The Effect of Immersion and the Enthusiasm from Watching eSports on Viewers’ Satisfaction and Behavior

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The debate whether e-sports is actually “sports” seems to have concluded when e-Sports was officially played at the 2018 Jakarta Palembang Asian Games(Ko, 2018). As e-sports became globally enjoyed form of leisure, Korea, where the terminology and professional leagues of e-sports all started, is leading the trend within the industry(Lee, 2007). In Korea, more than 45% of the population is participating in e-sports in which 75% of them are following professional e-sports league(KCCA, 2018). These e-sports fans are not only watching games through media, but also the rate of personally attending games at major e-sports stadiums located in Seoul is in rapid increase. In such trend, the e-sports industry itself is one of the fastest growing entertainment industry in Korea, including the increase of broadcasts, ticket sales, and player salaries. Despite the growth of the industry and the change of perception towards e-sports from “just a game” to “cultural trend”, there are much to be desired when it comes to providing academical studies in related topics(Son, Lee & Kim, 2007). Therefore, this study examined the effects of immersion and enthusiasm from watching e-sports on viewers’ satisfaction and behavioral intention to provide implications for future e-sports industry management.

This study distributed 372 questionnaires to fans who have watched e-sports game in Gyeonggi-do Korea, of which 332 samples were used for data analysis. Measuring items developed by Scanlan & Simon(1993), Vallerand & Houllfort(2003), Philippe et al.(2009), Whang(2008), Joe(2002) were adopted and refined accordingly to measure immersion and enthusiasm level of viewers, followed by their satisfaction and behavior. Using the SPSS 18.0 program, this study conducted frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis and found the following results.

First, the cognitive immersion(β=.255, p<.001) and behavioral immersion(β=.054, p<.001) factors from watching e-sports positively influenced the viewers’ satisfaction level. Second, the cognitive immersion(β=.352, p<.001) and behavioral immersion(β=.336, p<.001) factors from watching e-sports positively influenced the subjects’ intention for re-watching the games. Third, behavioral immersion(β=.552, p<.001) positively influenced the subjects’ recommendation intention. Fourth, the harmony enthusiasm(β=.700, p<.001) factor of viewers’ enthusiasm positively influenced the subjects’ satisfaction. Fifth, the harmony enthusiasm(β=.760, p<.001) positively influenced and compulsion enthusiasm(β=-.168, p<.01) factor negatively influenced the viewers’ intention of re-watching. Lastly, harmony enthusiasm(β=.522, p<.001) and compulsion enthusiasm(β=.136, p<.05) positively influenced recommendation intention.

In conclusion, as e-sports fans obtain immersion and enthusiasm from watching the games in which these factors affect their satisfaction and behaviors towards e-sports, it is implicated that strategical measures should be made that aims to maximize the immersion and enthusiasm the viewers feel from watching the games in order to accelerate growth of the industry in general.