos, 2014). Its first non-military use was suggested for economic development planning (Landeta

2006). This technique gradually found its place in the academic studies but from the mid-90s, it became highly popular. Landeta's study indicated that since 1995 to 1999 a total 444 articles on this technique have been published in "Science Direct" and "ABI / Inform" journals. Since 2000 to 2004, this number has increased to 667 articles (Landeta 2006). Among the various features of the Delphi technique, its four features are usually unchanged including anonymity, iteration, controlled feedback, and statistical —group response (von der Gracht, 2012).

### **3.1.3.1 Round 1**

In the initial phase of the project, experts were provided with an overview of the design and purpose of the project, an estimate of how much total time they would be expected to contribute to the project, and 2 open-ended questions. Hsu and Sanford (2007) wrote that some Delphi studies contain structured questionnaires in Round, One, based on extensive literature reviews

Before the study was launched, this researcher asked five master students in the Sports Management program at Seoul National University to read and respond to Round One questions to assess the time it may take for experts to complete the initial study more accurately. Communication

primarily was conducted through electronic mail. Experts were asked to respond within fourteen days to two open-ended.

### **3.1.3.1 Round 2 and Round 3**

As explained in the description of a typical Delphi study, responses to the first round of open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized into questions focused on understanding what factors are agreeable and important in regard to the success and challenges of institutionalization of esports in Korea. According to Hsu and Sandford, the second round of the Delphi is where expert consensus begins to take shape. When responses to the second round were received, the group mode and percentage of agreement was calculated. This research used a four-point Likert scale similar to other Delphi studies that prioritized issue identification (Okoli & Pawloski, 2004), which all looked for success factors in their field of study.

For Round Three, each expert received an individualized version with the same questions as Round Two, but also the results of the group mode and consensus percentage for each question similar to problem identification (Moris et al, 2014). This allowed experts to view the average group response to each question. Experts had the opportunity to revise and clarify their earlier responses if they chose to do so. After results of the third questionnaire were

received. Rounds Two and Three required experts to review results from prior rounds, provided opportunities for them to revise and clarify previous comments, and also to rate and explain their ratings.

### 3.3 Participants

For the selection of the panelists for the Delphi approach which was intended to answer the second and third research question, professionals and players were invited to participate in the study. There were ten experts who replied. These participants are currently professionals in Korea are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Participant's Professions**

1.	eSports Analyst
2.	eSports Manager
3.	eSports Professional
4.	eSports Project Manager
5.	eSports Athlete
6.	eSports Marketing Manager
7.	Head of Gaming
8.	eSports Host and Caster
9.	Content Editor (eSports)
10.	eSports Manager

Given that is a Delphi study does not represent a statistical sample size, the number of participant were already sufficient (Adler & Ziglio, 1996).

### **3.4 Data Collection and Analysis**

An understanding of what constitutes data and what data to collect is vital in order to answer the research question. Data is described as what the researcher has collected not necessarily what is out there to be collected (David & Sutton, 2011). The simplest description of data is by David & Sutton (2011) is that data is the output or a product of research, as opposed to something the researcher just collects. With this understanding of what data is; the section below will describe and put into perspective document analysis and interviews as tools that the researcher will utilize for generating data

Undoubtedly, the collective wisdom in decision-making can lead to more complete and comprehensive decision-making. However, the group problem solving through traditional consensus method is associated with numerous difficulties. The group members who have high self-confidence are dominating the weaker members. Some are also pressured to conform to group comments and or because they respect other people, they do not express their opinions. Hence, a group problem solving approach will be often futile

and ineffective. The anonymity principle is used to solve this problem. In Delphi technique, the experts and people who are used the survey do not know each other. Anonymity ensures overcoming the obstacles of groupthink (Powell, 2003). A coordinator collects the experts' opinions and then he/she provides other members with the summarized results. Then, based on the summarized results in the previous step, individuals again adjust and express their opinions. Finally, after reaching a consensus, the results are discussed in terms of a statistical report (usually mean or median) and are used for decision-making (von der Gracht, 2012). The Delphi technique is a research approach to gain consensus using a series of questionnaires and the provision of feedback to participants who have expertise in key areas.

The researcher adapted an inductive thematic analysis approach. Document analysis and mission statements for organisations responsible for esports in Korea were analysed and interview transcripts followed. “Data analysis is the attempt to understand the presence or absence of themes, common and/or divergent idea; beliefs and practices” in a topic under research (David & Sutton, 2011). This section will give a description of how the documents and interview transcripts were analysed. (Braun & Clarke, 2006) state that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be

widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions. They further argue that, it is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and ‘reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## **Chapter 4. Results**

To be able to answer the first research question, it was necessary to select a panel of experts in the field of eSports. Within the academy, the researcher was only able to get the input of one sports management scholar. Other panelists include the secretary general of the international esports federation and the korea esports federation, as well as former officials now working in the private industry but still within the domain of esports.

### **4.1 Process of Institutionalization**

The creation of the organizing body came to fruition upon the



establishment of the Korea eSports Association (KeSPA). Rivaling this then was the eSports Federation. Eventually, the eSports Federation was disbanded and KeSPA became the sole governing body of eSports in Korea. In 2012, the Korean Government passed into law the “ACT ON PROMOTION OF E-SPORTS”, which states that “the purpose of this Act is to establish infrastructure for the culture and industry of e-sports, enhance competitiveness in e-sports, and contribute to increasing people's opportunities to enjoy leisure time with e-sports and the robust development of the national economy by providing for matters necessary to promote e-sports.”

#### **4.1.1. Development of Rules and Regulations**

The development of rules and regulations in eSports is within the mandate of KeSPA which was established through the Act on Promotion of eSports. Part of its mandate is the selection of games to be included in its roster of accredited games. To this effect, Seong Hee Park, professor of Sports Marketing from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and a former consultant for KeSPA says there is a committee that is tasked in selecting which games to include. The committee is guided by the “Regulations for Selecting Esports” document, available on the KeSPA website. In conjunction

with this, the International eSports Federation, the international governing body of eSports which is accredited by The Association For International Sport for All promulgates rules and regulations through its Statutes. It has established an athletes commission, and referee commission. Furthermore, in its objective to be included to the Olympics, IeSF acting secretary general Leopold Chung says discussions are at an early stage and any involvement of eSports - or competitive computer gaming - at Paris 2024. He further added:

*"There are procedures which must be conducted, and consensus with various stakeholders is necessary, most importantly with the IOC. IESF is in conversation with Paris City to promote eSports momentum, and if possible, to support for eSports to be included to take part in the Paris 2024 Olympics as a cultural event or demonstration event."*

The development of rules and regulations in eSports is continuously being updated given the desire for it to be part of the Olympics.

#### **4.1.2. Development of Expertise**

Part of the growth of esports is the development of expertise. Alvin

Duckyoon Kim CEO of TeamES, established a data science company. His job involves the use of statistics to give real-time game analysis for teams. As games usually have an abundance of data, from the allocation of resources, to how it is used, it is perceived that any action, small as it may seem, is important to the success of a game, specifically for professionals. The rise of different professions within the domain of esports indicates a market for it.

In fact, LinkedIn, a social networking site specific for work lists a number of esports professions within Korea. The following table shows a list of Job Titles with eSports in it taken from the first 2 pages of LinkedIn:

**Table 2. List of eSports Professions in LinkedIn Search**

CEO, eSports Academy
eSports business development
Global Esports & Sports Business Development Professional
eSports Business Developers
eSports Data Analyst
eSports Coordinator at Garena Online
Esports Project Manager at Smilegate
PUBG Corporation Senior Manager of esports
eSports Marketing Director
Specialist League Operations (esports)
eSports Product Lead at Riot Games

Furthermore, there are at most 30 job postings for eSports in Korea in LinkedIn alone. “More and more, there is a need for marketing, data analytics, events management that is specific for eSports.” Said Kim.

#### **4.1.3. Formalization of Training**

According to Matthew Byun the CEO of an eSports academy called Game Culture Lab, training for eSports has become business. In Korea, there are eSports academy where players get to learn how to play from professional players and are given an analysis of how they are playing. Based on data analysis, players are taught how to economize resources, adapt on situational changes, and ultimately win a game. Practice, according to Byun is necessary. “One has to be disciplined in the early stages, depending on roles, they have to learn how to economize, support and strategize”. He further added that because of the nature of eSports, analysis of results are easier. “We can just download your previous game, and check all the details, from the way you economize, to how you strategize. From here, best practices are derived”.

Although training in eSports is dependent on the game, there are

general ideas that emerge, according to Byun. Economizing and strategizing are important factors. Tactics that have been coined from Starcraft days such as Turtling, where players wait out in a secure base, or rushing, to counter a farming strategy are ways to win a game. They are not written in formal books yet, but their concepts can pretty much be based in historical strategies of war. Studies in gaming is also used according to Byun, which gives esports a cache of knowledge it could easily tap into.

#### **4.1.4 Emergence of Governing Body**

The emergence of IeSF and KeSPA in Korea have become a cornerstone leading toward the institutionalization of esports as a sport. Governing bodies give legitimacy, protection to players and consistency in rules and regulations.

Alex Lim stated that Governing bodies can define the way that the sport operates through its affiliated clubs and societies. This is because sports have different levels of difficulty and skill, so they can try to organize the people playing their sport by ability and by age. KeSPA's incorporation has led to the accreditation of games, athletes and clubs. Although at the current stage KeSPA has failed to meet the standards needed to become an affiliate of the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee (KSOC).

As part of the process, KeSPA had to create at least nine national city or province branches, which are smaller sport associations at different cities throughout the country. In its statement, KeSPA explained that creating nine national branches in a single year was “near impossible,” and the organization focused on matters beyond maintaining its status with the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee. This proves difficult given that eSports is primarily in more developed cities such as Busan and Seoul, and teams are not exactly associated geographically.

It is also worthy to note that KeSPA has engaged the services of international lawyers to protect the interest of players under its purview. In its press release, it noted explained that the hiring of lawyers would “provide legal advisory to e-Sports players who need legal advice on visa, tax, contracts, etc. among the players of KeSPA's official e-Sports titles.”

## **4.2. Success Factors and Challenges is Institutionalizing Esports**

### **4.2.1 Delphi Round 1 Result**

The process was done either through email or a one on one interview. The question asked were: 1) What are the success factors in the institutionalization of eSports as a Sports in Korea? And 2) What are the

challenges in the institutionalization of eSports as a Sports in Korea?. A total of 10 respondents gave replied and their answers could be summarized into 12 themes, namely:

**Table 3. Success and Challenges Themes (R = 10)**

Q#	Theme	Number of Experts
1.1	Community	8
1.2	Media Adaption	4
1.3	Commercialization	3
1.4	Fast Internet and PC Bangs	9
1.5	Popularity	4
1.6	Government Support	4
1.7	Governing Body	2
2.1	Negative Perception	10
2.2	Conflicting Company Interests	4
2.3	Corruption	2
2.4	Politics	3
2.5	Limited Knowledge	3

### **Theme I: Community**

The community is an important factor in the success of the process institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea. Eight of all the respondents indicated the strong community in the esports scene in Korea is the backbone of the success of esports which contributes to the institutionalization of esports in the country in all its aspects. Sharing a common interest allows interest in esports to thrive. One of the respondents commented that the large

community allows game developers to continually improve on esports games which hooks the gamers. Another respondent commented that there is a sense of familiarity that comes when playing esports, even nostalgic given that memories were built through esports gaming. Furthermore, a sense of curiosity arises from professional players than brings about admiration and ultimately enjoyment from watching them play. This can be considered the grassroots propagation of sports development, which is vital in the success of sports.

## **Theme II: Media Adaption**

Media adaption of esports is another factor on why esports is popular in Korea. In the early years of eSports in the country, Television channels have been covering. One of the respondents commented on the ease of access to watch esports games. Twitch, for example, allows users to watch the games at the convenience of their home. It is also worthy to note that competitive games can be watched in-game which allows spectators to actually observe first-hand how the players are playing, albeit delayed for some minutes. According to the respondents, the different ways of consuming esports allows different people to appreciate the game. They can watch in on Television, they can watch in online or in their mobile phones, and ultimately, they can



experience it themselves by watching it in game.

### **Theme III: Commercialization**

Some respondents identify commercialization as an aspect of esports. Making esports a viable profession allows people to spend more time playing the sport. Furthermore, it has led to the increase of professions associated with esports. Professional players can now make a living playing games. Academies are being established as there is a market. The concept of a market for these academies suggest the growing need of it within the community of esports. Based on prize pools, a professional player can earn as much as \$1,175,068.35. Esportsearnings.com records that the total earnings recorded by Koreans total to \$69,386,561.73 by 3100 Players.

### **Theme IV: Fast Internet and PC Bangs**

It is undeniable that Korea has one of the best internet speeds. Internet speed is essential in networking games as there is a need for games to be responsive. Latency is how fast computers and servers respond to each other. A 1 second latency in games would lead to a concept called “lagging”, in which a player who has a very high latency would receive delayed communication from servers and thereby would have a bad experience of the

game. A high latency would lead to delayed reception of data from servers thereby making it difficult for the players to respond appropriately. As such, the fast internet, according to three responders is essential as this is the cornerstone of esports within the country. This, according to a respondent, has led to the rise of foreigners coming in Korea to play esports.

Fast internet also saw the rise of PC Bangs or computer shops. Computer shops are essentially part of the Korean Culture. People come to PC Bangs to have a feeling of community. Notwithstanding that local companies such as LG and Samsung produce high quality LED/LCD Monitors, PC Bangs are state of the art and cost a little less than 2000won per hour according to respondents. This makes it an attractive past time. In fact, it is the reason why esports is popular in Korea. When PC Bangs became popular because of Starcraft, one respondent commented, people started going in out of curiosity, and then after enjoying the game, made it a habit. The enjoyment in PC Bangs, with a communal feeling, of being able to come together and enjoy games is attributed to be the factor which makes esports successful in Korea.

### **Theme V: Popularity of Games**

One of the things that has attracted people into playing esports,

according to one respondent, is how the games are told as a story. People often find themselves immersed in the storytelling of the games, and this allows them to feel as if they are part of the story themselves. Much more, esports as a sport gives rise to concept familiar to the enjoyment of sports – unpredictability of results. The games are complex and there is an infinite permutation of results given certain conditions. Similar to sports, how one manages resources and execute strategies are part of the reason why people enjoy esports. One respondent commented “You have different ways to win, and you have different characters to use, there are different ways to win, and there are different ways to lose, unlike playing against Bots [automated opponents], playing against others make the game unpredictable, and I think this is what hooks players in video games nowadays”

### **Theme VI: Government Support**

Nine out of the 10 participant in the study found government support to be a crucial aspect in the institutionalization of esports as a sport. With the government leading the way with the enactment of laws that would fund government institutions, this being KeSPA, gives legitimacy of esports as a sport. It also helps address the addiction problems such as adding a curfew for minors which automatically cuts off access to games at a certain time

according to Professor Park. The Cinderella Act is viewed as a crucial law that attempts to stop gaming addiction to minors. The government has also sponsored hospitals that would rehabilitate gaming addiction. Although gaming companies in news find the government intervention as a threat, the participants in this study suggested the need for government support to help address problems.

### **Theme VII Korea eSports Association**

The Governing body, specifically KeSPA, is crucial to the institutionalization of esports. Two respondents identified this as necessary. The reasoning is because of the necessity towards the inclusion of esports in the Olympics. One of the respondents commented that the governing body could be able to protect the interest of players who would participate in games and events. Another reason, a respondent gave is, these governing bodies allow consistency with regards to player salaries and other rights which may be set aside should there be no governing body.

### **Challenge I: Negative Perception**

All respondents found the negative perception to be the most challenging obstacle esports has. No less than the president of the IOC has

commented on the violence of esports as a detriment to its inclusion in the mega-event. Addiction to the game has caused several heart-breaking events, such as the 15-year-old Korean boy who killed his mother and eventually himself after being nagged of playing too much computer games. Stories such as the 32-year-old man who died after reportedly playing for five days with few breaks. They have argued that older generations find esports to be a vice simply because people spend too much time on it. Of course, one of the respondents added, anything in extremes is always a vice, and moderation should always be a fundamental aspect of anything done in life, but perception is key towards success, and the negative perception towards esports is causing people to question why it should be pursued as a sport.

## **Challenge II: Conflicting Company Interests**

The institutionalization of esports as a sport is further hampered by the fact that the games are owned by corporations, according to three respondent. Companies ultimately have a say on how the games are developed. Intellectual property is also an issue. Unlike traditional sports where the sport is in public domain, computer games are developed under trademarks and are owned by corporations. KeSPA and CJ had a trademark dispute last year, according to one respondent. He identifies the ownership of

the League of Legends Championship Korea. CJ E&M has been in a continuous dispute with Riot Games Korea (RGK) since both were claiming the rights to LCK's trademark. On Dec. 4, 2015, KeSPA issued a statement on Facebook that "RGK holds the licensing rights for LCK," and while "KeSPA recognizes OGN's production capabilities and their contribution to LCK's advancement," the association does not acknowledge any CJ E&M claims over the trademark rights. This led to CJ E&M withdrawing from KeSPA which it has supported for almost 13 years.

### **Challenge III: Corruption**

Notwithstanding the already beleaguered reputation of esports because of addiction is the rise of corruption. According to one respondent, because of the money, the temptation to be corrupt is present. In fact, one player has attempted to commit suicide after realizing that he was part of a "feeder" team. News reports show League of Legends player Cheon "Promise" Min-Ki jumped off from a twelve-story building and ended up in a coma. According to several Korean news reports, this comes after he revealed alleged eSports match-fixing. The player posted this:

"When we first made the team, we were told that AHQ sponsored us with cash and computers. We didn't know they only gave us gaming

gear for rights to the team name. Our manager Noh had lied to us, and took out a loan to pay for our housing, living expenses, computers, and even our salaries. He was planning on placing illegal bets on eSports games and fixing them to win back the borrowed money and make a profit.”

Furthermore, In 2017, three employees of the Korean Esports Association (KeSPA), including a former assistant to chief executive Jun Byung-hun, have been arrested on suspicion of bribe-taking and money-laundering. Korean prosecutors formally indicted former KeSPA chairman Jun on the 18th, according to Hankyoreh. He is charged with bribery, embezzlement, abuse of power as a government official, receiving illegal political funds and other charges.

#### **Challenge IV: Politics**

With the growth of esports, so are the conflicting interests within the bureaucratization of esports. Accreditation for which games to include in its official list of games becomes a problem as this disenfranchises other gamers. Worthy to note in this theme is the fact that it is not possible for Teams to have a home stadium, which makes it difficult for clubs to market their own teams and compete with the rest of the world especially China which is

another country with a growing presence in esports according to one respondents. Although teams can rent stadiums, teams have to divide the revenue in proportion to the city and the province laws which makes doing so unviable.

### **Challenge V: Limited Experience**

Three respondents have identified the limitation of experience when it comes to institutionalizing esports as a sport. They point out the uniqueness of esports particularly the disconnect between traditional sports and esports. Traditional sports could easily adapt the institutionalization of other sports towards becoming a full-fledged sport, however, given that esports have a lot of aspects which makes it different from esports, the respondents pointed out the seeming impossibility of esports to become similar to traditional sports in terms of organizing and governance. At this point, the experience is based solely on general management principles and sports principles as required by law. However, given the corporate aspect of games as opposed to those of traditional sports which are not owned corporations, governance becomes difficult and would face continuous politicking.

### **4.2.2 Round 2 Results**



Round Two of the Delphi tries to look if there is a consensus given the themes from the Round 1 Questions. According to Hsu and Sandford, the second round of the Delphi is where expert consensus begins to take shape and made. The ability for experts to reassess, revise, and further distill their thoughts on the topic is one of the hallmarks of the Delphi study technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). As the responses for each question are categorical, a simple descriptive statistic is sufficient, and for this research, an 70% threshold is deemed appropriate to accept that a consensus has been reached. Should there be no consensus, the statement is pursued in the third round.

The respondents were given the summarized responses in a form of a statement and were asked if they agree with the statements, and are given an opportunity to change their responses or give replies. The following table:

**Table 4. Delphi Round 2 Results: Success Factors (Respondents = 10)**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Positive Consensus (%)</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>	<b>Pursue to Round 3?</b>
<i>The community is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	90%	10%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>The adaption of Media companies in broadcasting eSports is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	80%	20%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>Commercialization of esports is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Agree	40%	60%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>The fast internet and state of the art PC bangs (rooms) are factors in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>The Popularity of games is a factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	70%	30%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>The government support for esports is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	50%	30%	10%	10%	80%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>The Korea eSports federation is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Disagree	20%	20%	30%	30%	40%	Consensus Not Achieved	Yes

**Table 5. Delphi Round 2 Results: Challenges (Respondents = 10)**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Positive Consensus (%)</b>	<b>Thoughts</b>	<b>Pursue to Round 3?</b>
<i>The negative perception of esports is a challenge to the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	90%	10%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>Conflicting game company interests (i.e. Intellectual Property rights) is a challenge to the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	80%	20%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>Corruption in governing bodies is a challenge to the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	80%	20%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>Politics is an obstacle to the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	90%	10%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No
<i>Limited knowledge on how to run eSports clubs and the governing body is a challenge to the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Strongly Agree	70%	30%	0%	0%	100%	Consensus Achieved	No

It can be noticed that out of the 7 themes, 6 gained consensus in terms of identifying the success factors of institutionalization. Five of these factors, namely a) the community, b) adaption of media companies, c) commercialization d) popularity of games and e) fast internet and PC bangs received a positive consensus (agree and strongly agree) of 100%. Government support received 80% positive consensus. It can be noted that Commercialization does not have the same intensity in terms of agreement with the rest where consensus was achieved having 60% of the panelist indicate that they only agree to the statement whereas the rest having 50% - 100% strongly agreed to. One panelist commented that the system of eSports in Korea is based on companies forming and funding them, unlike other sports organizations where there are members who have a say on the organization, eSports clubs in Korea are run similar to professional sports organization.

Meanwhile, the governing body, Korea eSports Federation, only received a positive consensus of 40%, with 30% disagreeing, and 30% strongly disagreeing. Because this theme has not reached consensus, the theme will be pursued to third round.

With regards to the challenges and obstacles in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea. All themes received a 100%

positive consensus. All panelists agree that a) the negative perception b) conflicting game company interests, c) corruption, d) politics and e) limited knowledge on how to run eSports are challenges. As there is a 100% consensus, none of these challenges are pursued to Round 3. With regards to the limited knowledge, one panelist commented that esports is unique such that, it has elements of sports and elements of the IT industry.

#### **4.3.3 Round 3 Results**

In the third round of the Delphi Method, statements which did not reach a consensus are thrown back to the respondents to further distill it. Furthermore, the previous statements were given back so the respondents can change their answers or leave behind their comments. The question whether the Korea eSports Federation is a success factor received only 40% positive consensus, and 60% negative consensus. As this is considered split given the threshold of 70%, it was perceived that a further round was necessary. The results are in the following table.

Two experts initially expressed this as a success factor. In the second round, only 40% agreed that this a success factor, with 60% disagreeing. As there

**Table 6. Delphi Round 2 Results: Challenges (Respondents = 10)**

Statement	Mode	Agree	Disagree	Positive Consensus (%)	Thoughts
<i>The Korea eSports federation is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea</i>	Disagree	20%	80%	20%	Consensus not achieved

was no consensus, this was given back to the experts. In the third round, it can be noted that there is an increase in disagreement from 60% to 80% with the statement that the Korea eSports Federation is a success factor in the institutionalization of eSports. Because there is no consensus, this factor is deleted from the list.

#### **4.2.4 Delphi Study Summary**

##### **4.2.4.1 Success Factors**

###### **Success Factor I: Community**

With 8 experts initially indicating this as a success factor in the first round, this factor received a 100% consensus with 90% of the respondents Strongly agreeing and 10% agreeing. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

###### **Success Factor II: Media Adaption**

Four experts expressed this as a success factor in the first round of

the study. In the second round, 80% strongly agreed and 20% agreed, resulting in a 100% percent consensus. No expert changed his or her opinion in the third round.

### **Success Factor III: Commercialization**

Three experts initially suggested Commercialization as a success factor in the first round. 40% Strongly agreed and 60% agreed in the second round indicating a lesser intensity in terms of support. Still, it reached a 100% positive consensus. No Expert changed his or her opinion in the third round.

### **Success Factor IV: Fast Internet and PC Bangs**

Initially receiving the most number of opinion with 9 experts out of 10 suggesting this, it received a 100% Storngly agree in the second round. No expert changed his or her opinion in the third round.

### **Success Factor V: Popularity of Games**

This theme was suggested by 4 experts in the first round. 70% strongly agreed in the second round, and 30% expressed agreement in the third round. No expert changed his or her opinion in the third round.

### **Success Factor VI: Government Support**

Four experts gave this opinion in the first round of the study. 50% Strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 10% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed in the second round. Although 20% disagreed, 80% still gave a positive consensus, and in the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

#### **4.2.4.2 Challenges**

##### **Challenge I: Negative Perception**

All 10 experts indicated this to be a problem in the first round of the study. In the second round 10% agreed and 90% strongly agreed. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

##### **Challenge II: Conflicting Company Interests**

Four experts indicated this to be a problem in the first round of the study. In the second round 20% agreed and 80% strongly agreed. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

##### **Challenge III: Corruption**

Two experts indicated this to be a problem in the first round of the study. In the second round 20% agreed and 80% strongly agreed. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.



#### **Challenge IV: Politics**

Three experts indicated this to be a problem in the first round of the study. In the second round 10% agreed and 90% strongly agreed. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

#### **Challenge V: Limited Knowledge**

Three experts indicated this to be a problem in the first round of the study. In the second round 30% agreed and 70% strongly agreed. In the third round, no expert changed his or her opinion.

## **Chapter 5. Discussions and Conclusions**

The research objective is twofold a) to get to know how Korea is institutionalizing esports as a sport, and b) to identify what are the success factors and challenges in institutionalizing esports as a sport in Korea. To achieve the first question, it was necessary to interview people who are associated with the governing bodies that are primarily concerned with the institutionalization of esports in Korea, particularly, the Korean eSports Federation, and the International eSports Federation. It was also necessary to look for documentations and news reports to give credence to the history of

the process. Other stakeholders were also asked particularly those who have made a living out of eSports. Questions were guided based on the established elements of institutionalization, in particular a) Development of Rules and Regulations b) Development of Expertise c) Formalization of Training and d) Emergence of Governing Bodies.

The second part of this research looks at the perceived successes and challenges in the institutionalization of esports as a sport. Delphi method was used in gathering data as this forms a consensus among experts. Experts were nominated through recommendations and required that these people have stakes in the propagation of esports, in particular, professional who are working in the field of esports.

## **5.1 Discussions**

### **5.1.1 Institutionalization of eSports in Korea**

Korea is still in the process of institutionalizing esports as a sport. The development of rules and regulations is mandated by the Korean government which in turn brought about the Korea eSports Association. This codification of rules is necessary in the process of institutionalization. This stems from the concept of legitimacy as in every sports, there is a requirement

of an even playing field where players can compete within an agreed rules. KeSPA, for one, is adapting the World Anti-Doping Agency code which prohibits its players from taking drugs that would put their opponents at a disadvantage or cause health problems to the players. Given the limitations, KeSPA attempts to abide by the requirements of the Korean Olympic Committee, and the IeSF is attempting to adjust its organization guided by the requirements of the International Olympic Committee. This process is important as indicated by Di Margio and Powell, and described this phase as coercive isomorphism, which implies that organizations in an area must adapt to the structure and regulation.

Part of the process of institutionalization is the emergence of expertise. Professionalization is important as it given the sports industry's distinctiveness which is exemplified by features of intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption (Buswell, 2004). Nonprofessionals running an organization has proved to be a problem in the past as organizations, events, and governance were once managed by sports enthusiasts who do not have formalized management experience and relied on informal planning, control and administrative systems (Barney, 1991). Although specific esports professions are products of applying

expertise to the field of esports, they are proving to be effective given the number of professionals identifying themselves and the number of jobs that require such expertise. This is considered to be normative isomorphism, which is understood as the increased professionalization in managing organizations derived from recruiting people with the same understanding of how an organization ought to be managed (Di Margio and Powell., 1991).

Formalizing of training is seen as a necessity in the institutionalization. Jigoro Kano set forth his Kata as means to lay a foundation for Judo (Bennett, 2009). Many academies in Korea have emerged teaching strategies and game play mechanics. In the field of Game Studies, strategies are heavily studied, and the nature of esports allow concepts of gaming strategies to be applied in training.

Finally, the emergence of governing bodies is seen as the nexus of institutionalization of sports. The foundation of different sports that has become stabilized over time is because of the governing bodies. In Korea, the International eSports Federation was founded in 2008, and in 2012, by mandate of the government, the Korea eSports Association emerged. Although competing associations were present such as the eSports Federation, KeSPA with the backing of the government emerged as a winner. This

competition between two rival organization is called competitive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Competitive isomorphism gives legitimacy to the institution according to the norms and values of the environment and is similar to how sports associations emerge.

### **5.1.1 Success Factors**

Seven Themes emerged from the initial round of the Delphi Study conducted on eSports experts in Korea. They are a) the community b) media adaption c) commercialization d) fast internet and pc bangs e) popularity of games f) government support and g) KeSPA. In the second round of the study, all but KeSPA received a consensus as to what is perceived to be a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport. Drilling down further to the third round, it can be noticed that 80% replied KeSPA is not a success factor in the institutionalization of eSports as Sport. It would be interesting to note, that although it is not considered as a success factor, it was not brought up as an obstacle to the process. It can be surmised that KeSPA still has not set itself up as a leading organization in the institutionalization of esports as a sport.

The Community is the backbone of any sporting success. In the institutionalization of sports, it is important to have a shared history, that

is, critical to this behavioural 'blueprinting' is the course of a shared history during which the behavioural patterns are established. The shared history feature recognizes how important the period of time is in sedimenting or layering of the behaviours so that the layers do become sedimented or embedded as reliable and predictable (Morrow, 1992). Truly enough, multiple news agencies have come into the conclusion that eSports has become a national past time for Koreans.

Media adaption in Korea also proves to be a general factor in the institutionalization of sports. It allows the sports to be marketed, and incites interest. Media can introduce eSports to non players, and it allows players successes to be recognized. So much so that eSports professionals have become superstars in Korea.

Commercialization allows esports to be a career for many. In Korea, multiple job titles have eSports in it. Players are given salaries. Different professions in relation to esports are growing and constantly in need. Commercialization opens job opportunities for others as well.

The Fast Internet and PC bangs in Korea paved the way towards the institutionalization of esports. As PC games, played online, require fast internet in terms of response times, the uncongested internet allows games to

be playable at a much more enjoyable experience. The ubiquity of PC bangs with state-of-the-art hardware addresses the intense need of software programs in terms of graphic rendering.

The popularity of games, particularly in means of the story-telling makes esports interesting in conjunction with the competitiveness. It allows players to experience the game with stories and fantasies.

Government support, finally, allows the promotion and propagation of esports. Similar to how, in the dictatorial years of Korea, elite sports was propagated leading towards its current successful state, government support gives legitimacy to esports.

These factors, interwoven together, show the uniqueness of esports as opposed to traditional sports as all factors are emerging simultaneously, unlike other sports that required years to propagate.

### **5.1.3 Challenges**

Five themes emerged from the first round of the Delphi process, and these are a) negative perception b) conflicting company interests c) corruption d) politics e) limited experience. All five challenges received a consensus from the 10 experts and thus did not need to be included in the third round of

questions. Negative perception, corruption, politics and limited experience are all common problems that arose in the institutionalization of other sports.

Sports are often regarded as a virtue, whereas computer gaming is looked upon as a vice (Jonasson, Thiborg, 2010). The same problem can also be seen in elite sports as causing more harm (Augestad, Bergsgard, Hansen, 2006). Martial Arts perceived to cause juveniles violence and delinquency (Zivin, Gail, et al. 2001).

Corruption and politics have been well studied off as well in the field of sports which has led to the creation of tools such as the Basic Indicators for Better Governance. And finally, the limitation in experience in running esports as a sport is similar to the past ‘amateurism’ of running sports organizations which eventually led to gradual professionalization (Auld 1997).

Conflicting company interests, however, stands unique. In a study by Holden, Kaburakis and Rodenberg (2017), They argued that the classification of esports as a sport would have a potentially significant impact on the industry in the form of increased exposure to litigation which may present hurdles to sustained growth, particularly in the areas of consumer protection statutes, intellectual property rights, and antitrust laws. Given that games are



owned by corporations, it can well be argued that interests will be influenced by these companies which could very well affect the independence of eSports organizations.

## **5.2 Limitations and Future Directions**

As this is a qualitative research that sought expert opinions, the findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can.

The researcher conducted the research in Korea using English and sought the assistance of a native Korean speaker to translate some questions and replies. Ambiguities which is inherent in human language may arise.

Furthermore, the nature of email questions in some participants may have prohibited the respondents from asking follow up questions as opposed to one on one interviews where these ambiguities are clarified. It should also be noted that since the study is done in Korea, the researcher relied on available English versions of rules, statutes and even news. Original Korean versions may have more information that could affect the study.

One of the most important facets of propagation of sports is the

documentation of its institutionalization. At its current stage, it can be deduced that eSports is on its way towards becoming institutionalized as a sport. There are unique problems though that is only present in esports, particularly the commercial aspect of the games. In other facets, organizational formation and rules development, esports has traditional sports as a blueprint. The rise of expertise particularly in esports could encourage universities and colleges to further diverge studies to more specific areas of studies such as Data Science for eSports, Marketing for eSports, Business Development for eSports etc. as jobs within the esports industry is growing. Furthermore, KeSPA and IeSF, which aims for inclusion to the Olympics, could look into the success factors to further promote esports. These organizations could also look at the perceived challenges so they may be addressed. Further studies to the effect of the success factors and challenges could also help towards the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea.

More detailed studies on the specific elements of institutionalization can also be done as this research only scratched the surface. Furthermore, should Korea capitalize on the stated success factors, and address the challenges, it could cement its position as THE center of eSport.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Esports is being institutionalized in Korea similarly to how other sports were institutionalized. Firstly, Rules and regulations are being developed, updated and revised, primarily through the Korea eSports Federation and the Korea-based International eSports Federation. Secondly, expertise specific to eSports are emerging, and have become careers. Training is formalized, and given that computer gaming has been studied, allows esports to tap into a cache of knowledge for use in training. Finally, the emergence of the governing bodies becomes the nexus of esports progress towards becoming a full-fledged sport.

These institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea is driven towards success with the following factors: 1) Community support 2) Media Adaption 3) Commercialization 4) Fast Internet and PC Bangs 5) Game Popularity and 6) Government Support. The obstacles, however, to the process are: 1) Negative perception 2) Conflicting Company Interests 3) Corruption 4) Politics and 5) The Limited Experience in running esports as sport.

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## **Appendix I: Cover Letter**

Dear Sir/Maam:

Thank you for agreeing to partake in a survey exercise for this research project. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

This Master's Thesis research aims to understand the success factors as well as the challenges in institutionalizing eSports as a sport in Korea. Institutionalization refers to the a) development and standardization of rules b) formalizing of training c) development of expertise and d) emergence of governing bodies.

The following survey is stage 1 of a Delphi Questionnaire. This is designed to obtain your personal opinion relating to the issue.

The Delphi Process involves questioning you on three separate occasions:

Round1: Some general open ended questions will be submitted to you requiring your response. These are below for you to reply now.

At a later date:

Round2: Your answers (and those from other panelists) from round 1

will be summarized and formulated into a series of more specific questions that you will be asked to respond to.

Round 3: Round 2's questions which have not reached consensus will be submitted to you again but this time, you will be able to see the average reply of other panelists and you will be asked to adjust your answer from the second round or not.

Thank you very much

Salvador Reyes Jr.

## **Appendix II: Round 1 Questions**

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The two questions below are designed to seek your personal opinion. Please reply to each one but please do not feel limited in length or style of your answers. A reply to these email is fine.

- 1) In your opinion, what are the key success factors in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea?
- 2) In your opinion, what are the challenges in the institutionalization of esports in Korea?

Thank you very much for your assistance,

Salvador Reyes Jr.

### **Appendix III: Round 2 Questions**

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While there are only 2 open ended questions within one round of the Delphi Technique, twelve themes were created.

1	The community is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2	The adaption of Media companies in broadcasting eSports is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3	Commercialization of esports is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4	The fast internet and state of the art PC bangs (rooms) are factors in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5	The Popularity of eSports is a factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree



6	The government support for esports is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7	The Korea eSports federation is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8	The negative perception of esports is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9	Conflicting game company interests (i.e. Intellectual Property rights) is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10	Corruption in governing bodies is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11	Politics is an obstacle to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

12	Limited knowledge on how to run eSports clubs and the governing body is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Any comments you may wish to (but are not expected to) add:

**Appendix III: Round 3 Questions**

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You recently assisted the second round of my research with your opinions to 12 questions on the successes and challenges in institutionalizing esports a sport. This is the final round of the research and you will be asked 1 question. Please read the statement and mark your answer. A short note is provided with the question to let you know what the general opinion was in the previous round.

12	The Korea eSports federation is a success factor in the institutionalization of esports as a sport in Korea		
		Disagree	Agree

*Note: In the last round of questions, 40% agreed with this.*

The following statements received consensus from the previous round, if you wish to give more inputs, please include it below.

1	The community is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

2	The adaption of Media companies in broadcasting eSports is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

3	Commercialisation of esports is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

4	The fast internet and state of the art PC bangs (rooms) are factors in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

5	The Popularity of games is a factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

6	The government support for esports is a success factor in the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 80% agreed with this.*

8	The negative perception of esports is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

9	Conflicting game company interests (i.e. Intellectual Property rights) is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

10	Corruption in governing bodies is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

11	Politics is an obstacle to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

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*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

12	Limited knowledge on how to run eSports clubs and the governing body is a challenge to the institutionalisation of esports as a sport in Korea

*Note: In the last round of questions, 100% agreed with this.*

# 대한민국 e스포츠의 스포츠 제도화

Salvador Reyes Jr

글로벌스포츠매니지먼트 전공

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대한민국은 e스포츠의 선두자리에 위치하고 있다. 1990년대 스타크래프트부터 시작해서 2018년 리그오브레전드까지 한국은 e스포츠의 중심지로 꼽히고 있다. e스포츠의 상승과 함께 따라오는 문제는 과연 스포츠로 간주될 수 있는지 와, 그리고 어떻게 올림픽 종목으로 포함될 수 있는지에 대한 의문이 제기된다. 스포츠의 측면 중에 하나이자, 특히 올림픽의 측면은 제도화이다. 본 연구는 한국이 e스포츠를 스포츠로서 어떻게 제도화하고 있는지를 이해하고자 한다. 특히 a) 규칙 및 규정 개발 b) 전문성 개발 측면 c) 훈련 공식화 및 d) 거버넌스 기구의 출현. 또한 e스포츠를 스포츠로서 제도화하는 과정에서 직면하는 성공 요인과 도전을 이해하려고 한다.

이해를 돕기 위해 e스포츠 분야의 전문가들에게 본

연구문제에 대한 그들의 의견을 구했다. 방법으로는 인터뷰, 문서 연구, 델파이 접근법이 사용되었다.

연구 결과는 한국이 제도화하는 과정에서 상당히 발전하고 있다는 것을 보여준다. 한국은 e스포츠협회(KeSPA)에 합법성을 부여하는 정부의 권한 때문에 e스포츠를 스포츠로 제도화할 수 있다. 게다가, 올림픽과 같은 국제 스포츠 기관의 요구조건이 이미 시행되어 있기 때문에, 한국은 따라서 완전한 스포츠화가 될 수 있도록 하기 위해 그런 요구 조건을 충족시키려 하고 있다.

이 연구는 또한 다음과 같은 성공요인을 보여주고 있다: a) 강력한 지역사회, b) 미디어 적응, c) 상업화, d) 아주 흔한 PC 방과 빠른 인터넷 속도 e) 게임인기 및 f) 정부 지원.

그러나, 진행하는 과정에 있어 장애물 또한 존재하였다. 특히 a) 부정적인 인식, b) 상충하는 회사의 관심, c) 정치, d) e-스포츠를 스포츠로서 운영하는데 있어서의 제한된 경험을 꼽을 수 있다.

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**주요어:** e스포츠, 올림픽

**학 번:** 2017-22548