

Call for Papers - The Business of eSports: Deciphering the World of Competitive Gaming

Submission Deadline: 15 June 2019

The competitive gaming scene surged in the recent years with tournaments filling the bird's nest in Beijing in 2017, and the League of Legends finals in 2018 peaked at 200 million viewers. In 2017 this market had a value of nearly 500 million U.S. dollar, and some analyst proposed that it will go up towards 1,7 billion U.S. dollars in 2021. Companies like Adidas, Mercedes-Benz, Gillette and Old Spice joined the eSports scene rivaling the commitment by Red Bull, Coca-Cola, and Intel. There are now over 150 sports teams involved in eSports, e.g., Philadelphia 76ers, Golden State Warriors, FC Schalke 04, Kraft group (owners of New England Patriots) and many more are investing in eSports heavily. The key goal for them is to attract the young generation. We observe a massive surge in interest in 2016 and 2017. It may even seem like that we are in a buying frenzy capped by Amazon's acquisition of Twitch for 970 million dollars. In some games, teams have to pay a franchise fee for roughly 60 million U.S. dollar to create the next NFL or NBA.

At the same time, eSports in its today form is over 20 years old; the competitive gaming aspect started even with the first game. Even the first video game was designed to be watchable by other people. The eSports sphere grew in those 20 years out of its infancy without being influenced heavily by the outside companies. Companies and brands evolved and created their way of managing. This lead to novel approaches, that are not always typical "start-up" or traditional. For example, the concept of virtual teams is a natural thing for eSports. Hence, they understand the need for global virtual teams. However, contrary to modern "beliefs" to have a high potential team, people need to work in the same place. This is a counter-argument towards the ideas of "new work." Although traditional companies and sports teams nowadays invade eSports, they are capable of surviving, e.g., Razer an eSports company bought THX sound systems. This makes it unique for research. The "novel" ideas from eSports have to fight against traditional ideas and concepts. This happens in all areas of management studies. The question about strategy, innovation (or defending innovation) will make this topic relevant to strategic management. How is it possible to achieve ambidexterity in this volatile environment?

There is an evolution in the sphere, that is quite striking from a management perspective. The organization is not institutionalized, and there is ongoing coordination to create evolving governance. There are shifting rules, and there is a power game of the "insider" and the outsiders. The industry is rooted in business, media, and sports research as well. Making it interesting for any management field. The world of eSports is massively growing, however, neglected by research. This is quite striking as eSports is born digital, born global, and born agile, subsequently making an exciting research target for management scholars. The eSports industry showed much resilience, and many of the actors in the eSports industry do understand that they have to be sustainable. The topic will stay relevant, and there is much to research in this context.

Potential Research Questions

- What are effective “digital” strategies in eSports?
- How do eSports companies achieve flexibility and sustainability?
- What are the ways of approaching ambidexterity (exploration and exploitation)?
- How do eSports companies deal with the volatility of the eSports ecosystem?
- In this volatile environment, what are ways to minimize the risks and position themselves in the market?
- How can eSports companies create competitive strategies in this volatile market?
- What are the work conditions in the eSports ecosystem and how do they affect the strategic management?
- What are potential aspects media companies could learn from eSports companies in terms of digitization?
- How do eSports companies create their business model in terms of off-line and on-line customers?
- What are strategies to identify the competitive advantage and what are ways to position the brand in the market? Diversify or not.

Submission and Review Process

To submit a manuscript, the journal receives all manuscript submissions electronically via its [ScholarOne Manuscripts](#) site. For more details on the submissions process, please visit the journal's [Instructions for Authors](#) page for more details. The submission deadline is the **15th June 2019**. If you have any questions, please contact tobias.scholz@uni-siegen.de. We envisage publishing the Special Issue in 2020. We look forward to receiving your manuscript!

Editors:

- Bozena Mierzejewska, Fordham University (bmierzejewska@fordham.edu)
- Tobias M. Scholz, University of Siegen (tobias.scholz@uni-siegen.de)