

The Development and Economy of Cybersport, Cybersport Tournaments and its Spatial Effects in Tourism

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Abstract:

This article is written about the development of cybersport, its advantages, features and effects of cybersport in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Cybersport, Esports, Tourism, Cybersport tournaments.

The evolution of traditional games and the shift to digital media have been sped up by developments in information technology, the expansion of the internet network, and the rise in computer and smartphone ownership. Digital games, which have been evolving for many years, are today not only played for leisure and fun but also for professional and competitive reasons. In reality, this effect has led to the emergence of a new sports branch. This area of sports, particularly among the younger generation known as generation Z, is called "Electronic sports (Esports-esports)" or Cybersport.

One of the first and most trustworthy sources to use the term for the first time compared esports to traditional sports in a news release created for the inauguration of the Online Gamers Association (OGA-UK) in 1999. According to an examination of the literature, the word "electronic sports" is abbreviated in a variety of ways: like eSport, e-Sport, and e-Sport. However, new usage guidelines for "esports" were authorized in the 2017 edition of the Associated Press (AP) Styleguide. It was highlighted that the right spelling was "esports," and that it should be stated as "Esports" at the beginning of the sentence.

Even with certain physical and cerebral components, there are still disagreements about whether esports is a legitimate sport discipline. Most of these conversations center around the idea that esports don't include any kind of physical exertion. The group that supports the contrary, however, should not be dismissed. In addition to these conversations, it is believed that esports could emerge as a counterculture or a modern sport alternative. Esports has developed into a sport branch that also gets public funding. Esports is acknowledged as a legitimate sporting discipline in nations like South Korea, China, Russia, Hungary, and Denmark, as well as Turkey. It is amazing how

this area has seen such extensive development that it now has a federal structure on both a national and international level. For instance, the Turkish Esports Federation [TEF] in 2018; the International e-Sports Federation in Korea in 2008; and the European Esports Federation in 2020. At the national and international levels, numerous official and private esports competitions are also staged, including the World Cup, European Cup, International League, Esports Amateur League, and Esports Professional League. Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Turkey has designated esports as a branch of sports, and players' involvement in competitions is constrained by the issuing of licenses.

The growth of the internet, the advent of internet cafés, and the creation of competitive games are three significant events that have shaped esports up to this point. Digital games first became popular in the arcades in the 1980s, and in the 1990s, arcade halls were where the culture of digital games was created. Since the 2000s, when the internet has been used extensively, games are now played online thanks to the global access network. Games are now multiplayer instead of single-player as a result. As a result, esports have opened up a brand-new market for goods, services, and organizations. Early in the 1990s, the West (Europe and the United States) invented esports games, and South Korea was the first nation to take part. In an effort to expand the esports culture, the South Korean government, which embraced the idea of esports in popular culture in the early 2000s, created the "Korean e-Sports Association," a division within the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of South Korea. The rapid expansion of esports since 2010 has been greatly influenced by the popularity of online live broadcast platforms like Twitch, which highlights the competitive character and rising trajectory of esports:

"As a matter of fact, as teams, tournaments, leagues, prize money, management and sponsorship agreements increased, a competitive gaming culture emerged. Finally, international bodies such as World Cyber Games, Cyberathlete Professional League, Korean Esports Association and International Esports Federation work synchronously with country federations, setting rules for the esports ecosystem and shaping the institutionalization process"

Sports have recently taken on a significant role in the tourist sector, which plays a significant role in the lives of modern societies. Two significant, fiercely competitive, and interconnected industries are sports and tourism. After the 1980s, the idea of "Sports Tourism," in which these two distinct industries are assessed jointly, is introduced. Research into the role and significance of sports tourism in the nation's economy has also increased during the 1990s. In actuality, a sizeable portion of all tourism-related income worldwide come from the sports tourism industry. Sports tourism movements help nations promote their political, cultural, economic, and public image while also bringing in significant foreign exchange earnings via long-term organizations or tournaments.

The 21st century's evolving technologies and advancements in the cybersport industry have started to influence people's travel and leisure behaviors. Electronic sports are among the most well-liked pastimes of the day, along with big tournament organizations, internet broadcasts, university scholarships for cybersport professionals, cybersport federations that have been established, and the ability to compete in the Asian Olympic Games. From this vantage point, it is easy to assess the cybersport phenomena in the tourism industry. Given that only a portion of the gaming industry has generated more revenue than the film industry, which is referred to as "on-screen tourism" in the literature, and that the gaming industry has more than doubled the revenue of Hollywood's

film industry overall, it is clear that electronic sports tourism is a niche market that needs to be targeted. Cybersport events are increasingly viewed as enormous events that take place in vast facilities, have high ticket prices, and attract a sizable audience as a result of the growing demand. Research findings and literature, including a systematic evaluation and comparison of destinations, are still in their infancy despite the cybersport industry's rapid expansion.

2. About cybersport

Cybersport is a relatively new phenomenon that hasn't been thoroughly researched yet. When the cybersport literature is browsed, multiple definitions emphasizing the many aspects of cybersport stand out. To emphasize the various aspects of cybersport, let's examine some of its definitions:

"It is a sports field where individuals improve their mental and physical abilities by using information and communication technologies and train players".

"It is a form of sport in which the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the inputs of players and teams, as well as the outputs of the cybersport system, are provided through human computer interfaces".

"It is a sport where two people from one side of the world to the other can play games via the internet or people from all over the world can meet and play with large organizations, covering much more than most sports require, both physically and mentally".

"Cybersport is a field that is introduced as the new form of sports and played with various modes of competitive multiplayer, digital games played on computer/console / mobile platforms, online or offline, individually and/or as a team".

If we construct a broad definition of cybersport that incorporates a variety of definitions: Individuals who use information technologies; It is a branch of sports that fosters the development of mental and physical skills; it includes organizations that occasionally facilitate cross-border interaction; it involves competition; it requires more mental effort than most sports; however, it also necessitates the acquisition of physical skills, which also fosters the development of mental and physical abilities.

The term "cybersport" refers to a concept developed by technological advancements; it is broad and multidisciplinary in nature and covers a wide range of subjects, including professional players, teams, uniforms, managers, coaches, and representatives as well as leagues, tournaments, events, endorsements, and player transfer fees as well as commentators and university scholarships. Cybersport comes in a variety of forms, including classic sports that have been modified for the virtual world.

3. Economy of the cybersport sector

It is known that the number of cybersport viewers on a global scale is 495 million. 222.9 million of this figure is the segment that follows cybersport regularly. It is estimated that the total number of cybersport viewers will reach 646 million in 2023. China ranks first in the world in terms of both cybersport audience and cybersport awareness. It can be said that audience and awareness numbers are growing rapidly in emerging markets in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa and Southeast Asia. Cybersport is a rapidly developing sector/sport/field in Turkey also. According to the latest data, 32 million people play digital games in Turkey, and 4 million people have cybersport awareness. Being a cybersport player on a national and international scale is

subject to a license. There are 85 licensed cybersport teams and 1515 cybersport players (1384 men and 131 women) in Turkey.

The cybersport economy accounts for 1% of the global gaming industry of about \$ 99.6 billion. The cybersport economy, which has a revenue of \$ 776.4 million in 2019, is estimated to reach over \$ 1 billion by the end of 2020. Global cybersport revenues increase by more than 38% year-on-year. Sponsorships account for more than half (\$614.9 billion) of the cybersport sector's 2020 revenues (\$1.06 billion) (such as sponsorship, media rights, broadcast fees, product and ticket sales, live broadcasting). The main reason for sponsorship revenues to be in the first place is that it creates an important advertising space for companies that have difficulty in reaching the young generation between the ages of 12 and 25, called generation Z, through traditional mass media (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.). Not just from the computer or gaming industry, sponsorship agreements are made in almost every sector from automobile companies to personal care, from communication to textile. In addition to foreign teams such as Paris Saint Germain, Manchester City, Schalke 04, three major Turkish clubs «BJK, FB, GS» have formed their own cybersport teams. Cybersport is not only limited to clubs and teams but also players from different sports around the world (such as Shaquille O'Neal and Rick Fox, baseball players Jimmy Rollins and Alex Rodriguez, as well as an active NBA player, Jonas Jerebko) started to invest in the field. As in other sports, player transfers are carried out between teams and countries in the field of cybersport. The number of companies investing in cybersport sponsorship and establishing the cybersport league is also growing rapidly.

Cybersport grows its economic structure significantly every year and makes a multi-faceted contribution to the sports economy. Cybersport attracting the attention of investors from many fields including modern sports clubs; a growing economy, potential fan base and having a different \$776,4 \$957,5 \$1.059,3 \$1.598,2 \$0 \$200 \$400 \$600 \$800 \$1.000 \$1.200 \$1.400 \$1.600 \$1.800 2018 2019 2020 2023 million \$ 237 sports content have a great impact. Currently, technology companies make deals with professional cybersport teams for both advertising and financial support purposes. Intel, Coca-Cola, Red Bull, Mountain Dew, T-Mobile, Mobil 1, Audi, Airbus, ASUS, HTC, Logitech, Razer and Turkish Airlines are multinational companies that sponsor cybersport. Cybersport revenues are derived from broadcasters' investments, tickets, advertising, sponsorships and major award-winning tournaments. A portion of the revenue is transferred to the game platform, a portion to the seller, and a portion to the prize pool. Each cybersport team has its own sponsor income, and teams pay their players' salaries at rates that vary depending on the level of economic development.

Cybersport is a field that has its own unique features in the sports industry; when evaluated in terms of its size and development trend, it can be called a new economy. In the rise of the cybersport economy, which is a strong economy within the sports industry; maintaining the sustainability and success levels of sports clubs, which are one of the most important actors, in this industry, monetary inflows and newly implemented business models that underlie the existence of actors and the sustainability of the industry are important factors. In 2017, the Olympic Council of Asia announced that the Asian Games, which will be held in China in 2022, will take place in the medal competitions as official games. One of the most important developments is that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has reported that the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris will include some cybersport demonstration events. The recent

development of cybersport is a new indicator of the social trends emerging, especially in postindustrial societies where consumers are increasingly working to maintain their leisure spending. As a result, some emerging forms of leisure activity have yielded lasting benefits, such as a sense of self-realization and identity development. Previously due to a significant lack of value creation for cybersport users and the financial crisis, the period from 2009 to 2013 constitutes the most significant years of growing the cybersport economy. The increasing activity has created stable sources of revenue in the cybersport field so that the sector has evolved into a business that can focus on less risky growth and then sustainable business models.

4. Cybersport tournaments and its spatial effects

A major event has the ability to leave the city or nation hosting it with a lasting legacy that offers prospects for social, political, and economic advancement as well as recognition to the entire world. Through competitions, the cybersport business brings together a sizable number of individuals, including team members, fans, sponsors, and representatives of gaming corporations. Top structures have been developed for computer games that are actively played with the assistance of big businesses. For these games, championships and tournaments under various names are held. Cybersport competitors who win these competitions are also given some titles. In this organization, football's top professional sports teams compete against players who play computer games, who are mostly members of Generation Z.

In 2019, the total number of tournaments held online and offline worldwide was 5158. These tournaments awarded \$227.6 million in total prize money. Most tournaments that provide prizes worth more than \$3 million are hosted in nations in North America and the Far East. Interest in cybersport is also high in these nations, which place a high value on technology advancements and list 240 innovative activities. The 2019 "The International" competition set a record for the most honors given out. When comparing the locales of the games that have given out more than \$1 million in prizes since their introduction, South Korea, France, and China come in second to the United States and Japan.

In terms of the number of tournaments organized, USA ranks first, followed by China. If we look at the reasons why the USA and China are so prominent:

- Since most of the games in question are of USA origin, the main centers of the companies are located in this country;
- The number of potential audiences is higher compared to European countries;
- Location advantage for companies organizing tournaments,
- To be able to produce solutions in a short time with sufficient staff and workforce against any problem;
- The reasons such as China and Asian countries showing great interest in games and the affordable labour costs come to the fore;

Turkey hosted its first cybersport competition in 2005. This tournament, which has 36 players and a total prize pool of \$64,000, is the first of its kind to be organized in Turkey. A total of 12,000 ticketed spectators attended the Istanbul League of Legends International Wild Card Tournament in 2016. The biggest international tournament staged in Turkey is Blast Pro Series Istanbul, which took place on September 28 and 29, 2018, despite their being local competitions in the years that followed. A prize of \$250,000 was awarded to the event, which attracted 8000 ticketed spectators

and six teams. On the Twitch live broadcast network, the event, which was observed in real time by hundreds of thousands of people, was instantly viewed by up to 241 thousand individuals. Because the contests are not planned so that the audience would also participate in multiple events, as is typically the case with daily activities, it can be explained why cybersport events taking place in Turkey have not yet had the desired impact. It is clear that traditional sports have qualities that add value and make outdoor space. Growing demand from both people who play and watch sports has led to larger stadium construction projects, which is a reasonable cause to consider sports as part of spatial planning. Cybersport tournaments have shown to be quite effective in drawing enormous crowds to big events, gyms, and on-screen. Tournaments, which were first staged on a modest or regional scale, have grown into important worldwide events, and competitions that were formerly hosted in internet cafés or tiny rooms have begun to take place in stadiums. Both traditional sports and cybersport can be discussed in terms of the feature that governs the venue. Stadiums are only being constructed right now for cybersport events. Only a few of them, along with the "Arlington ESports Stadium" with a capacity of 2500, are the "Fortress E-Sports Arena" with a seating capacity of 1000 and the "Fusion Arena" with a capacity of 3500. Once more, examples of these are the "Riot Games E-sports Stage" with a 1000-person capacity, the "ninal E-Sports Arena" with a 1600-person capacity, and the "Nonstop Zula Stage." Stadiums and their surrounding areas, particularly in metropolitan areas, might be referenced when discussing how remodeling affects cities.

Stadiums can have a variety of impacts on the area where they are built. The change in land use they produce is where these effects start. Stadiums, which have varying capacities, can also result in pattern changes, particularly in urban land use. While the activities are being planned, it's important to keep a close eye on any potential issues that might develop in the surrounding area as well as the economic and tourism upswing they bring about. Numerous academic research have examined both the beneficial and detrimental effects of stadiums. The economic impact and tourist component of sports groups have also been covered in numerous studies. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the IOC have a tight working relationship as a result of sport's positive impact on tourism. Both organizations sponsor research on how particular sports activities affect tourism as well as sports that promote tourism. Tournaments and events create a subculture among the audience and significantly increase tourism movement.

5. Cybersport tourism: Can it contribute as alternative tourism?

The concept of sports tourism has been discussed in the literature for a while as one of the alternative forms of travel and a reflection of the numerous sporting events (such as the Olympic Games, World Cup, and others) that are held annually around the globe. According to studies, 88% of the 110,000 foreign visitors who came to Australia for the Sydney 2000 Summer Olympics visited Sydney as a tourist afterward. The desire of returning to Barcelona was found to be the most valuable factor for tourists' futures, according to a study of travelers who attended an cybersport event hosted in Barcelona in 2019. It is well-known that 60,000 fans traveled to Istanbul for the 2005 UEFA Champions League Final. In traditional sports, sports tourism is fairly common. For instance, 1 million visitors traveled to the UK in 2011 to watch the Champions League, and on average, these sports tourists spent more than 50% of what the typical traveler did that year. ESL One Frankfurt (2014), one of the greatest events in the world, demonstrated that

cybersport enthusiasts are just as devoted as football supporters and have traveled great distances to attend the competition. Visitors to ESL One came from every continent (apart from Antarctica). Cybersport is now being considered as a new travel motive in the tourist industry and are also examined in the special interest tourism category. because cybersport experiences are not exclusive to the internet. It may be claimed that organized cybersport activities are beginning to serve as the main driver for carrying out tourism operations at some levels, much as the tourist activities performed for a football organization. Events are a major source of prestige and revenue for the nation and community. Cybersport championships stand out as a particularly attractive alternative option for promoting the city and drawing tourists, especially in light of the high cost of investments, time-consuming planning requirements, and difficulty in obtaining hosting rights. Approximately 243 significant factors make cybersport a popular tourist activity. The possibility to meet the top players fighting in the world league and to experience the tourist potential of the location where the tournaments are hosted are two amazing benefits of watching cybersport in the region where it is played.

Cybersport is a phenomenon that spans both the online and offline communities and is both recreational and athletic by nature. Similar to traditional sports, this field has gained popularity particularly among young people and people from other cultures around the world. It has also developed a fan base. As an illustration of a few cybersport competitions that are highly influential globally: The 2014 "League of Legends World Championship" was held in South Korea, and 40.000 ticketed spectators were present. The event, which was broadcast live from Seoul's Sangam Stadium to 27 million viewers worldwide. The video had 11.2 million immediate views, with an average viewing time of 67 minutes. The contest between the San Antonio Spurs and the Miami Heat, which took place in the same year and will decide the 2014 NBA champion, had 19 thousand ticket holders, while there were 18 million spectators nationwide.

Nowadays, cybersport has become one of the hottest trends in the hospitality and tourism industry due to its growing popularity. Active participation of the state in the process is of great importance in the success to be obtained from the cybersport event. States affect the budget amount in tourism development, computer technology infrastructure and the quality of technology used. The intense interest in cybersport can be seen as a great advantage for the development of cybersport tourism. Hosting cybersport tournaments benefits the economy in general and the hospitality sector in particular. This is because cybersport viewers spend money on travel, lodging, food, and other necessities, boosting the regional economy. Cybersport competitions also assist in building the brand by bridging social innovation with technological advancement. Depending on the event, cybersport tournaments might last up to 10 days. When just the competing teams, athletes, coaches, and support staff are taken into account, there is a substantial tourism potential. As a result, both athletes and spectators contribute to the economy of the destination. A significant organization's good influence on the nation's image as a travel destination will be highly beneficial. If we look at the different definitions of cybersport tourism based on these explanations:

"Cybersport tourism, interaction created by professional teams, spectators and tournament organizers participating in computer games tournaments organized offline in a physical venue"

"Cybersport tourism is a type of tourism based on the realization of electronic sports activities in a designated country and destination in the form of tournaments, the participation of players,

audiences, relevant institutions and organizations in these tournaments, and the use of various touristic activities such as eating, drinking, accommodation, entertainment"

The number of tourists willing to tour cities or countries thousands of miles away to participate in cybersport events has increased significantly over the decades. This trend has created a new type of tourism "cybersport tourism". Cybersport events attract a lot of attention from the audience. Viewers get the chance to closely watch the race of the world's best players, meet their favorite players and share their passions with hundreds of enthusiastic fans of similar interests.

Taking into account that the cybersport tourist (especially the Z generation) will come together with the players and take a photo after the tournament, which, in the words of this segment, will be a "unique and unforgettable experience". As a growing market, cybersport events constitute an important attraction area for the tourism sector.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The 21st century is shaped by digital communication technologies. Communication has grown to be the most alluring industry of the era as a result of the rapid development of digital technologies and their entry into practically all facets of daily life. The impact of industry 4.0 and the age of digital transformation on societies has sparked the emergence of cybersport, which is strongly related to digital technology. Cybersport, which derives its income from wagering, incentive programs, competitions, and sponsors, has succeeded in increasing awareness among millions of people worldwide. Cybersport is a cutting-edge, interdisciplinary industry where the fields of finance, sports, new media, information technology, and new media all come together. Despite the extent of interest in cybersport at the amateur, professional, and recreational levels, it is remarkable that there are not yet enough scientific research in this area. Cybersport is a product of the twenty-first century with a huge global audience and revenue. At this moment, fresh academic research on cybersport is crucial for supplying the knowledge that the industry need.

While debates over cybersport virtual nature, lack of physical exercise, and actual sports branch continue, a sizeable portion of the population views cybersport participants as athletes and draws comparisons between traditional sports and cybersport. Numerous well-attended cybersport tournaments and events have drawn hundreds of competitors from different continents, and this new sport is becoming more and more regarded as a decent spectator sport. The social activities of the twenty-first century are cybersport competitions. Fans pack an arena the size of Anfield to see the match between well-known cybersport teams Fanatic and DC Dota2 instead of traveling to a football stadium to watch Arsenal vs. Liverpool. For example, ESL One's participation in Frankfurt (Germany) was 52,000, while the League of Legends World Final in Seoul (South Korea) saw 45,000 fans fill the Sangam Stadium. Therefore, these events are tourist attractions, and a new marketing environment is in question within the tourism paradigm. Numerous well-attended cybersport tournaments and events have drawn hundreds of competitors from different continents, and this new sport is becoming more and more regarded as a decent spectator sport. The social activities of the twenty-first century are cybersport competitions. Fans pack an arena the size of Anfield to see the match between well-known cybersport teams Fanatic and DC Dota2 instead of traveling to a football stadium to watch Arsenal vs. Liverpool.

Examining the regional impacts of cybersport reveals that 38% of the entire global cybersport revenue comes from only North America. It was discovered that 56% (509 million dollars) of the

total global cybersport revenues were generated in China and North America. The key reason for these countries' rising incomes is their importance to cybersport players and event organizers. Asian nation internet network upgrades in recent years have created a favorable environment for cybersport. Asian nations that invest more in the field in terms of production and development may soon overtake North American nations as a result of these technical advancements.

It is predicted that by 2021, there will be 250 million cybersport fans worldwide. North America has hosted 28% of the events that have been planned thus far, followed by Western Europe (26%), and Eastern Europe (13%). North America accounts for 44% of ticket income, followed by Western Europe with 29%, according to tournaments held across the world and sales revenues. When compared to developing and undeveloped nations, countries with large gross domestic products have a higher spending potential for cybersport, demonstrating that the cybersport industry fosters favorable conditions for these nations' further development. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which adds further barriers to participating and viewing traditional sports, many nations are making significant investments in the cybersport sector. Eighty-three percent of cybersport lovers between the ages of 18 and 34 began to play video games more frequently following the quarantine, particularly during the lockdown procedure (also known as the quarantine) in April and May. Similarly, 18% of those who watched traditional sports events began to watch cybersport events.

Cybersport ensures that the number of nations holding competitions steadily rises because it has a competitive aspect and consistently thrills viewers. The audience's desire to watch the competition live has raised interest in cybersport tourism. Cybersport tourism may be a result of the millennium generation's (also known as generation Z) great interest in information technologies and the internet. Cybersport competitions frequently last more than a few days, sometimes even up to ten. Teams, players, coaches, assistant staff, and spectators all serve as a destination's tourist resource. Large-scale organizations, in particular, and those that last for longer than a week in terms of the impression they will give of the destination in the nation, will also make a beneficial contribution. The results can be interpreted as a major benefit for the growth of cybersport tourism if the results are considered in the context of tourism. Cybersport competitions in Turkey are not planned so that participants can also take part in other events, and they are typically explained by how individuals plan their daily schedules.

Recent developments in the inclusion of cybersport competitions in the Olympics and the expanding audience suggest that this area will have a substantial impact on tourism. It may be claimed that it is a successful strategy for enhancing regional equality, extending the tourist season, and diversifying tourism. It is crucial to boost cybersport economic impact and make sure that it becomes a sector that supports tourism in economically growing nations like Turkey. Cybersport has been able to participate in higher education and establish itself in formal terms in several nations, including Turkey, thanks to the assistance of various ministries.

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