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LUIZ FELIPE VIANNA GONÇALVES

SPONSORSHIP IN eSPORTS: A STUDY ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPECTATOR'S IDENTIFICATION WITH eSPORTS ON THE SPONSOR'S BRAND EQUITY AND THE SPECTATOR'S PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS THE SPONSORS

Rio de Janeiro

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Supervisor: Prof. Victor Manoel Cunha de Almeida, Ph.D.

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"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

– *Walt Disney*

RESUMO

Gonçalves, Luiz Felipe Vianna. Sponsorship in eSports: a study about the influence of the spectator's identification with eSports on the sponsor's brand equity and the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsors. Rio de Janeiro, 2020. Dissertation (Master's Degree in Business Administration) – COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2020.

Este estudo investigou a influência da identificação do espectador de eSports em eventos de eSports na sua própria percepção do valor da marca do patrocinador e a influência dessa percepção na sua própria intenção de compra com relação aos produtos ou serviços deste patrocinador, além da influência mediadora da percepção de congruência entre patrocinador e os eSports sobre a relação entre a identificação do espectador com eSports e o valor da marca do patrocinador. O estudo contribui para a literatura de patrocínio e eSports, utilizando como principal referencial teórico a *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979), *Associative Network Theory* (Collins & Loftus, 1975) e a *Schema Theory* (Axelrod, 1973). As questões de pesquisa foram desdobradas em três hipóteses substantivas que contemplaram a verificação da relação entre a identificação do espectador com os eSports, a percepção do valor da marca do patrocinador (Oi ou Dell), a intenção de compra com relação ao produto ou serviço do patrocinador e a percepção de congruência entre o patrocinador e os eSports. O estudo foi conduzido durante dois eventos de eSports realizados no Rio de Janeiro no ano de 2019: a Game XP e o CBLoL. Foi aplicada uma *survey* na entrada dos eventos com espectadores que compareceram com a intenção de assistir eSports. Foram coletados 446 questionários válidos durante a Game XP e 232 no CBLoL. A análise dos dados das duas amostras foi realizada separadamente utilizando AFE e AFC, tendo sido verificadas a confiabilidade e a validade convergente e discriminante dos construtos. Para testar as hipóteses substantivas, foi utilizada a técnica de Modelagem de Equações Estruturais com o uso da técnica ML. Foi também realizada a técnica dos quatro passos proposta por Baron e Kenny (1986), o teste de Sobel (1982) e a análise por *bootstraping* para suportar o efeito mediador da percepção de congruência. Os resultados empíricos sugerem que a percepção do espectador com relação ao valor da marca do patrocinador influencia sua própria intenção de compra com relação aos produtos ou serviços do patrocinador. Além disso, foram suportadas as hipóteses de que a percepção de congruência entre megaevento e patrocinador exerce um efeito mediador na relação entre a imagem do megaevento e o valor da marca do patrocinador, sendo esse efeito parcial para um evento e total para o outro, podendo ter a ver com a percepção do patrocinador como endêmico ou não.

Keywords: eSports, Patrocínio, Eventos, Identificação, Valor de Marca, Intenção de Compra.

ABSTRACT

Gonçalves, Luiz Felipe Vianna. Sponsorship in eSports: a study about the influence of the spectator's identification with eSports on the sponsor's brand equity and the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsors. Rio de Janeiro, 2020. Dissertation (Master's Degree in Business Administration) – COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2020.

This study has investigated the influence of the eSports spectator's identification in eSports events in his own perception of the sponsor's brand equity and the influence of this perception on his/hers own purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services. Also, the mediating influence of the perception of congruence between the sponsor and eSports on the relation between the spectator's identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity is investigated. The study contributes to the previous literature in sponsorship and eSports, using as main theoretical reference the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979), the Associative Network Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975) and the Schema Theory (Axelrod, 1973). The research questions originated three substantive hypotheses that were investigated to verify the relation between the spectator's identification with eSports, the perception of brand equity (Oi or Dell), the purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services, and the perception of congruence between the sponsor and Sports. The study was conducted during two eSports events held in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 2019: Game XP and CBLoL. A survey was applied at the events' entrance to spectators that attended the event with the intention to watch eSports. During Game XP 446 valid questionnaires were collected and 232 during CBLoL. The data analysis for the samples for each event was made separately using EFA and CFA, having the reliability and the convergent and discriminant validities of the constructs being verified. To test the substantive hypotheses, the Structural Equations Modeling was used, together with the ML technique. Also, the four steps technique proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the Sobel Test (1982) and the bootstrapping analysis were conducted to support the mediating effect of the congruence perception. The empirical results suggest that the spectator regarding the sponsor's brand equity influences his/hers own purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services. Besides that, the hypotheses regarding the mediating influence of the perception of congruence between the spectator's identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity was supported, being this effect partial for one event and total for the other. We can speculate that this difference is related to the spectator's perception over the sponsor being endemic or not.

Keywords: eSports, Sponsorship, Events, Identification, Brand Equity, Purchase Intention.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Asymptotically Distribution-Free
ADSL	Assymetrical Digital Subscriber Line
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CBLoL	Brazilian League of Legends Championship
CBBE	Consumer Based Brand Equity
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Construct Reliability
DotA	Defense of the Ancients
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
F1	Formula 1
FBBE	Firm Based Brand Equity
FGV	Fundação Getúlio Vargas
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FPS	First-Person Shooting
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
ICTs	Information and Communication Technlogies
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LoL	League of Legends
ML	Maximum Likelihood
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
MSA	Measuring of Sampling Adequacy
MSSC	Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption
NASCAR	National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing
OBE	Overall Brand Equity
PGA	Professional Golfers' Association
PUBG	PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds
PUC	Pontifical Catholic University
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RTS	Real Time Strategy
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SESD	Scale for eSports Spectator Demand
SII	Sport Interest Inventory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
Uerj	University of the State of Rio de Janeiro
UFRJ	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Study Objectives

This study´s main objective is to contribute to the previous literature on eSports events sponsorship, by investigating the influence of the spectator identification with eSports in the sponsor's brand equity and the spectator purchase intention towards the sponsor's products. Also, the perceived congruence between eSports and the sponsor is also investigated and how it mediates the relation between the identification with eSports and sponsor's brand equity. Those relations were already studied and verified in the sports marketing literature, but little, if any, research have focused on verifying them in an eSports context. This study intends to contribute with evidence to support those relations, by investigating them in Game XP, a recently created event (the first edition was in 2017), held in Rio de Janeiro, with a gaming thematic and a wide variety of attractions, and the Brazilian League of Legends Championship Finals (CBLoL).

1.2   Origin and importance of the study

The importance of events as motivator of tourism is unquestionable and many researchers have studied events using a destinations and tourism industry perspective (Getz, 2008). Crompton and Mckay (1997) even reported that suggestions were being made, at that time, towards the recognition of festivals as one of the three major categories of tourism attractions, along with ambient attractions and permanent attractions.

Due to this importance, in the late 1980s, the term 'event tourism' had what supposedly was its first appearances in articles (Getz, 1989) and tourism reports. After that, event studies experienced an incredible growth and today 'event tourism' is generally recognized as being inclusive of all planned events (Getz, 2008).

Other fast growing fields in the last decades are gaming and eSports. In recent years, eSport have been growing at an incredibly fast pace, both in spectatorship and in revenue. For instance, in 2018 the audience of eSports reached 395 million people, among enthusiasts and occasional viewers, and is expected to reach 454 million in 2019 and 645 million by 2022 (Newzoo, 2019a). Also, the money flowing in the industry is growing

considerably, with the total revenues in 2018 reaching 865 million dollars and is expected to reach 1 billion in 2019 and almost 1.8 billion by 2022 (Newzoo, 2019b).

As eSports grow, more opportunities to explore new potential revenue streams emerge. Among these new opportunities we can find eSports and gaming events, such as Fortnite World Cup and League of Legends World Championship. However, the majority of the events is related to one specific game and is focused on spectatorship.

In an attempt to explore this big gaming industry and the growth eSports had been experiencing, Game XP was created in 2017, in Brazil, which is a different concept of event that has eSports and gaming as their main topic. The Game XP is a gaming themed event that calls itself a Game Park and describes itself as 'a place where the magic of amusement parks and the adventure of games coexist'[1]. The event started inside the Rock in Rio festival, one of the biggest music festivals in the world (inside the 2017 edition) and, in September 2018 had its first independent edition. Game XP was born from a partnership between Rock in Rio, Comic Con Experience (CCXP) and Grupo Globo (the biggest media company in Brazil).

The event holds rollercoaster, ferris wheel, live shows, immersive experiences, video games, presence of the biggest game producing companies in the world and 3 arenas where people can watch important eSports competitive tournaments. In the 2018 edition, the event had the biggest gaming screen in the world at the time, with 1,500 m² and received around 95,000 people and according to studies conducted by FGV (private Brazilian university) and presented by the Ministry of Culture, the economic impact of the event was of R$ 53.9 million. The Game XP 2019 (July 25th to 28th) is a big opportunity to study event sponsorship in the eSports context. In the 2019 edition, the main sponsor of the event (also called 'master sponsor') is a Brazilian telecommunication company called Oi, which is also the sponsor of the eSports arena located inside the event, called Oi Game Arena, and will be used in this study to investigate the sponsorship in the eSports context.

Data was also collected for this study during the CBLoL Finals, with a different sponsor: Dell. In comparison, CBLoL Finals are expected to attract much less attendance, since it is a one day eSports event, while Game XP is a four day festival that also holds

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[1] Taken from Game XP official website (https://www.gamexp.com.br/a-gamexp) on August 13th, 2019.

eSports competitions, but with much more options for the public, even with amusement park elements. Therefore, despite receiving much less people, 100% of the public of CBLoL Finals is there to watch eSports.

1.3 Academic Relevance

Getz (2008) mentions the spatial-temporal nature of planned events as a phenomenon, which leads to an important characteristic of them: the uniqueness of each individual event, explained by the unique interactions among the setting, people and management system. Therefore, studies held in different events can contribute with new evidence to previous findings.

Sponsorship has been widely studied in the academic literature in different contexts, mainly since the 1990s. However, due to the recency of eSports growth in comparison to other contexts in which sponsorship is well established (such as sports events), there is still little studies in sponsorship focused on an eSports context, if compared to other contexts in which sponsorship is present.

This study intends to contribute with previous literature on eSports sponsorship by studying eSports' spectators in the Game XP event and the Brazilian League of Legends Championship Finals (CBLoL) and investigating relations that were already studied in the sports marketing context, but in a different context: eSports events. Therefore, the theoretical contribution that this study intends to deliver is to provide additional evidence to aid with the understanding of sponsorship in the eSports context, which is recent, if compared to traditional sports, and has been growing fast.

Specifically, this study intends to verify if and to what extent the event spectator identification with eSports influences the spectator's perception of the sponsor's brand equity, if and to what extent the spectator's perception of the sponsor's brand equity influences his own purchase intention towards sponsor's products, and if and to what extent the spectator's perception of congruence between esports and the sponsor has mediating effect in the relationship between spectator's identification with eSports and the perception of sponsor's brand equity.

1.4   Managerial Relevance

Sponsorship in eSports have been growing very fast. According to IEG eSports sector update (2018), more than 300 companies have invested in eSports related sponsorship in 2018, being those companies from many different categories, from consumer electronics to non-alcoholic beverage and lottery & gaming. Those companies probably pursue different managerial objectives with their eSports sponsorships. They might want to raise their brand awareness and brand equity or even connect with a specific target audience, eSports spectators. Other possibility is that companies want to sell more products to people identified with eSports. Therefore, the existence of evidence to support that those companies can really get closer to their objectives by sponsoring eSports can help marketing professionals to justify sponsorship decisions.

Sponsorship investments can be high and is important that people responsible for making the sponsorship decision gather as much information as possible about a sponsorship opportunity. eSports is a fast growing market with great opportunities for companies but understanding how sponsorship works in this context is important for preventing them to invest great amounts of money in something that might not provide them the return they expect. Also, understanding eSports audience might help the companies to plan and execute brand activations that might please this target, therefore optimizing the sponsorship returns.

In summary, any information that might enhance the companies' understanding of sponsorship in the eSports context is extremely valuable to contribute to this discussion about sponsoring eSports, since a poorly planned or executed sponsorship relation can be extremely harmful for the company. Finally, for the eSports industry, it is fundamental that sponsorship grows together with the audience, in order to provide financial support to keep the industry growth sustainable.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 eSports

2.1.1 *A brief history of eSports*

The beginning of competitive video gaming dates from the early 1980s, during the era of arcades. It is estimated that in 1981 and 1982, arcades earned around $5 billion annually (Borowy & Jin, 2013; Sheff & Eddy, 1999). With the spread of the arcade, a unified gamer culture was established, fostered by the advertisement of public games spaces, such as the arcades, as places for the new gaming community to get together to share their interests and consolidate the sense of group among them.

The emergence of public gaming competitions in the arcades was fundamental for the establishment of the first "cyberathletes", which used to compete among themselves looking for prizes and pride. Already at that time, professional arcade gamers used to compete with sponsorship, attract press coverage and become famous, even though in a much smaller scale. These competitions were the early manifestations of sportification in the video game industry.

The first tournaments held in arcades resemble in many aspects the eSports tournaments of nowadays. At that time, competitive gamers would get together in arcades to compete for the highest scores in games such as Pac-Man, Centipede, Donkey Kong and Galaga. However, despite the great influence of the arcade in the expansion of electronic games and the emergence of manifestations of sportification in the industry, the competitions were still between individual players. It was with the popularization of the personal computers and of the internet that the players starting to organize themselves in what was called "clans", or teams of online players that competed together in online tournaments.

The development of the gaming culture occurred very differently in Asia, in comparison from the United States and Europe, and, therefore, we can observe two distinct trajectories in gaming culture history, based on western and eastern value systems (Wagner, 2006). In the 1990s, while competitive gaming was strongly connected to networked first-person shooting (FPS) games (Doom, Quake, Counter-Striker) in the western gaming culture, the eastern competitive gaming culture started in Korea and was

strongly related to Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG) games (Lineage) and Real Time Strategy (RTS) games (Starcraft). Independently if in the east or west of the planet, the emergence of online gaming moved the dynamic of the gaming community from being built upon the events in the arcades to being precipitated from the online to the offline (Huhh, 2008).

Due to the huge success of eSports in Korea in the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism approved the foundation of the Korea e-Sports Association to help develop the eSports in the country. Today, the Korean association is a role-model to other associations that have been founded in different countries, such as China, Japan, UK, Germany and Netherlands (Thiborg, 2009).

After 2009, with the launch of League of Legends (LoL), the eSports scenario started to grow at a faster pace towards the numbers we have today in audience, revenues and prizes. Since that period, a new genre of eSports had grown incredibly: Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA), driven mainly by LoL and its main competitor Defense of the Ancients 2 (Dota 2). Even more recently, another genre reached the mainstream and exponential growth: Battle Royale, pushed by Fortnite, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), and others.

The money flowing in the industry is growing at a quick pace. In 2018, eSports generated a total of 865 million dollars in revenues (considering merchandise & tickets, game publisher fees and brand investment revenues, which account for media rights, advertising and sponsorship), an increase in 32% from the previous year (Newzoo, 2019b). The 2018 LoL World Championship finals itself, accounted for more than 200 million online viewers (Qian, Zhang, Wang, & Hulland, 2019). It is estimated that in 2022 eSports will generate a revenue of around 1.8 billion dollars and achieve an audience of around 645 million people, among eSports enthusiasts and occasional viewers (Newzoo, 2019a). This big numbers have attracted the attention of big brands all over the world, such as Coca-Cola, Intel, Mercedes Benz, American Express and others (Newzoo, 2017).

This dynamic scenario is one particularity of eSports, since it evolves very quickly with younger generations and the development of new technologies. This dynamism poses a constant question to which the biggest games producers seek to answer: what is the next big success in the industry?

2.1.2 *Defining eSports*

The term eSports have only recently been widely adopted to define competitive gaming. However, despite this acceptance of the title, eSports still lack a concrete, unified definition. A widely accepted definition would be fundamental not only to understand eSports itself, but also to orientate the discussion that came along with the adoption of the term: can eSports be compared to, or even considered as, traditional sports? Is this relation between them even necessary?

Perhaps the first explicit definition of eSports was elaborated by Wagner (2006), heavily inspired by the definition of traditional sports provided earlier by Tiedemann (2015). Wagner (2006) defined 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 states that society should expect that the boundaries to what can be accepted as sport disciplines are dynamic, and that they will change as society's value system changes, due to innumerable factors, such as technology progress. Wagner's work is widely recognized as important, being a relevant first step to the critical discussion about eSport. However, this definition raised some critics. Some authors argue that Wagner's definition is too narrow, since it neglects the influence of various nonhuman factors (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Witkowski, 2012). Witkowski (2012) also questions the choice of the term "information and communication technologies" (ICTs), arguing that it places the computer as the dominant technology, which is, again, too narrow. Also, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) argue that the definition proposed by Wagner is not enough to solve the question regarding the sporting activities that can be embraced by the traditional sports definition.

Both Witkowski (2012) and Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) emphasize that is very important to bear in mind that the title eSports carries an important aspect of the game: the electronic. Based on this argument, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) propose a new perspective in this quest to elaborate a solid definition for the term eSports, arguing that to properly define eSports, the focus should be moved to the electronic factor in eSports. They propose that the main difference between eSports and traditional sports is related to the location in which the activities which determine the outcome of the sport are manifested. In traditional sports, these activities are seen in the "physical world" or "real world", even if electronic systems are used to aid the sporting activity, while in eSports

these activities happen in the "virtual world", or within electronic-mediated environment. Based on their perspective, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) proposed a new definition for eSports: "a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams as well as the output of the eSports system are mediated by human-computer interfaces".

Usually, eSports are divided in different genres. The genres put together games that have similarities in their structure. However, also the genres are not totally unified. For example, in Qian et al (2019), Battle Royale games are included in the First-Person Shooter genre, since they have similarities between them. Some of the genres are:

- Battle Royale: Fortnite, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), etc.
- Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (or MOBA): League of Legends, Dota 2, etc.
- First-Person Shooter (or FPS): Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Quake, etc.
- Real Time Strategy (or RTS): Starcraft 2, Warcraft III, etc.
- Fighting Games: Street Fighter V, Super Smash Bros, Tekken 7, etc.
- Collectible Card Game: Heartstone, Yu-Gi-Oh!, etc.
- Sports Games: FIFA, NFL Madden, NBA 2k, etc.

Also, differently from many of the traditional sports, eSports are usually developed and owned by a company. This ownership model is different from the institutionalization process of the majority of the traditional sports, involving federations, confederations, and other bodies, and might have different impacts in the future of the field. Therefore, even those who criticize eSports and its comparison to traditional sports have reasons to understand the phenomenon and try to understand its consequences.

Heere (2018) went back in time by bringing McBride (1975) to the discussion, when he states that: "Philosophers ought not waste their time attempting to define 'sport'". His conclusion is based on an understanding that sport is an ambiguous construct and the outcome of this understanding is that any attempt to present an absolute definition for sport would probably fail. Therefore, from this perspective, if sport is an undefinable construct, the debate of whether eSports are a form of sport loses completely its sense. However, after McBride's statement, the sport industry has grown incredibly. To serve

this growing industry the discipline of sports management emerged, and with this new discipline's rise, deciding if something qualified as a sport moved from being only an intellectual exercise to being also fundamental for the legislation of sport as a business activity and to help separate sports management from its parent discipline of management itself (Heere, 2018). From this perspective, the discussion about eSports is just the most recent addition to a long discussion of what defines the sports management field. This broader discussion divides sports management scholars in two groups: the first group understand sports management as an interdisciplinary field and support an open view of what sports management is (Chalip, 2006), while the second group argues that defining the boundaries of sports management is fundamental to differentiate it from other fields, such as recreation management (Dustin & Schwab, 2008).

Some scholars support the idea that eSports are a manifestation of sportification in the video game industry (Heere, 2018). Crum (1991) introduced the term sportification to the sports management field and Heere (2018) proposed two definitions to it: "(a) view, organize or regulate a non-sport activity in such a way that it resembles a sport and allows a fair, pleasurable, and safe environment for individuals to compete and cooperate, and compare their performances to each other, and future and past performances; or (b) add a sport component to an existing activity in order to make it more attractive to its audiences."

The sport construct is polymorphic by its nature (Heere, 2018). Therefore, the definition of sport is totally dependent on its purpose and context. Heere provides the example of governmental entities concerned with the health of the population. In his example, for the purpose supported by those entities, sport should be understood as an instrument to increase people's health, and the boundaries to the concept should be drawn upon this objective, excluding low intensity traditional sports from its definition. In summary, the acceptance of this polymorphic nature allows that each organization create its own definition to the construct, according to its own objectives (Heere, 2018).

In summary, the definition of eSports (and also sports in general) has been widely discussed in the literature, but no widely accepted definition was elaborated yet. Some scholars support that to keep sports management relevant, the perception of what sport is should evolve with time and embrace new manifestations of sportification (Heere, 2018). Fact is that eSports have been growing fast during the last years and it would be more

interesting if scholars started to focus on studying the phenomenon eSports and its context through different perspectives, instead of wasting time and energy trying to make it fit into a polymorphic traditional sports definition. It would be important that even the people who criticize eSports invested their time in studying the phenomenon to help society to understand the potential negative effects of the phenomenon on obesity, social inclusion, gender equality and other aspects (Heere, 2018).

2.1.3   *eSports Spectator Motives*

Spectators' motives have been an interesting research topic both in traditional sports and eSports. Understanding what motivate people to watch a competition can help to enhance the potential of that competition to attract audience and, consequently, revenue. In theory, the more people watching a competition, the more the organizers can charge from sponsors and broadcasters, bigger is the potential market for merchandising and tickets and bigger are the sponsorships for the athletes, for example.

Motivation is one of the most studied constructs in the sports field. Hebb (1955) proposes the first widely used definition for motivation as the process that energize and direct purposeful behavior, and Deci (1971) added that motives encourage behavior due to the enjoyment generated by the activities. Previous research shows that understanding motives helps to understand behavior (Trail & Kyoum Kim, 2011) and Trail, Fink and Anderson (2003) identified that motives are also central predictors of sport consumption decisions. Individuals attend to sport events for different reasons and focused on different aspects of the experience (Funk, Pizzo, & Baker, 2018; Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003) but most of the spectators behavior have been focused on fulfilling social or psychological needs (Robinson, Trail, Dick, & Gillentine, 2005).

The first eSports studies related to motivation were focused on motivation to play eSports rather than spectatorship. Previous research suggests that playing eSports is motivated by competition, challenge, escapism and skill development (D. Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011; Weiss & Schiele, 2013). More recently, scholars have started to give more attention to the motives for spectating eSports (Funk et al., 2018; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Qian et al., 2019). However, so far there is no study that has treated the different games and genres separately, treating motives to spectate eSports as universal (Funk et al., 2018).

According to Qian et al (2019), it is fundamental to understand the theoretical sustenance of eSports online spectator demand and also discuss the differences and similarities between eSports and traditional sports concerning spectators' motives. Qian et al (2019) states that eSports online spectator demand originated from the same roots of what is known in the literature as sport market demand, which is a construct related to attitudes people have in consequence of their own evaluation and expectations toward the main attributes of core products. In the case of sports, the core product is sport games itself (Zhang, Lam, & Connaughton, 2003). The sport market demand concept is based upon cognitive-oriented attitudinal theories such as theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Mazis, Ahtola, & Klippel, 1975).

Based on the similarities between eSports and traditional sports, the first studies about the eSports market demand used the dimensions already established in previous study to understand the factors of market demand. Therefore, factors such as player characteristics (Byon, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010; Zhang et al., 2003), event attractiveness (Cianfrone, Zhang, Pitts, & Byon, 2015), commentary features (Comisky, Bryant, & Zillmann, 1977) and schedule convenience (Braunstein, Zhang, Trail, & Gibson, 2005; Zhang et al., 2003), that emerged as market demand factors related to traditional sports, were considered the core attributes of eSports competitions and started to contribute to defining the dimensions of eSports online spectator demand (Qian et al., 2019).

However, despite the similarities between eSports and traditional sports, there are still different aspects between them. Therefore, scholars have proposed that there might be other dimensions to measure eSports online spectator demand that go beyond the ones that were brought from traditional sports (Funk et al., 2018; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Qian et al., 2019).

Literature has brought some aspects that are unique to eSports which could help to come up with possible dimensions to enhance the eSports online spectator demand measures. For example, eSports are extremely related to technology and, differently from traditional sports, the matches and tournaments are not necessarily the main attractions. Individual streamers, who broadcast their gaming routine in addition to stream of major events, might be almost as important as the tournaments itself. The experience provided

by streamers differentiate themselves from the regular events broadcasts as the former is able to develop its own personal identity whilst having the possibility of building communities through engagement with viewers, other players and other streamers, creating a network around his identity (Hamilton, Garretson, & Kerne, 2014) strengthened by a sense of belonging raised by the group to its members, supported by the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979).

This engagement is fostered by other unique factor of eSports, which is the chat room. The chat room is a main feature in the eSports online spectating experience, allowing the spectators to interact among them and with the streamer via text- or image-based inputs, fortifying the network (Hamilton et al., 2014). The communities associated with individual streamers and eSports events have changed the way online spectators interact, adding a strong sense of connectedness to an experience that has previously been considered socially isolated: watching people playing video games (Bowles, 2018).

Therefore, this highly engaging and interactive environment are indicators that unique demand factors related to eSports should be considered in addition to the ones that were taken from sports market demand. Qian et al. (2019) explored these new dimensions of online spectator demand by conducting a mixed methods studies, in which the qualitative phase, represented by semi-structured interviews and online open-ended survey, was responsible to identify the preliminary demand factors, while the quantitative phase, where the factors derived from the qualitative were tested on a larger sample for construct reliability and validity for the scale they have elaborated – Scale for eSports Spectator Demand (SESD) (Qian et al., 2019).

Through their study, Qian et al (2019) propose eight dimensions to measure eSports online spectator demand, being four of those dimensions unique to the eSports context (chat room, streamer traits, virtual rewards and stream quality) and four of them brought from the sport management literature (player characteristics, commentary features, event attractiveness and schedule convenience). Their proposition was tested using EFA, CFA and SEM and the dimensions that came up with the study seem to address the unique factors of eSports demand in addition to the similarities with sport market demand.

To contribute with spectator motivations in eSports, Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) tested an adapted version of a motivation scale that was developed focused on traditional

sports, due to evidence of similarities between them, the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption - MSSC (Trail & James, 2001). They added novelty and aggressiveness to the scale. They concluded that, from the 10 dimensions used, escapism, acquiring knowledge, novelty and enjoyment of aggression were positively and statistically significantly associated with eSports watching frequency, while aesthetics was negatively associated, and the other factors did not present statistically significant associations.

After them, Pizzo et al. (2018) went one step further with a comparative study between traditional sports (Korean Soccer League, K-League) and eSports of different types (FIFA Online 3, Sports Games; Starcraft 2, RTS). Industry reports, that suggested that eSports spectator share similar motives with traditional sport spectator (PWC, 2016), motivated them to investigate this similarity. They mixed elements from the MSSC (Trail & James, 2001) and Sport Interest Inventory - SII (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002) and used a single item for each of the 15 dimensions. They concluded that 11 of the 15 motives were similar on the 3 contexts and that although the results suggested that spectators of traditional sports and eSports share the same motives for sport consumption, the motives predicting game attendance frequency were distinct across different event contexts.

While Pizzo et al (2018) and Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) test the sport consumption motivation scales in an eSports context, advancing knowledge regarding relation between traditional sports and eSports, Qian et al (2019) focus on presenting new motives that are particular of eSports, bringing along factors related to the key attributes of eSports media products.

Previous studies were responsible for supporting the existence of congruence between eSports and traditional sports (Cunningham et al., 2018; Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Heere, 2018; Pizzo et al., 2018), allowing that future research on eSports takes advantage of this expected association to investigate the eSports phenomenon from different perspectives.

2.2   Identification

2.2.1   *Social Identity Theory*

The identification construct has been used in the sports marketing literature to describe a psychological relation an individual establishes towards a sports entity, be it a team, a sport or a sports celebrity (Madrigal, 2001).

A study by Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk (1999) proposed that there are three components that influence an individual's social identity, being one cognitive (self-categorization), one evaluative (group self-esteem), and one emotional (affective commitment). The self-categorization component relates to the cognitive awareness of membership in a social group, group self-esteem relates to a particular value connotation attached to the group membership and the affective commitment is related to a sense of emotional involvement the individual has with the group.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) approaches the importance of social groups to an individual as a source of recognition, identification and social inclusiveness. The theory is based upon the idea that humans are social beings and, therefore, belonging to social groups is part of human life and a need for an individual's psychological equilibrium. Also, according to SIT, an individual's perception of itself is based on individual identity, such as personality traits, and social or collective identity, that comprehends identity traits that the individual shares with other people and groups and that are socially demonstrated (Tajfel et al., 1979).

Ashforth and Mael (1989) also contributed to the social identity literature. According to their work, the individual's perception of belonging to a specific group is shaped by the similarities to a group in contrast to differences to other social groups. Therefore, in summary, the social categorization is important for humans in order to help an individual to situate itself in the social environment and the individual's social identity is shaped by the social categories to which he belongs.

2.2.2   *Identification with eSports*

The literature related to identification with eSports is very scarce, but many have been studied regarding identification in traditional sports that can be verified in this other context.

For instance, many studies have been using SIT as a framework to investigate different types of identification between fans and sports entity. In the literature can be found studies related to identification between fans and a specific sport (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008), sports event (Deitz, Myers, & Stafford, 2012) or sports teams (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002), which is the most explored. In the case of the fan-team identification, for example, this relationship plays a significant role in the fan identity (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003).

The identification fans have with the team encourage the creation of communities due to the similarities among these fans (Qian et al., 2019). According to Madrigal (2000), a sponsor can receive a positive response from fans because, with the supports he gives to the team, he is perceived as a partner or even a member of the social group of the team fans, benefiting from the willingness to help that social group members have among them. However, evidence have been raised to support the idea that when that sponsor threatens the identity traits of the team, that differentiate them from others, the fans response can be negative (Reysen, Snider, & Branscombe, 2012).

Trail, Anderson and Fink (2005) found evidence that the fan's purchasing behavior might be influenced by the identification between fan and team and, therefore, nurturing a strong relation with fans is key to sponsors. Also, outside of the academy, IEG Sponsorship Report 1994 presented a study with NASCAR fans and found significative intention to prioritize or even switch brands just because of sponsorship.

Different studies have investigated the influence of identification in sponsorship relations. Gwinner and Swanson (2003) found evidence that team identification influences sponsor recognition and satisfaction with sponsor, for example, and Madrigal (2000) found evidence that identification increase the chance of purchasing sponsor's products.

The identification with eSports in general or competitive gaming related to a specific game is also a part of the fans identities and incentive them to create communities to discuss about anything related to their interest, even during the competitions, as can be observed in the chats available in broadcasted eSports competitions (Qian et al., 2019). Also, people identified with eSports have been working hard for the last decade in order to grow eSports and keep pursuing growth.

Based on the evidence found in the sports marketing literature regarding sponsorship and some similarities in both contexts, such as spectator motives (Pizzo et al., 2018), it seems reasonable to suppose that a sponsor that is supporting in any way eSports or an individual's preferred game competitions may be seen as a member in the fans social group and benefit from this membership, in a similar way to what have been seen in traditional sports.

2.3 Sponsorship

2.3.1 *Defining Sponsorship*

Sponsoring sports, arts and charities started as a philanthropic activity, but over time moved to a more strategic approach, focused on achieving corporate objectives and seeing sponsorship as an investment, rather than just a good intention (Cornwell, 2008; Dolphin, 2003).

Since the inception of sponsorship as a marketing strategy for companies, many have been the proposed definitions for the concept. One widely spread definition was created by the *International Events Group* (IEG), a consultancy company that has been an industry leader in the world of sponsorship, which in 1982 defined sponsorship as "A cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property (typically sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property."[2]. Also according to the glossary presented in IEG website, sponsorship is related to a property, described as "a unique, commercially exploitable entity, (typically in sports, arts, events, entertainment or causes)". When the property of a specific sponsorship is an event, which is the case of this study, the term event marketing is preferable.

In the academic literature, many other different definitions of sponsorship have been proposed. Meenaghan's (1983) definition is commonly accepted, according to which sponsorship is "the provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives."

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[2] Extracted from IEG Lexicon and Glossary in http://www.sponsorship.com/Resources/IEG-Lexicon-and-Glossary.aspx

Despite the wide variety of definitions for sponsorship, there is an important aspect that is present in all of them: the mutual benefit between sponsor and the sponsored entity. In other words, the sponsorship relation is expected to be beneficial for both parts involved, although unforeseen facts might frustrate this expectation (such as a sponsored athlete being caught in the doping exam). To define sponsorship is also important to understand what differentiate it from traditional advertisement, and one key aspect regarding this distinction is that sponsorship persuasion to mass audience is implicit and indirect, while advertisement delivers the message direct and explicitly (Erdogan & Kitchen, 1998).

Other definitions are also very important in the sponsorship context. For instance, the definition of endemic and non-endemic brands are vital to the understanding of how a sponsor can better invest his money to take the most out of a sponsorship relation.

2.3.2 *Endemic vs Non-endemic Sponsors*

An important classification of brands within the sponsorship domain is endemic and non-endemic brands. In the eSports context, being an endemic sponsor means that the company is native to the eSports and its products/services are related to eSports, while non-endemic sponsors provide products/services that are not perceived as related with the eSports context (Gawrysiak, Burton, Jenny, & Williams, 2020).

A study conducted by the information and research company Nielsen (Pike & Master, 2017) in four important occidental eSports markets (U.S., UK, France and Germany) found evidence to support that eSports fans prefer endemic sponsors over non-endemic. For instance, Nielsen's research suggests that 31% of eSports fans in France believe non-endemic brand activity is not at all appropriate in the eSports context, while in the U.S. they estimate that 15% of fans share this belief.

Pike and Master (2017) even propose a semi-endemic classification in the eSports context, in which they include technology brands not directly involved with gaming and eSports, energy drink and snack food manufacturers, stating that, despite the fact that these companies does not provide truly gaming products/services, they are so ingrained in the eSports and broader gaming experience that they might not be considered non-endemic.

Gawrysiak et al (2020) even propose a four-step ladder to present the evolution of eSports branding and which would be the optimal entry points for both endemic and non-endemic sponsors, with the latter being advised to invest in eSports sponsorship once the sites, events and players are professionalized, while the endemic brands should be entering the market a step before, what they call a context in which the solitary nature of games has been surpassed and the virtual nature of online gaming, encompassing competition and cooperation, is established.

2.3.3   *eSports Sponsorship*

Due to the recency of eSports in comparison to traditional sports, the sponsorship of eSports events has been much less discussed in the literature. However, some characteristics are similar in the sponsorship in both industries. For instance, a company might invest in eight different types of sports sponsorships, such as sports teams, sports celebrities, sports organizations, sports events, sports facilities and others (Fullerton & Merz, 2008; Lagae, 2005; Rines, 2000; Sá & Almeida, 2015). The different types of sponsorship can also be seen in eSports, where brands can choose to sponsor a specific event or a charismatic and famous player.

According to Lee and Ross (2012), companies that invest in sports should have well defined the objectives they want to achieve through the sponsorship in order to optimize their return, since the media coverage is not enough anymore (Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004). Usually, companies seek sponsoring opportunities aiming at profit oriented benefits, but intangible benefits, such as strengthening the brand, consolidate relationship with commercial partners (by inviting key clients to the events, providing them with unique experiences), and pursue organizational goals (such as bonding with employees) have been growing in importance over time (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis, 2008; Sá & Almeida, 2015).

Despite the evidence raised in literature related to the positive impact of sports sponsorship in the sponsor's brand equity (Donlan, 2014; Grohs et al., 2004; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), little have been discussed about this relationship in eSports. Also, to enhance the effectiveness, it is key that the sponsorship is integrated with the company's marketing strategy (Donlan, 2014) and it is known that congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored entity might increase the chances of achieving the proposed objectives (Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004).

Meenaghan (2001) states that the perceived benefits of sponsorship are potentialized among the people most involved with the sponsored activity and, therefore, decision to sponsor a sports event is usually related to an intention to turn the company's marketing strategy towards these consumers involved with the event. Based on this statement, together with the exponential growth of eSports as an industry, people identified with eSports have been perceived as an interesting and growing market for companies to target.

In traditional sports sponsorship, it was argued by Nufer and Bühler (2010), that sponsoring an event is much less riskier than investing on a partnership with a club, team or individual, because a private life scandal or some games lost in a row may impact negatively the sponsored image and, by image transfer, also impact negatively the sponsor's image (Smith, 2004). Little have been discussed about this different risk levels in the eSports context, but since relating your brand to an individual eSports player or an eSports team, seems to hold similar sources of risk to traditional sports players and teams.

The perception of congruence is also proven to be a relevant factor in the relation between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored entity and will be approached in a particular sector, but IEG's eSport sector update 2018 presented a balance between endemic and non-endemic brands as eSports sponsors (53% endemic vs. 47% non-endemic) (IEG, 2018).

2.4   Brand Equity

2.4.1   *Defining Brand Equity*

Sponsorship is typically related to consumer based brand equity, since the enhancement of brand awareness and brand image are some of the main goals of sponsorship in literature, which are dimensions of brand equity.

A widely accepted definition of brand equity is the one from Aaker (1991): "Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers".

Aaker proposed the idea that brand equity is divided in four dimensions: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality and brand association in addition to perceived quality. Keller (1993) also proposed dimensions for the brand equity concept, but he divided brand equity in two big dimensions: brand awareness and brand image, being the former related to brand recall and recognition performance by consumers and the latter to the set of associations linked to the brand held in consumers' memory.

In the literature, brand equity can be measured through two different perspectives financial (firm based) and consumer based (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 1993; Oliveira & Luce, 2012). Purely financial evaluations are only relevant in specific situations, such as merger and acquisitions. Also, the consumers' perception of the brand marketing offers will impact their revenues and market share, reinforcing the relevance of the consumer based brand equity (CBBE), as being an antecedent financial value of the brand, or the firm based brand equity (FBBE) (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Oliveira & Luce, 2012).

2.4.2 *Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE)*

Measuring brand equity from the consumer perspective, focusing on understanding their behavior and perceptions is much more valuable for companies in order to enhance the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. Therefore, the most valuable asset in the brand equity context is the knowledge created about the brand in consumers' mind (Keller, 1993). Due to the verified relevance of the consumer perspective, this study will focus on the CBBE approach.

According to Kotler and Keller (2015) a positive (negative) CBBE means that consumers react favorably (unfavorably) to a product if they know the brand attached to the product. Therefore, CBBE measures the incremental value perceived by the consumer because of the presence of a specific brand. Keller also states that a high brand equity is important to a company because it might increase the probability of brand choice, produce a greater consumer loyalty and decrease the vulnerability to competitive marketing actions.

The exposure to the brand during an event is enough to impact positively many dimensions of brand awareness, also impacting positively CBBE (Donlan, 2014; Grohs et al., 2004). Besides congruence, high levels of involvement with the event has also been

verified in literature to potentialize the brand awareness of the sponsor (Grohs et al., 2004; Kim, Ko, Claussen, & Hee Kim, 2008) and also increase the chances of enhancing the corporate image (Kim, Ko, L. Claussen, & Hee Kim, 2008). Also, Kim et al. (2008) verified that consumers highly involved with the event tend to show a higher purchase intention towards the sponsors' products.

Despite all the already proved benefits of sponsorship, potential sponsors should be careful with events that already have a significant number of sponsors, since the presence of a high number of sponsors might confuse the consumers, weakening their recall of the sponsoring brands (Donlan, 2014; Nufer & Bühler, 2010). This situation led the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to categorize the sponsorship, creating tiers of different benefits and that required different investments, in order to avoid the previously mentioned confusion. This strategy has been used in different kind of events since then. For instance, Game XP has Oi as a major sponsor.

2.4.3 *Measuring Brand Equity*

The brand equity can be measured direct or indirectly and both approaches are complementary, since the direct approach is important to indicate if the nature of the impact consumers perceive in the brand is positive or negative, while the indirect approach is useful in identifying which dimension are more significant to cause that differential (Keller, 1993). While the direct approach measures the differential impact of brand equity in the consumers' reactions, the indirect approach measures CBBE through its dimensions (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010).

Scholars have developed scales to measure CBBE indirectly, looking for empirical evidence to support the multidimensionality, and, more specifically, the dimensions proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). Among the elaborated scales, the multidimensional brand equity (MBE), proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001), became one of the most used scales to measure CBBE in the academy (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010). However, Aaker's and Keller's propositions are only partially validated, since the study in which the scale was elaborated only supported the influence of brand loyalty and perceived quality in CBBE, with the authors proposing that brand awareness and brand associations are put together as one single construct.

Washburn and Plank (2002) retested and validated the three dimensions model proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001) and, according to the authors, the strong relation between brand awareness and brand associations is explained due to the fact that people need to be aware of the existence of the brand in order to start making associations related to it. However, they also suggest that the inability to differentiate the two constructs, despite the clear distinction of the concepts, is one of the major limitations of the scale.

Besides the stated importance of Yoo and Donthu (2001) as a starting point for the development of multidimensional scales to measure CBBE, their study also proposed the creation of a direct scale to measure brand equity, the widely accepted overall brand equity (OBE). The OBE scale measures the incremental value attached to a product by its brand in comparison to a similar product unbranded (Buil, Martínez, & de Chernatony, 2013).

The scale was widely tested in different contexts, being used independently (Ballester & Espallardo, 2008; Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Woisetschläger, 2007) or together with Multidimensional Brand Equity (MBE), to complement and validate de multidimensional scale (Bravo, Fraj-Andrés, & Martínez Salinas, 2007; Jung & Sung, 2008). It was also tested in Brazil alone or together with MBE (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Burlamaqui & Barbosa, 2006; Coelho, Amorim, & Almeida, 2019; Costa & Almeida, 2012; Vargas Neto & Luce, 2006).

2.5 Purchase Intention

2.5.1 *Sponsorship and Purchase Intention*

The consumer decision making process regarding the purchasing of a product has been discussed in the literature (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2001; Solomon, 2002). The purchase intention is an intermediary step in the purchasing process, situated between the evaluation of the available options and the purchasing decision (Kotler & Keller, 2015) and was defined by Chang and Liu (2009) as 'a customer's plan to buy a specific brand'. Azjen (2002) also poses intention as the immediate antecedent of behavior and that in most of the cases it is a good predictor of behavior, despite not being enough to guarantee the behavior.

Thinking about the consumers, Kotler and Keller (2015) present a model (see appendix 1) representing the purchasing decision making process in which they indicate that there are factors between the purchase intention and purchase decision that can influence the process. They call it the intervening factors and they are the attitude of others (for instance, the more intense is the other person's attitude and the closer the person is from the decision maker, the more his purchase intention will be adjusted) and unanticipated situational factors (for example, losing the job or other purchase becoming more urgent). Because of that intervening factors, Kotler and Keller (2015) state that purchase intentions are not completely reliable predictors of behavior.

Some studies have investigated the relation of sponsorship and purchase intention, which is related to a corporate objective of sponsorship: increasing sales. Evidence to support the idea that brand equity can affect the purchase intention have been found in the literature (Ashill & Sinha, 2004; Chang & Liu, 2009). Madrigal (2000) investigated the influence of social alliances with sports team on intention to purchase sponsor's products. Therefore, in summary, previous literature has found evidence that sponsorship activity influences consumer's purchase intention, be it directly or by enhancing sponsor's brand equity and, as a consequence, increasing purchase intention.

On a corporate level, according to Sá and Almeida (2015) there are six groups of the objectives observed in sports sponsorship: (1) corporate objectives (Cornwell, Pruitt, & Clark, 2005; Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006); (2) brand objectives (Cornwell et al., 2005); (3) product objectives (Rines, 2000); (4) audience objectives (Cornwell et al., 2005; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003); (5) relationship objectives (Cornwell et al., 2005; J. A. Meenaghan, 1983); and (6) executive's personal objectives (J. A. Meenaghan, 1983).

The eSports context has not been widely explored as the sports context, but it seems reasonable to expect that the relations between sponsorship and purchase intention already investigated in the sports marketing literature may also occur in the eSports context.

2.5.2 *Purchase Intention measuring*

Many are the scales proposed in the literature to measure purchase intention used in different contexts. However, according to Blackwell, Engel and Miniard (2001), to accurately measure if the consumer would buy a product it is imperative to focus on the

consumer's perceptions related to the possibility of buying the product, not only if the consumer likes the product. They also argue that scales that present an element to measure the purchase as an action are, in general, superior to those that don't.

Pope and Voges (2000) conducted a study involving the purchase intention construct in which they applied one question proposed by Whitlark, Geurts and Swenson (1993), operationalized through a 5-item Likert scale that varies from 'definitely will buy' to 'definitely will not buy', to measure consumer's purchase intention.

Baker and Churchill (1977) used three questions to measure purchase intention, approaching the consumer's willingness to try, buy or actively seek the product in stores. Based on their study, Kim et al. (2008) conducted a sponsorship related study approaching consumer's purchase intention towards 2002 FIFA World Cup sponsors' products investigating if consumers were willing to try, buy or seek sponsor's products or services.

Spears and Singh (2004) proposed a 4-item scale to measure purchase intention, which was also posteriorly used in other studies, such as Chavanat, Martinent and Ferrand (2009) that studied relations involving the brand image of 2006 FIFA World Cup, the French National Soccer Team, the French player Zinedine Zidane and the sponsoring company Adidas.

Other disseminated scale to measure purchase intention was proposed by Ohanian (1991) and posteriorly used in other studies (DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 1996; Pornpitakpan, 2004). The scale is based on the dimensions of consider buying, inquiring about and actually purchasing the product/service, and was applied, in general, to studies involving celebrity endorsers' impact to the consumer's purchase intention.

2.6   Congruence

2.6.1   *Defining Congruence*

Congruence is commonly used to indicate a perception of similarity in the consumer's mind, yet no widely accepted definition has been proposed (Rifon et al., 2004). Speed and Thompson (2000) state that the congruence indicates to which extent the sponsorship relation seems to make sense for consumers and they study also found

evidence that some incongruence might even be considered as positive, because it might signal philanthropic intentions.

Academic discussions over congruence rely on the idea that people make associations in their minds and that, together with these associations, people develop a perception that, in some of these associations, both sides have a match between them, while in others they oppose themselves. According to Fleck and Quester (2007), these perceptions impact the consumer's response to stimuli that come from marketing strategies that include sponsorship, for example.

The relevance of congruence as a variable in any sponsorship decision is undeniable. Johar and Pham (1999) found evidence that when consumers perceive a logical relation between the sponsor's product and the sponsored event, they have higher chances of identifying a brand as a sponsor of the event. Also, scholars have found evidence that a strong congruence between sponsor and sponsored might impact positively the consumer's attitude towards the sponsor and, consequently, the purchase intention (Hyung-Seok & Chang-Hoan, 2009; Speed & Thompson, 2000).

The studies related to congruence and image transfer are based upon two different theories developed in cognitive psychology: Associative Network Theory and Schema Theory (Drengner, Jahn, & Zanger, 2011).

2.6.2   *Associative Network Theory and Schema Theory*

According to the Associative Network Theory, the human memory is organized as a network, in which the nodes are pieces of information. Those pieces of information are connected to each other with different intensities, meaning that some connections are stronger than others. The intensity varies according to the importance of the connection to the understanding of a concept. For instance, the information "car" is a node in the network that is probably related to "driving a car", "particular old car I own" or "what to do if you see a red light" (Collins & Loftus, 1975). Creating experiences with the brand will develop new connections in the brand's node and, therefore, enhance its associative strength (Cornwell, 2008).

The theory also proposes that, when we want to retrieve information from our memory, a stimulus is generated in a node and spread across the connections to the nodes

directly connected to it. This stimulus loses intensity as the distance to the node where the stimulus originated increases (Collins & Loftus, 1975).

The knowledge a person has in his own memory about a specific brand is a node in his memory network connected to other nodes, and one of that connections might be related to sponsorship (Keller, 1993). Therefore, it is important for a brand to try to establish the most connections as possible, and to make them as stronger as it can, in the consumer's memory network.

The mentioned importance explains the relevance of congruence in the network context. A congruent relation between sponsor and sponsored entity tends to strengthen the direct connection between those two parts, and, in addition, develop new indirect connections to the brand's node. For instance, if in a person's memory, the event node is connected to "health", a successful sponsorship attempt might develop an indirect connection between the brand's node and "health" (Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006).

In summary, a sponsorship relation perceived as congruent tend to develop stronger direct associations and more indirect associations, making people more prone to remember and recognize the brand (Koo et al., 2006). In contrast, incongruent relations generate weak associations between brand and sponsored entity, making it harder for people to remember (Cornwell et al., 2006). Also, it seems that in situations where the connections already exist, the image transfer between them seems to be easier.

Other theory related to the human memory and how information is connected is the Schema Theory, according to which information is kept in schemas that can be informally defined as pre-existing assumptions a person have about how the world is organized (J. Singer, 1968).

The theory states that, when a new piece of information is received, the individual, in an attempt to process and understand it, will try to fit it a schema previously used in a similar context. The more naturally the information fits in the previously tested schema, smoother will be the process. However, if the information struggles to fit the pattern created in his mind, a person might use inferences and even distort the information received, in order for the information to make sense to him (Axelrod, 1973).

So, according to the schema theory, when the schema a person has related to a specific event is consistent with the knowledge it has of the sponsor's brand, the relation is perceived as congruent. For instance, a sports related company sponsoring a sports event or a car manufacturer sponsoring a F1 race will probably fit easier in pre-existent schemas related to both parts, defining a congruent relation. Because people expect those relations, they are easier to process and keep in mind (Drengner et al., 2011).

2.6.3 *Congruence between Sponsor and Property*

Many are the studies in the sponsorship literature that were dedicated to investigating the impact of the perceived congruence in a sponsorship relation in the consumer's response and they were directed toward different kinds of sponsored entities, being the event sponsorship the most present in those studies (Deitz et al., 2012). Evidence was also found to support that previous experience and the social identification may impact individual perceptions of congruence (Deitz et al., 2012).

Also, those congruence perceptions can be based on functionality or image. For instance, a running shoes manufacturer sponsoring a marathon is trying to take advantage of congruence based on functionality, while a luxury brand sponsoring a contest of luxury related sport, such as golf, is thinking about congruence based on image.

Fleck and Quester (2007) present another approach to congruence, stating that the perception of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored entity is influenced by the relevance of that relation for both parts and the expectancy of that relationship, being it for functional reasons or historical reasons, such as the relationship built between Coca-Cola and the Olympics.

2.6.4 *Measuring Congruence between Sponsor and Property*

The importance of congruence between sponsor and sponsored property to achieve positive response from consumers is already established by many previous studies. However, those studies treat congruence differently. While in some of them congruence is treated like a condition (dichotomy between high congruence and low congruence) (Rifon et al., 2004), others try to measure it (Deitz et al., 2012).

In one of those studies focused on measuring the relative strength of mental associations in consumer's minds, Speed and Thompson (2000) developed a 5-item scale

that try to embrace abstract notions of congruence. Their study suggests that consumer's response to sponsorship is impacted by consumer's attitude towards the sponsor, towards the event and his individual perception of congruence between them.

Speed and Thompson's (2000) scale was widely used worldwide (Close Scheinbaum & Lacey, 2013; Deitz et al., 2012; Olson & Thjomoe, 2011). Among those studies, Deitz et al. (2012) highlighted the significant role of congruence as an influencer of consumer's response to sponsorship, Close Scheinbaum and Lacey (2013) stated that the perception of congruence is a relevant variable to the perception the spectators have of a sponsor and Olson (2011) verified the validity of the scale outside of the sports context, through a comparative study in sports events and cultural events.

In Brazil, Speed and Thompson's (2000) scale was also tested (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Coelho et al., 2019). Amorim and Almeida (2017) investigated the sponsorship of rival football clubs by the same company and Coelho et al. (2019) studied the impact of FIFA's reputation in the FIFA World Cup Image and the value of the sponsors. In both studies, the impact of the perception of congruence was also verified.

3 HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In this chapter the research hypothesis and the proposed conceptual model are presented.

3.1 Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model, together with the previously described relations between the variables is presented in fig 1.
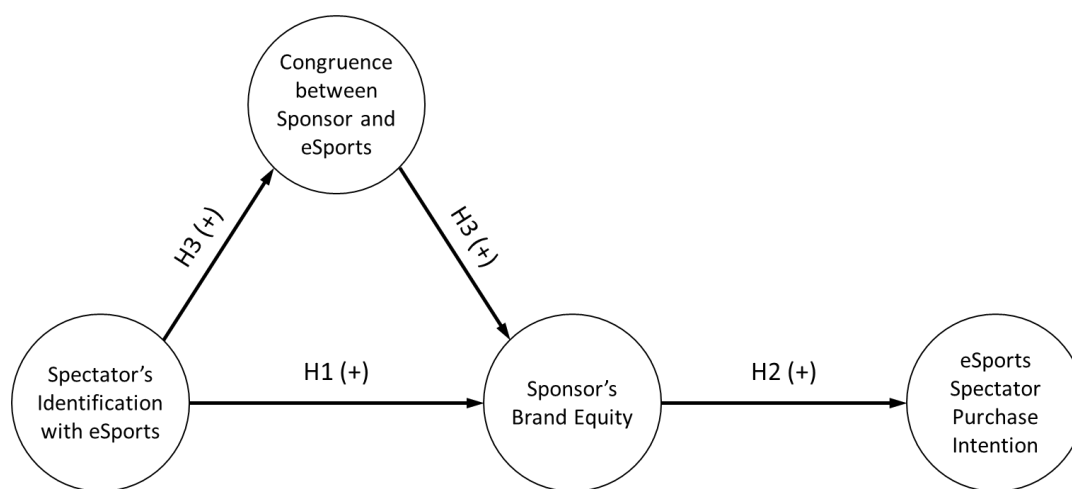
Fig. 1 - Proposed Conceptual Model

3.2 Hypotheses

3.2.1 *The influence of the spectator's identification with eSports in the sponsor's brand equity*

Some studies have been done to investigate the impact of the identification in sponsorship, mainly in the sports context. For instance, Amorim and Almeida (2017) found evidence that the identification with a team impact positively the sponsor's brand equity, although the results of the study show little power in identification with the team to explain brand equity.

According to the Social Identity Theory, for example, a team's sponsor is seen as a new member of a social group that comprehends people identified with that team. That situation brings benefits to the sponsor, since supporting a member of the group is a

natural behavior of other members (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). In the sports literature, the impacts of high team identification on chances of buying sponsor's products (Madrigal, 2000) and the perception of sponsor's brand equity (Wang, Cheng, Purwanto, & Erimurti, 2011) were investigated.

People identified with eSports form a social group in which people interact and help each other. In eSports competition streams on the internet, the chat provides a tool to facilitate this social interaction among eSports fans watching the matches (Qian et al., 2019). Also, Pizzo et al (2018) studied spectator's motives and found evidence that support similarities between eSports and traditional sports. Therefore, it is expected that, similarly to what happens among team fans in traditional sports, the identification with eSports in general may contribute to the differentiation of the sponsor among competitors, enhancing the sponsor's brand equity.

H1: The spectator's identification with eSports has positive impact on the sponsor's brand equity.

3.2.2 *The influence of the sponsor's brand equity in the eSports spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsor's products*

The influence of brand equity in consumer's purchase intention was widely investigated in the literature in different contexts. Cobb-Walgren, Ruble and Donthu (1995) conducted a comparative study on the impact of brand equity on consumer's purchase intention towards two different products/services. In the first study, conducted with two different hotel brands, they found evidence of the effect of brand equity on consumer's usage intentions, and in the second study, involving competing brands of cleansers, the evidence was reinforced. They argued that, for comparative purposes, their idea was to study two clearly distinct set of brands, being one a service category with a fairly high financial and functional risks and the other a product category generally associated to low risk.

Chen and Chang (2008) found evidence to support the impact of brand equity on purchase intention with airline brands, while studying the moderating effects of switching costs. Chang and Liu (2009) investigated the impact of brand equity on brand preference and purchase intention in three different service industries: bank credit cards, mobile telecommunication and ADSL. Their study did not consider the direct impact of brand

equity on purchase intention but found evidence to support the impact of brand equity on brand preference and of brand preference on purchase intention.

Coursaris, Osch & Balogh (2016) looked at Facebook posts from Delta Airlines, McDonald's and Walmart to study empirical links between social media content, brand equity, purchase intention and engagement and also found evidence to support the relationship between brand equity and purchase intention. Vahdati and Mousavi Nejad (2016) also found support to this relationship by collecting data from the customer base of an Iranian bank.

Jalilvand, Samiei and Mahdavinia (2011) opted to break brand equity in brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty, as proposed by Aaker (1991), and to investigate the impact of each category in the purchase intention. Their study found support to the influence of each individual component of brand equity on consumers' purchase intention.

The impact of brand equity has also been investigated in sponsorship contexts (Chanavat et al., 2009; Pope & Voges, 2000) and the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention has also been widely investigated (Düsenberg, Almeida, & Amorim, 2016; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Other studies also found evidence that supports the influence of brand equity on consumer's purchase intention (Beneke, de Sousa, Mbuyu, & Wickham, 2016; Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017)

Having the influence of brand equity on consumers' purchase intention been widely supported in different contexts, including traditional sports events, and due to the similarities between eSports and traditional sports supported by Pizzo et al (2018) findings, it is reasonable to expect that it might happen also in an eSports sponsorship context. Therefore, it is expected that spectators physically present in the investigated eSports events might have their purchase intention towards sponsor's products or services influenced by their perception of the sponsor's brand equity.

H2: The sponsor's brand equity has positive impact on the spectator purchase intention towards sponsor's products.

3.2.3 *The influence of congruence in the relationship between the identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity*

The influence of the perception of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored entity has been widely investigated on the literature on the sponsorship context. For instance, evidence was found to support that the perception of congruence influences consumers' cognitive and affective responses toward the sponsors (Deitz et al., 2012; Koo et al., 2006), sponsor recognition (Koo et al., 2006), sponsor identification (Johar & Pham, 1999), purchase intention (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008), and sponsor's brand equity (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Coelho et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2011).

Congruence's perception influence on consumer's responses are in accordance with the way human memory works, according to Schema Theory (Axelrod, 1973; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999) and Associative Network Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Cornwell et al., 2006). Koo, Quarterman and Flynn (2006) suggest that any newly received information about the brand by the consumer that seems irrelevant to the existing schema in their memory will likely be filtered out, while relevant information is more easily assimilated by the consumer. Therefore, the fit perception in the sponsorship relation by the preexisting schema in the individual's memory might generate more and stronger connections related to the brand's node, consolidating the brand in the most identified fan's minds.

Rifon et al. (2004) have studied sponsorship congruence perception between sponsoring companies and causes and stated that if consumers perceive congruence in that context, they may also perceive the presence of altruistic motives for the sponsorship, enhancing the credibility of the sponsorship relation, positively influencing consumers' response to it. The congruence in that relationship seem more real for the consumers, providing evidence for them to believe that it was genuinely motivated by generosity.

Congruence influence in the sponsorship context has been widely supported by the literature. The perceived fit in the consumers' mind between the two entities in a sponsorship relation can be very positive for the sponsoring company (, allowing them to potentialize the benefits they take from their sponsorship investments. This mediating effect has been supported by literature in traditional sports events (i.e. (Coelho et al., 2019) and, since Pizzo et al (2018) found evidence to support the existence of similarities between traditional sports and eSports, this study expects that the congruence between

the sponsor and eSports mediates the spectator's identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity.

H3: The perceived congruence between eSports and the sponsor mediates the relationship between the spectators' identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity.

4 METHOD

In this chapter, the method will be presented, together with the procedures used during the study. First, the study is contextualized, presenting objectives and the scope, encompassing the nature of the study and the scientific approach. Next, the operationalization of variables will be explained, together with the data collection process. Finally, the data analysis technics are described.

4.1 Study Contextualization

4.1.1 *Study Objectives*

This study intends to contribute to the exploration of a growing eSports field, still full of academic opportunities. Previous academic research focused on eSports have approached the phenomenon from many different perspectives and, among those, studies focused on the comparison between eSports and traditional sports (Cunningham et al., 2018; Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Heere, 2018; Pizzo et al., 2018) established a foundation to support similarities between them and allowed future eSport research to benefit from that revealed congruence.

Despite the growing number of researches on eSports, there is still a lot to investigate in the sponsorship relations in the eSports context. Combining the investigated association between traditional sports and eSports and the sponsorship relations that have been widely supported in the sports marketing literature, it is expected that those relations might be also verified in eSports sponsorship. However, that expectation must be supported by empirical evidence in the eSports context and this study intends to help to provide that evidence.

In summary, this study objectives to investigate eSports events sponsorship to verify if and to what extent spectators' eSports identification impacts the sponsor's brand equity, together with the mediating influence of congruence between eSports and the sponsoring brand, and if and to what extent the spectator's perception of the sponsor's brand equity impacts the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsor's products/services, applying previously tested scales in a sports context to an eSports context and through the lens of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979). Evidence to support those relations was found in the sports marketing literature, but this study intends to find evidence to support their existence in eSports sponsorship.

4.1.2 *Research Questions*

This study aims to contribute with the previous literature regarding eSports events, by addressing the following research question: **"Does the sponsoring of an eSports event contribute to the brand equity of the sponsor and to the purchase intention among eSports spectators?"**. This research question was split in three different specific questions that are related to the research hypothesis:

1st question: Does the spectators' identification with eSports influences the sponsor's brand equity?

2nd question: Does the sponsor's brand equity influences the spectators' purchase intention towards the sponsor's products/services?

3rd question: Does the spectators' perception of congruence between eSports and the sponsor's brand has a mediating effect in the relation between the spectators' identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity?

4.1.3 *Scope of work*

In this section, the boundaries of the scope of this study are presented. To define the borders of the study, the following limitations were considered:

First of all, the study investigates the influence of the eSports spectator's identification with eSports on his own perception of the sponsor's brand equity and of his own perception of the sponsor's brand equity on his own intention to purchase the sponsor's products/services. The study was conducted in two different events. The first,

Game XP, is a bigger four-day event that holds an eSports arena. The event's master sponsor is a Brazilian telecommunication company called Oi, that also sponsors the eSports venue, called Oi Game Arena. Since the study focus on sponsorship in eSports and the event includes other attractions related to gaming, and not necessarily eSports, the study focused exclusively on people who answered that among their plans for the event, they had the intention to watch eSports.

The other event is the finals of the Brazilian League of Legend Championship (CBLoL), that occurred on September 7th, in Rio de Janeiro. Despite being a much smaller event in terms of capacity (and also being a single day event), everyone attending the event was there to watch eSports. CBLoL 2019th edition was officially sponsored (according to CBLoL official website) by Gillette and Dell Gaming, one non-endemic and one endemic brand. Dell was selected to be used in this study, since Gillette in Brazil is strongly associated to razor blade used for shaving (Gillette is even used as a term to refer to razor blade, independently of brand).

4.1.1.1   Game XP

The Game XP is an event focused on entertainment immersed in a gaming thematic. The first edition occurred in 2017, in a very small proportion, inside one of the biggest music festivals in Brazil, Rock in Rio. In the following year, the first independent edition happened, with tickets specifically for the gaming event being sold. The 2018 edition received around 95,000 visitors and had an estimated economic impact of R$ 53.9 million.

The event holds a wide variety of entertaining attractions, such as Ferris wheels, rollercoaster, laser tag, game zone and eSports competitions inside the Oi Game Arena (Oi is a Brazilian telecom company that sponsors the arena). The event website presents a representation of a map with the event attractions, as seen in fig 12 (appendix 2). The event was created by a partnership between Rock in Rio, Grupo Globo and Comic Con Experience, in an attempt to take advantage of the fast growing gaming segment to monetize and foster the gaming culture in Brazil.

The 2019 edition was held in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, from July 25th to July 28th and received 95,000 visitors, generating an economic impact of R$82.3 million and paying R$11.1 million in taxes (according to FGV)[3].

4.1.1.2   CBLoL - Brazilian League of Legends Championship

CBLoL is the Brazilian League of Legends Championship, organized by the League of Legends game developer Riot Games, being the main professional League of Legends competition in Brazil. The tournament has suffered many changes in format since its first edition, in 2012 (just few months after the launch of the Brazilian server in the League of Legends game), and in 2019 edition the tournament includes eight different teams and is divided in two stages, called 'splits', each one occurring in one semester of the year and rewarding the champions with the opportunity to play the first round of international League of Legends tournaments, specifically the Mid-Season Invitational and the League of Legends World Championship. Each 'split' is a single tournament that starts with a first round in which all the teams play against each other and the four best teams go on to a playoff stage fighting for a spot in the great final. Since 2015, the tournament also includes promotion and relegation to "circuito desafiante", that works as a second division.

Since 2015, all matches except for the finals are played in the Riot studios, in São Paulo, and streamed live in the official Riot Games Brasil Youtube and Twitch channels. The finals are open to the public and in each edition are played in different locations. The 2019 2nd split finals were played in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, on September 7th. The finals are a huge success in numbers. The 2017 2nd split, for example, occurred in Belo Horizonte, and received more than 8,000 spectators. The final matches were watched by around 1.2 million people in cable TV and 1.4 million online and were also broadcasted in 50 cinemas around the country.[4]

Brazil is an enormous and fast growing market for eSports, being an important target for Riot Games. However, the Brazilian teams are still far from the competitive level from the strongest teams worldwide, with the teams that have played in the

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[3] Extracted from https://g1.globo.com/pop-arte/games/noticia/2019/07/28/game-xp-recebe-95-mil-visitantes-e-confirma-nova-edicao-em-julho-de-2020.ghtml on August 14th, 2019.

[4] Extracted from https://globoesporte.globo.com/sportv/e-sportv/noticia/26-milhoes-assistiram-a-final-do-campeonato-brasileiro-de-lol.ghtml on August 14th, 2019.

international competitions struggling even in the first round. Companies are working hard to take advantage of the growing popularity of eSports, and more specifically League of Legends, in Brazil. Gillette and Dell Gaming are sponsors of the 2019 edition of CBLoL.

4.1.1.3   Sponsoring Brands – Oi and Dell

Oi is a Brazilian telecommunication company, being one of the biggest telecommunication companies in Brazil and even South America. Oi has previously invested in sports and events. For instance, the company has previously invested in surf and was even one of the sponsors of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, held in Brazil.

Oi has sponsored the 2018 edition of Game XP, becoming a master sponsor in 2019. It seems to be a good idea to sponsor an event that holds a gaming thematic, and also eSports, since Oi is a big internet provider in Brazil and gamers and eSports spectators are important to the company as a target, since they need to have good internet connections in order to play online with friends and to watch their favorite eSports competitions.

This sponsorship also increases the diversification in the company's sponsorship portfolio and seems to indicate a trend in the telecommunication market in Brazil, since Vivo, other of the biggest telecommunication companies in the country, has also recently invested in eSports. Keyd was one of the biggest eSports teams in Brazil, competing in many different eSports and, since 2018, Vivo sponsorship became so significant that the organization changed its name to Vivo Keyd.

The other event investigated in this study, CBLoL, is sponsored by Gillette and Dell. Dell was selected to be studied and it also has its own history with sponsorships. Dell is a technology company, one of the biggest hardware manufacturers worldwide. Dell Technologies shows in its own website its sponsorship, like McLaren Technology Group (F1) and PGA Tour (Golf)[5]. Dell Gaming is a product line from Dell that features products that are developed to meet the gamers' needs. Therefore, investing in eSports, through CBLoL, seems to be related to a strategy of reaching that specific audience.

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[5] Exctrated from https://corporate.delltechnologies.com/pt-br/about-us/sponsorships.htm on August 14th, 2019.

4.2   Nature of the Study

This study applies the causal-comparative research method, since it is characterized as a systematic empirical investigation in which researchers have no control over independent variables, because they are not susceptible to manipulation or they have already occurred. In this research method, the relationships between variables are inferred, independently of the simultaneous variation of dependent and independent variables (Kerlinger, 1973).

4.2.1   *Research Method*

This study used survey as data collection method, through close-ended questions evaluated by the respondents. The study uses previously tested scales to measure the constructs in the model, through 7-points Likert scales.

4.2.2   *Unit of Analysis*

The unit of analysis in this study is the individual. The study investigates the presential spectators' individual perception of his own identification with eSports, of the sponsor's brand equity, of congruence between eSports and the sponsor and his own purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services.

4.3   Operationalization of Variables

The conceptual model tested in this study presents endogenous and exogenous variables. The exogenous variable, in the sense that it is not affected by other variables in the system, is the spectators' identification with eSports. The other variables in the model are endogenous variables: the sponsor's brand equity, the perception of congruence between eSports and sponsors and the spectator's purchase intention. The perception of congruence between eSports and the sponsor is also a mediating variable.

Four constructs were operationalized: (a) spectator's identification with eSports, (b) eSports sponsor's brand equity, (c) spectator's perception of congruence between eSports and the sponsor, and (d) spectator's purchase intention towards sponsor's products or services.

To operationalize the variables, preference was given to pre-existing scales that were previously tested in Brazil, as they were already translated to Portuguese and tested in the Brazilian context, being ready to be applied in the events. All the items of the scales were measured through 7-point Likert scales.

4.3.1 *Variables relative to the spectator's identification with eSports*

To operationalize the spectator's identification with eSports the Points of Attachment Index (PAI) was selected. PAI was widely used to measure different kinds of identification in different sports contexts. Some identification scales were proposed and used in the sports context, but they usually focus on identification with a specific sport, team or player. PAI version proposed by Shapiro, Ridinger and Trail (2013) was used because it includes a dimension to measure 'Identification as a general sport fan', being much broader than a specific sport (or eSport category) which is specifically what this study intended to measure. The dimension had to be adapted from 'general sport fan' to 'general eSports fan'.

PAI was used in Brazil in different studies and, therefore, some dimensions had been previously translated to Portuguese. However, for this study, the specific dimension of 'Identification as a general sport fan' from Shapiro et al. (2013) was translated. In the end, from the 9 dimensions present in the PAI from Shapiro et al. (2013), just one was used, totalizing 3 items (see appendix 3).

4.3.2 *Variables relative to the eSports sponsor's brand equity*

To operationalize the consumer based brand equity, the Overall Brand Equity (OBE) scale was used. OBE was proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001), which was widely used and accepted to measure brand equity of companies (see appendix 4). That scale was used in many different contexts and different countries, even in Brazil and in the sports sponsorship context (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Coelho et al., 2019).

Since OBE has already been used in Brazil, in Portuguese, no translation was needed. However, the original OBE was developed to measure brand equity of companies that sell physical products. This fits for Dell, but not for Oi, that commercialize services. Amorim and Almeida (2017) had adapted the scale for financial services and, therefore,

little more adaptations were made so that it could be applied for telecommunication services. In the end, OBE was measured with 4 items using 7-point Likert scale.

4.3.3 *Variables relative to the spectator's perception of congruence between eSports and the sponsor*

For the congruence construct, the 5-item scale from Speed and Thompson (2000) was used. The Sponsor-Event Fit scale was selected because it was developed for the sponsorship context and was already tested in Brazil (Amorim & Almeida, 2017; Coelho et al., 2019). The items in the scale mention abstract notions of congruence, trying to measure the respondent's perception of a logical connection between sponsor and event.

Since this study wants to measure the perception of congruence between the sponsor and eSports, the scale was adapted replacing the event part for eSports (see appendix 5). The scale was previously translated to Portuguese and, therefore no further translation was needed. In the end, the congruence between eSports and the sponsor was measured with 5 items using 7-point Likert scale.

4.3.4 *Variables relative to the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services*

To measure the purchase intention, the variables used by Ohanian (1991) were used (see Appendix 6). Her questionnaire included items that measured respondents' likelihood to inquire about, consider purchasing and actually purchase a product endorsed by a celebrity. The items had to be adapted for the Oi case, since the company was approached as a service provider.

4.4 Research Population and Sample

According to Malhotra (2017), a population is the aggregate of all the elements that share same common set of characteristics and that comprise the universe for the purpose of the marketing research problem. Therefore, based on that definition, the target population of this specific study is composed by in-person spectators of eSports in the two events that were investigated: Game XP and CBLoL.

The events were selected because they were the biggest eSports events held in the city of Rio de Janeiro during the second semester of 2019. Two samples will be collected,

one in each event, composed by people that are interested in watching eSports inside the arenas. In the Game XP version of the questionnaire, a filter question had to be asked, to make sure that the respondent was interested in watching eSports even with the wide variety of attractions in the festival. For CBLoL, that filter question was not necessary, since the only attraction in the event was the League of Legends competition and, therefore, every person entering the arena would be watching eSports. In both events the data was collected at the entrance.

4.5   Data Collection Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was developed to an assisted data collection, in which the interviewer asks the questions orally and face-to-face to the respondents and write down their answers in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed by five different groups of questions. The first group contains the filter question, demographic questions and questions for sample characterization (i.e. if it is the respondent's first time watching eSports in-person or not).

The second group presents the three items related to the identification with eSports. The third group contains the four items related to the sponsor's brand equity, being these items adjusted for each event's sponsor. The fourth group contains the five items related to the congruence between eSports and the sponsor, and the final and fifth group presents the three items related to the purchase intention, being this two groups also adjusted for each event,.

To help the respondents with the close-ended questions a card was printed presenting the scale and what each number stands for in a scale from 1, "totally disagree", to 7, "totally agree" (see appendix 7).

Finally, two different versions of the questionnaire were elaborated, one for each event. The two versions were necessary, since the events had different sponsors and one of them sells products, while the other focus on providing services. Besides that, the need for the filter question regarding the Game XP event, because eSports is just one of the attractions of a broader festival, also posed a reason to differentiate the questionnaires.

After the Game XP collection, the first question of sample characterization was slightly modified due to the feedback from the interviewers from 'Você gosta de eSports?'

to 'Você gosta de eSports ou veio só para acompanhar alguém?' ("Do you like eSports?" to "Do you like eSports or just came to accompany someone?").

4.5.1 *Pretest of Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was tested with six different people that are eSports spectators and, therefore, were potential participants in the study sample. During the pretests, it took around 5 minutes, in average, for the respondents to answer the full questionnaire. After the questionnaire was completed, the respondents were asked about their perception about the clarity and the phrasing of the questionnaire, and also suggestions and critics. The pretests were very useful in order to make a minor fix in the items related to brand equity in the Oi version of the questionnaire.

The items were initially phrased using the term 'service', but Oi is usually more associated with the mobile phone sector than seen as an internet provider. Because of that, after the pretests and the respondents' suggestions, the term was changed to 'services' in order to avoid respondents in the field to focus on just one kind of service, which could even enhance the bias in the items related to congruence.

4.5.2 *Final Version of the Questionnaire*

The same amount of both versions of the questionnaire were printed, being 50% for Game XP and 50% for CBLoL. The questionnaires were two pages, but it was printed two-sided in the same paper. Both versions of the questionnaire, together with the printed card with the Likert scale can be seen in Appendix 7.

4.6 Data Collection

The data collection was conducted in two different locations. Game XP occurred from July 25th to July 28th, 2019, and CBLoL on September 7th, 2019. The procedures related to data collection are detailed in this section.

4.6.1 *Data Collection at the Game XP entrance*

The data collection related to the Game XP event was performed during every single day of event. The event gates were open at 10:00 am and the event finished at 9:00 pm every day. The interviewers were previously tested to apply the questionnaire and arrived

around 8:00 am and left the site at any time between 11:30 am and 4:00 pm. Due to the fact that the event finished very late, it was an option not to interview people exiting the event, since it was unsafe, and people were tired and anxious to get home. The group of interviewers was composed by graduation students from different courses of different universities of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ, Uerj, PUC-Rio) and acquaintances of the author. Some interviewers were financially rewarded for their collection work and others volunteered to help and gave up the payment. The average size of the team was of seven interviewers, but since the presence of the interviewers depended on their availability, in the first day of event, a Thursday, only four interviewers were available which weakened the interviewing capacity. The daily collection varied from 31 to 166.

The collection took place outside the entrance of the event, which happened through a single entrance. The entrance was crowded with many people approaching the visitors for different reasons (interviewers doing other academic research and people offering participation in a draw, selling products or reselling tickets), which posed one more obstacle for the collection. Sometimes, visitors had already been approached by four different people when the interviewer approached for this study, which put them in a position of unwillingness to participate. The interviewers were told to randomly approach people and to begin asking the filter question, about the eSports spectating intention, before proceeding with the interview.

The most efficient moment of collection was before the gates were open, because the visitors were idle in the queue and, therefore, answering the questionnaire did not disturb them. However, because of the large amount of people approaching visitors, the organization of the event prohibited people without tickets to go inside a first gate that opened around 8:00 am, inside which the queue formed. This posed other obstacle to the data collection. 462 questionnaires were collected but due to lack of compliance with the filter question or questions that were left unanswered, 16 were discarded. In the end, 446 questionnaires were collected in accordance to the previously defined requirements.

4.6.2 *Data Collection at CBLoL entrance*

The CBLoL Finals was a one day event where the data collection was performed. The event gates were open at 9:00 am and it started at 11:00 am, ending around 6:00 pm. The interviewers arrived around 7:00 am and left the site at any time between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Few people were interviewed exiting the event before it ended. The group

of interviewers was also composed by graduation students from different courses of different universities of Rio de Janeiro, some which had previously worked as interviewers during the Game XP event and some new interviewers, and acquaintances of the author. All the interviewers were financially rewarded for their collection work. There were seven interviewers and 232 questionnaires were collected in a single event day.

Similarly, the collection took place outside the entrance of the event, which happened through a single entrance, and 43 were collected inside the arena. Also similarly to Game XP, the entrance was crowded with many people approaching the visitors for different reasons (interviewers doing other academic research and people selling products or reselling tickets), but on a smaller scale. The interviewers were told to randomly approach people asking if they were willing to participate in the survey and, since there was no filter question for this event because it was just focused in eSports, start the interview in case of positive response.

The most efficient moment of collection was also before the gates were open, when the visitors were idle in the queue. During this event, the access to the queue was easier and the interviewers perceived the event spectators as more receptive to help with the research. 232 questionnaires were collected and all of them were in accordance to the previously defined requirements.

4.7   Data Preparation

Even though the study involved two versions of the questionnaire with two different sponsors, they followed the exact same order of the items. Two databases were formed, one for each event and they were analyzed separately, in order to investigate the relationship between the constructs in each specific event and the respective sponsor.

The tabulation process also comprised the adaptation of yes/no questions into binary variables (0 or 1), being 0 related to 'yes' and 1 to 'no'. Also the item related to gender became a binary variable, being 0 related to 'male' and 1 to 'female'. Finally, schooling was defined as a variable ranging from 0 to 3. In Brazil, education is divided in three main blocks: 'fundamental', 'médio' and 'superior' (or '1º grau', '2º grau' and 'superior'). Differently from the American system, the 0 to 3 range goes from '1º grau incompleto',

that comprises people that have not finished the basic education yet (and compares to not having completed the first year of high school in USA), to 'superior completo' (people who completed undergraduate school in USA). After the Game XP event, the schooling question was modified, combining the two first options together and modifying the phrasing to 'Ensino Fundamental' ('1º grau incompleto' and '1º grau completo' in the Game XP questionnaire), 'Ensino Médio' ('2º grau completo') and 'Ensino Superior'.

4.8 Data Analysis

In total, 446 questionnaires were collected during the Game XP event and 232 during the CBLoL Finals. The data relative to both events was consolidated separately on Excel spreadsheets.

The data collection generated two databases, one relative to each event, and they were analyzed separately. First, the database from Game XP were analyzed, and then the data collected during the CBLoL Finals. For the exploratory analysis the software SPSS v.20 were used and for the validation of the scales and the hypothesis testing the software AMOS v.26 were used.

4.8.1 *Sample Characteristics*

First, an analysis was made in order to better understand the general characteristics of the sample. The main objective for that analysis is to verify the composition of the sample in terms of gender, age and education level. Also to see what portion of the sample was a first time in-person spectator of eSports and a first time in-person spectator of the specific event in which they were interviewed.

4.8.2 *Descriptive Analysis*

The descriptive analysis comprised univariate and multivariate analysis. It is important to evaluate frequency, mean and standard deviation of each variable individually. The sample was characterized and the groups were analyzed according to gender, education, previous experience with being an in-person spectator of eSports, previous experience with the event and previous experience with the sponsor brand. Also, the age distribution of the sample was analyzed.

4.8.3 *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

Factor analysis is an interdependence technique whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis. Factor analysis provides the tools for analyzing the structure of the interrelationship (correlations) among a large number of variables (e.g. test items, questionnaire responses) by defining sets of variables that are highly interrelated, known as factors. These groups of variables (factors) which are by definition highly intercorrelated, are assumed to represent dimensions within the data (Hair, Anderson, Black, & Babin, 2016).

Factor analytic techniques can achieve their purposes either from an exploratory or confirmatory perspective. Many researchers advocate in favor of the exploratory perspective, by arguing that, in this perspective, factor analytic techniques "take what data give you", without setting any a priori constraint on the estimation of the components or the number of components to be extracted. However, despite this use of factor analysis being appropriate for many of the possible applications, there are situations in which the researcher has preconceived thoughts on the actual structure of the data, based on theoretical support or prior research. In situations like that, the researcher requires that factor analysis take a confirmatory approach, assessing the degree to which the data meet the previously expected structure. By providing insight into the relationship among variables and the underlying structure of the data, factor analysis is an excellent starting point for other multivariate techniques (Hair et al., 2016).

According to Hair et al. (2016), the factor analysis decision process is divided in six stages. The first stage comprises the understanding of the intended objectives of the factor analysis. This stage is related to the research problem and it involves searching and defining the fundamental constructs or dimensions assumed to underlie the original variables. The second stage is related to the design of the factor analysis. It involves three basic decisions: (1) calculation of the input data to meet the specified objectives of grouping variables or respondents; (2) design the number of variables, measurement properties of variables and types of allowable variables (3) sample size necessary. The third stage involves the assumptions in factor analysis, which are more conceptual than statistical in the case of factor analysis.

The fourth stage is where the factor analysis properly starts in order to identify the underlying structure of relationships between variables. This stage requires decisions

concerning (1) the method of extracting factors (common factor analysis x component analysis) (2) the number of factors to represent the underlying structure in the data. The fifth stage is related to the factors' interpretation. This stage comprises three processes: estimate of the factor matrix, factor rotation (orthogonal x oblique) and factor interpretation and respecification. The final stage involves the validation of the factor analysis, which can be executed by moving to a confirmatory perspective. Hair et al. (2016) also propose an additional stage related to additional uses of factor analysis results.

When the primary objective is to identify the latent dimensions or constructs represented in the original variables, the common factor analysis is most appropriate (Hair et al., 2016). Therefore, the Principal Axis Factoring with extraction based on eigenvalue will be used. Since the literature supports the relationship between constructs, the oblique rotation should be used. There are two important indicators to be used to evaluate EFA adequacy: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), that is expected to be above 0.5, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity, that is expected to present sig. < 0.05.

The Cronbach's Alpha is an important reliability coefficient. It assesses the internal consistency of scales. It is expected to be above 0.7 for each specific scale. Hair et al. (2016) state that a problem with the Cronbach's Alpha is that it is positively related with the number of items in a scale and, therefore, a scale with a large number of items might artificially inflate the alpha. Since this study involves scales that goes from 3 to 5 items, this doesn't seem to be a problem.

The underlying structure is usually analyzed through factor loadings. The factor loadings are important to verify if the factors fit within the constructs, being expected that the factor loadings are above 0.5. To verify the convergent validity and discriminant validity, a correlation matrix was generated. In order to achieve convergent validity, it is necessary that the correlation coefficients between items inside the same factor are above 0.3, while for discriminant validity, it is necessary that the correlation coefficients between items from different factors are below 0.3.

4.8.4 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

While the distinctive feature of EFA is that the factors are derived from statistical data, in CFA, they come from theory. With CFA, researcher must specify the number of factors and which factor each variable will load on before results can be computed,

differently from EFA, in which the factors that emerge can only be named after the factor analysis is performed. Therefore, this technique does not assign variables to factors, this role being executed by the researcher based on theory, being each variable assigned to one single factor. In summary, CFA statistics will tell how well the researcher's theoretical specification of the factors matches the empirical data. Therefore, CFA is a tool that enables to "confirm" or "reject" preconceived theory (Hair et al., 2016).

It is necessary that the normality of the multiple variables is verified, which can be done through kurtosis indicators, which will be obtained with AMOS software.

Some are the indicators that are important to measure quality of fit of the model. Some of them are: Chi-square ($\chi 2$), normed Chi-square, Goodness of Fit (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

Chi-square is one of the most widely used indicators of model quality, being a non-significant value of $\chi 2$ considered an indicator of good model fit. However, $\chi 2$ is negatively correlated to some factors, such as the number of observations in the study, which makes it unlikely that $\chi 2$ will not be significant in cases with more than 400 observations. If this is the case, the evaluation of normed Chi-square is suggested, since it is a simple ratio of $\chi 2$ to the degrees of freedom. Usually, a ratio of 3:1 or less is an indicator of better-fitting model (Hair et al., 2016), but even if this condition is satisfied it is important to look to other indicators.

It is also expected that both the GFI and the CFI are above 0.9 so that the model can be considered to have a good fit. The CFI is an incremental indicator, in the sense that it compares the model to a null model, penalizing the proposed model for the number of estimated parameters. Finally, the RMSEA tries to correct for both model complexity and sample size by including each in its computation. The lower the RMSEA, better the fit, with the cutoff to a good RMSEA still being debatable according to Hair et al. (2016), ranging from 0.5 and 0.8. However, recent research points that it is not advisable to define an absolute cutoff for RMSEA.

The Construct Reliability (CR) will be used to verify the reliability of the constructs. The CR is a measure of reliability and internal consistency of the measured variables representing a latent construct. According to Hair et al. (2016) CR should be above 0.7 in order to indicate adequate convergence or internal consistency.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) will also be evaluated. AVE is calculated as the mean variance extracted for the items loading on a construct and is a summary indicator of convergence. It is computed as the total of all squared standardized factor loadings divided by the number of items. According to Hair et al. (2016), an AVE of 0.5 or higher is a good indicator of adequate convergence. Also, if the square of the correlations between constructs is equal or lower than the AVE of the construct, the discriminant validity is verified.

4.8.5 *Substantive Hypothesis Testing*

The technique selected to test the substantive hypothesis is the Structural Equations Modeling (SEM). According to Hair et al. (2016), differently from other multivariate techniques, SEM can examine a series of dependence relationships between variables simultaneously and, therefore, is particularly useful in testing theories that contain multiple equations involving dependence relationships. Other multivariate techniques, such as multiple regression and factor analysis, are limited in the sense that they provide powerful tools to examine a single relationship at a time.

In other words, SEM is a family of statistical models that seek to explain the relationships among multiple variable, by examining the structure of interrelationships expressed in a series of equations (similar to a series of multiple regression equations), where these equations depict all of the relationships among constructs involved in the analysis. Therefore, SEM can be thought as a unique combination of interdependence and dependence technique (Hair et al., 2016).

With the SEM technique, coefficients will be calculated to the previously hypothesized paths in the conceptual model that will be analyzed. Also, to evaluate the significance of the paths' coefficients it is indicated to consider a criterion of p-value below 0.05 in order to support the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2016). The hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 will be tested through the analysis of significance of the paths.

For the mediating hypothesis H4, the four steps proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and the Sobel (1982) test will be used to verify the significance of the mediation effect. The four steps involve the isolation of the variables in order to verify each relationship individually. In the first step, evaluates the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Then, the influence of the independent variable on the

mediating variable is evaluated. The third step comprises the evaluation of the influence of the independent variable and the mediating variable on the dependent variable, excluding the direct relationship between independent and mediating variables. Finally, during the fourth step, the influence of the mediating variable on the relationship between independent and dependent variables is verified. If the steps one to three present significant results, a partial mediating effect is indicated. However, if all steps present significant results, it indicates total mediation of the relationship.

5 RESULTS

This chapter presents the research results separately for each event where data was collected. First, a characterization of the database (one for Game XP and one for CBLoL) is presented, providing an analysis regarding the composition and representativity of the groups inside the sample. Then, The results from the Exploratory Factor Analysis are presented, followed by the results from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Finally, the Hypothesis Tests are presented. To better understand the analysis and results presented in this section, it is important to first provide the correspondence between variables and questionnaire items, which is valid for both samples.

5.1 Correspondence between Variables and Questionnaire Items

Table 1 presents each item description in the questionnaire, with the respective number of the question and the related variable used during the data analysis process. This connection between the questionnaire items and the variables is fundamental for the better observation of the results that emerge from the analysis, facilitating the general comprehension of this study.

Table 1 - Correspondence between variables and questionnaire items.

Variable	Questionnaire Item (Oi/Game XP)	Questionnaire Item (Dell/CBLoL)	Item Description in the Portuguese Version of the Questionnaire
IDeS_1	10	8	Eu sou fã de eSports em geral.
IDeS_2	11	9	Eu sou fã de vários eSports diferentes.
IDeS_3	12	10	Ser um fã de eSports é muito importante para mim.
BEOi_1	13	-	Vale a pena usar Oi, mesmo quando os serviços são iguais aos de outras operadoras.
BEOi_2	14	-	Mesmo que outras operadoras tenham as mesmas características, eu prefiro usar Oi.
BEOi_3	15	-	Mesmo que haja outra operadora tão boa quanto, eu ainda prefiro usar Oi.
BEOi_4	16	-	Se outra operadora não apresenta nenhuma diferença, parece mais inteligente usar Oi.
BEDell_1	-	11	Vale a pena comprar um Dell, mesmo quando o computador é igual ao de outras marcas.
BEDell_2	-	12	Mesmo que outras marcas tenham as mesmas características, eu prefiro comprar um Dell.
BEDell_3	-	13	Mesmo que haja outra marca tão boa quanto, eu ainda prefiro comprar um Dell.
BEDell_4	-	14	Se outra marca não apresenta nenhuma diferença, parece mais inteligente comprar um Dell.
FITOi_1	17	-	Há uma ligação lógica entre a Oi e os eSports.
FITOi_2	18	-	A imagem da Oi e a imagem dos eSports são compatíveis.
FITOi_3	19	-	A Oi e os eSports combinam bem juntos.
FITOi_4	20	-	A Oi e os eSports inspiram ideias semelhantes.
FITOi_5	21	-	Para mim, faz sentido que a Oi patrocine os eSports.
FITDell_1	-	15	Há uma ligação lógica entre a Dell e os eSports.
FITDell_2	-	16	A imagem da Dell e a imagem dos eSports são compatí-veis.
FITDell_3	-	17	A Dell e os eSports combinam bem juntos.
FITDell_4	-	18	A Dell e os eSports inspiram ideias semelhantes.
FITDell_5	-	19	Para mim, faz sentido que a Dell patrocine os eSports.
PIOi_1	22	-	Eu consideraria a possibilidade de adquirir os serviços da Oi.
PIOi_2	23	-	Eu buscaria mais informações sobre os serviços da Oi.
PIOi_3	24	-	Eu contrataria os serviços da Oi.
PIDell_1	-	20	Eu consideraria a possibilidade de adquirir um computador da Dell.
PIDell_2	-	21	Eu buscaria mais informações sobre os computadores da Dell.
PIDell_3	-	22	Eu compraria um computador da Dell.

5.2 Data Analysis from the Data Collected during Game XP event

This section details the results from the data analysis performed with the database generated from the data collected during Game XP, from July 25th to 28th, 2019.

5.2.1 *Sample Characteristics*

During Game XP, 462 questionnaires were collected but due to lack of compliance with the filter question or questions that were left unanswered, 16 were discarded, leading to a final number of 446 questionnaires. To characterize the sample, the criteria used was gender, education level, previous experience as an in-person spectator of eSports events, of Game XP itself and of eSports that occurred inside Game XP previous events, and previous experience as an Oi (event's sponsor) client. To make the sample comparable to the sample from CBLoL regarding education level, the two first options were added together to create '1° Grau'. The details are presented in **Table 2.**

Table 2 - Sample Profile (Game XP)

Variable	F	F%
Total Interviews	446	100%
July 25th	31	7.0%
July 26th	131	29.4%
July 27th	118	26.5%
July 28th	166	37.2%
Male	362	81.2%
Female	84	18.8%
Stated that likes eSports	440	98.7%
Had previously watched eSports in-person	219	49.1%
Had previously attended Game XP	125	28.0%
Had previously watched eSports in-person at Game XP	105	23.5%
Had previously used any Oi service	322	72.2%
'1° Grau'	195	43.7%
'2° Grau'	149	33.4%
'Superior'	102	22.9%

The event occurred between July 25th and July 28th (Thursday to Sunday). Since the first day of event was a Thursday (a work day), it was more difficult to find interviewers for that specific day, which, together with a much smaller attendance of the event, led to a significantly lower number of interviews collected in that specific day. Even though Friday was also a work day, it was easier to find interviewers available and to collect data.

The majority of the interviews collected during the event was from male respondents, around 81.2%. The female portion of the sample (18.8%) seems to be below what we would expect, but the results presented in a study from Interpret[6] that was held

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[6] Extracted from https://interpret.la/females-gains-6-increase-in-gender-share-for-esports-viewership/?cn-reloaded=1 on February 6th, 2020.

during the last quarter of 2018 (Q4) showed that 30.4% of eSports watchers were female and 20.3% of eSports league watchers are female, being the differentiation between them defined as the first group having indicated to have at least watched an eSports event/tournament, while the second group indicated to have watched an identifiable eSports league. Based on the results from this study, the female portion of the sample seems to be reasonable.

Almost the whole sample (98.7%) indicated that they like eSports, which might be explained due to the fact that only people that were intending to watch eSports in the event were interviewed, while almost half the sample had previously watched eSports in-person. Based on this data, it seems that Game XP, due to the great variety of attractions, worked as an opportunity for many people to experience for the first time an in-person eSports competition, without the compromise of going to a specific event.

Regarding the previous experience with the Game XP event, only 28.0% had already been to other edition of the festival (2017 or 2018) and 23.5% of the sample had previously watched eSports in person during a Game XP event. Also, people with previous experience with Oi services were 72.2% of the sample, which might influence their perception of the brand. This number was expected to be high since telecommunication is a very concentrated market and Oi offers different services in the area, from cellphone to internet connection.

The distribution of the sample by age is presented below (**Fig. 2**) and helps to understand the education level distribution of the sample. A significant portion of the respondents were below 20 years old and its common that people graduate in '2º Grau' around 18 years old, before going to university. Therefore, younger people will probably be inside the '1° Grau' group.

Mean = 21.25
Standard Dev. = 8.109
N = 446
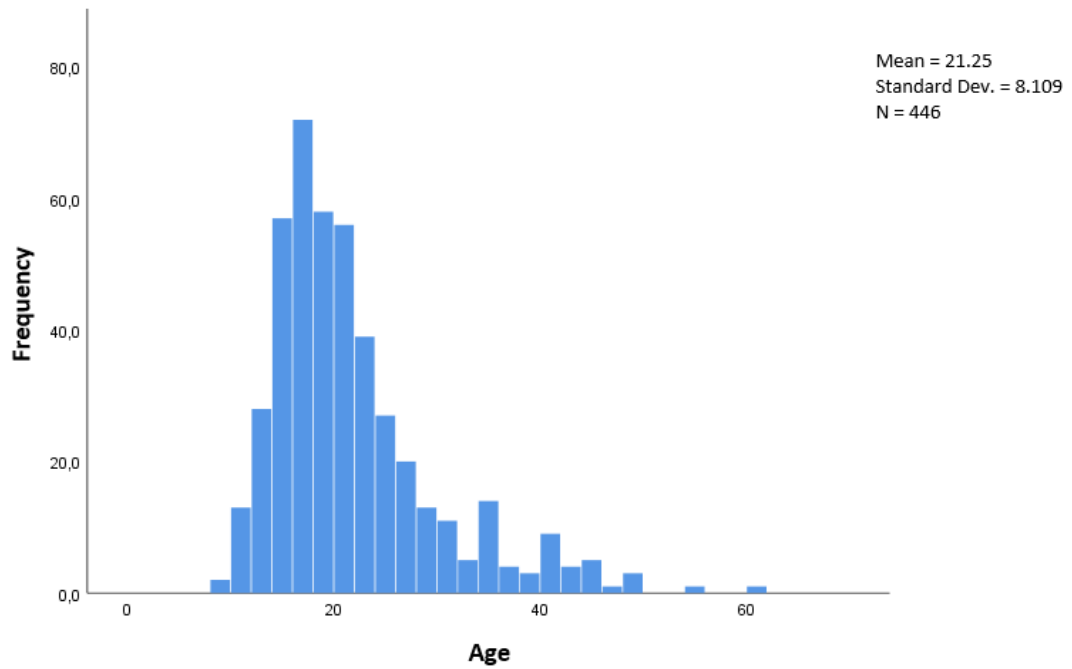
Fig. 2 - Age distribution (Game XP)

5.2.2   *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

The Exploratory Factory Analysis was applied to the scales in this study – Points of Attachment Index (IDeS), Overall Brand Equity (BEOi), Sponsor-Event Fit (FITOi) and Purchase Intention (PIOi). The extraction method selected was the Principal Axis Factoring based on the eigenvalue and the rotation method selected was Direct Oblimin. The main results of the Pattern Matrix generated by the analysis is presented below in **Table 3**.

Table 3 - Exploratory Factor Analysis I (Game XP)

Variable	Identification with eSports	Brand Equity (Oi)	Congruence (Oi/eSports)	Purchase Intention (Oi)
	Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin Rotation			
IDeS_1	0.793			
IDeS_2	0.726			
IDeS_3	0.798			
BEOi_1		0.816		
BEOi_2		0.888		
BEOi_3		0.829		
BEOi_4		0.701		
FITOi_1			0.723	
FITOi_2			0.884	
FITOi_3			0.914	
FITOi_4			0.846	
FITOi_5			0.618	
PIOi_1		0.843[a]		
PIOi_2		0.637[a]		
PIOi_3		0.839[a]		

Note: [a] Assembled in a different factor

The KMO indicator for this analysis was 0.897 (inside the suggested interval between 0.50 and 1.00) and the p-value for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 0.000 (inside the expected value of $p < 0.05$), suggesting that the factor analysis was satisfactory.

The criteria selected to validate the weights calculated in the analysis was that they should be above 0.50. The items for Identification with eSports assembled in a single factor, as expected. Also, the Congruence items assembled in a single factor. The items from Brand Equity and Purchase Intention assembled in the same factor. However, since we hypothesize based in previous literature that purchase intention towards the sponsor's product is influenced by the spectator's perception of the sponsor´s brand equity, this result seems to be reasonable.

Another Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied, changing the extraction method to Principal Axis Factoring based on fixed number of factors (four factors). The KMO indicator was 0.897 and the p-value for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 0.000, suggesting a satisfactory factor analysis. In this analysis, the factor loadings were all above 0.50, with the lowest being 0.600 for the item FITOi_5. The total explained variance was 69.6%. The results for the second Exploratory Factor Analysis are presented below in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Exploratory Factor Analysis II (Game XP)

Variable	Identification with eSports	Brand Equity (Oi)	Congruence (Oi/eSports)	Purchase Intention (Oi)	M.S.A	Communalities
	a = 0.804	a = 0.910	a = 0.900	a = 0.914		
IDeS_1	.788				.724	.624
IDeS_2	.735				.756	.526
IDeS_3	.803				.753	.669
BEOi_1		.629			.946	.661
BEOi_2		.981			.868	.911
BEOi_3		.866			.905	.763
BEOi_4		.612			.954	.627
FITOi_1			.728		.930	.586
FITOi_2			.877		.903	.762
FITOi_3			.904		.893	.816
FITOi_4			.842		.921	.723
FITOi_5			.600		.956	.400 [a]
PIOi_1				.820	.898	.829
PIOi_2				.829	.918	.678
PIOi_3				.842	.882	.865
Explained Variance	11.43%	43.82%	9.71%	4.64%		

Note: [a] Communality < 0.5

Besides the factor loadings, more results were analyzed in order to confirm the EFA adequacy, and the reliability and validity of the constructs. At first the MSA indexes were analyzed for each item (in order to verify the EFA adequacy) and the Cronbach's alphas were analyzed for each construct. For the MSA, values above 0.5 were

expected, and they were all above 0.724, suggesting the EFA adequacy. Regarding the Cronbach's alpha, the reference value to verify the reliability of the constructs is $\alpha > 0.7$, with all of the alphas being above 0.804. Then, the communality was analyzed, with values expected to be above 0.5 for each item individually. Only one item (FITOi_5) was effectively below the expected value, presenting a value of 0.400.

Finally, the convergent and discriminant validities were verified through the Correlation Matrix (**Table 5**). For the convergent validity of the scales, it is expected that for the items that belong to the same scale present a correlation above 0.3 between them, while for the discriminant validity, the correlation between items from different scales is expected to be below 0.3.

Regarding the convergent validity, all the values were as expected (above 0.3), which suggests that inside the scale the items are measuring the same construct. For the discriminant validity, the correlation between items from different scales were analyzed and many of the items from the constructs Brand Equity, Congruence and Purchase Intention had correlations above 0.3 between them. The higher values appeared between Brand Equity and Purchase Intention. Correlation between those constructs were expected, since the model hypothesizes that there is an influence among them. Overall, the results suggests that the utilization of EFA was adequate, with the constructs being consistently measured by the proposed items.

Table 5 - Correlation Matrix (Game XP)

			Identification with eSports			Brand Equity				Congruence					Purchase Intention		
															Correlation among variables		
Item	Mean	SD	IDeS_1	IDeS_2	IDeS_3	BEOi_1	BEOi_2	BEOi_3	BEOi_4	FITOi_1	FITOi_2	FITOi_3	FITOi_4	FITOi_5	PIOi_1	PIOi_2	PIOi_3
IDeS_1	6.15	1.103	**1.000**														
IDeS_2	5.48	1.436	**.571**	**1.000**													
IDeS_3	5.17	1.632	**.645**	**.585**	**1.000**												
BEOi_1	3.95	1.752	.173	.138	.223	**1.000**											
BEOi_2	3.27	1.742	.140	.110	.189	**.767**	**1.000**										
BEOi_3	3.00	1.754	.128	.086	.165	**.676**	**.832**	**1.000**									
BEOi_4	3.82	1.866	.141	.055	.188	**.631**	**.717**	**.689**	**1.000**								
FITOi_1	4.44	1.827	.131	.131	.214	.396 [a]	.404 [a]	.401 [a]	.475 [a]	**1.000**							
FITOi_2	4.27	1.798	.126	.090	.158	.426 [a]	.425 [a]	.407 [a]	.449 [a]	**.705**	**1.000**						
FITOi_3	4.61	1.766	.117	.063	.167	.438 [a]	.432 [a]	.420 [a]	.484 [a]	**.644**	**.793**	**1.000**					
FITOi_4	4.31	1.723	.120	.068	.188	.419 [a]	.430 [a]	.400 [a]	.477 [a]	**.632**	**.725**	**.796**	**1.000**				
FITOi_5	5.65	1.536	.112	.045	.122	.271	.271	.267	.335 [a]	**.486**	**.517**	**.568**	**.528**	**1.000**			
PIOi_1	4.17	2.045	.077	.054	.147	.629 [a]	.613 [a]	.590 [a]	.601 [a]	.392 [a]	.428 [a]	.450 [a]	.422 [a]	.368 [a]	**1.000**		
PIOi_2	4.28	1.999	.055	.094	.159	.527 [a]	.458 [a]	.437 [a]	.493 [a]	.352 [a]	.415 [a]	.433 [a]	.394 [a]	.362 [a]	**.727**	**1.000**	
PIOi_3	3.93	2.079	.082	.080	.129	.634 [a]	.633 [a]	.600 [a]	.582 [a]	.403 [a]	.448 [a]	.479 [a]	.456 [a]	.362 [a]	**.855**	**.754**	**1.000**

Note: [a] Correlation > 0.30 between items from different scales.

5.2.3 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed to validate the measurement model. To determine the estimation technique, histograms were generated for each variable (see Appendix 8) and kurtosis analysis was performed, both for individual items and multivariate kurtosis. The C.R. was 29.1, which is unable to support the multinormality of data, and, therefore, ADF (Asymptotically distribution-free) technique is recommended for the CFA. However, since ADF is recommended for bigger samples, this study opted to use Maximum Likelihood (ML) as technique for the following analysis.

There were 36 parameters to be estimated in the model. Therefore, in the Game XP sample, there were around 12.4 cases per parameter. The measurement model used in the analysis was specified according to the one in **Fig. 3**.
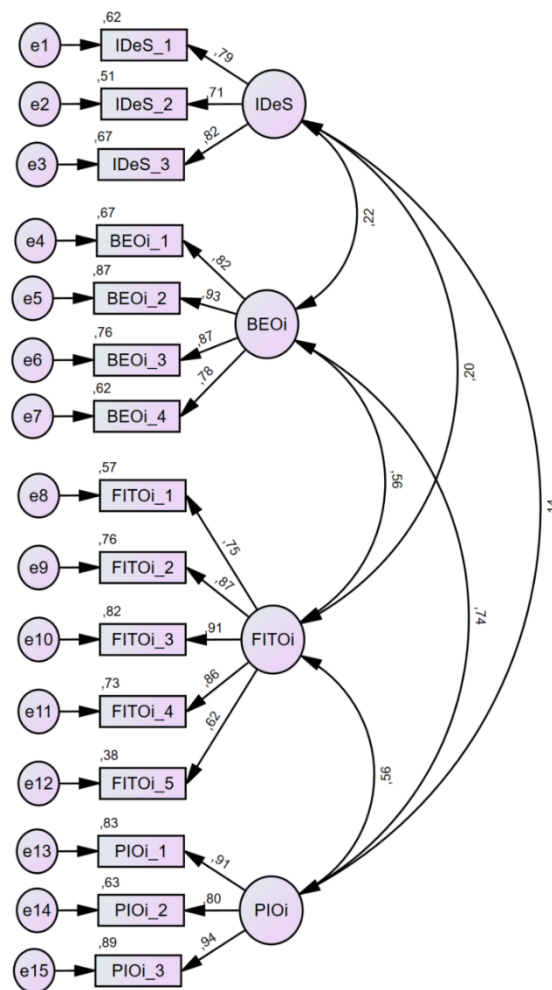

Fig. 3 - Measurement Model (Game XP)

To validate the model, model fit indicators such as chi square, normed chi square, GFI, CFI, RMSEA and PCLOSE were analyzed. These model fit indicators are inside the expected ranges, suggesting a good fit for the proposed model in this analysis. The results are presented below in **Table 6**.

Table 6 - Model Fit Indicators for Measurement Model (Game XP)

Fit Indicators	$\chi2$	p-value	$\chi2/df$	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Measurement Model	183.693	0.000	2.187	0.948	0.979	0.052[a]	0.381[a]
Suggested limits	< possible	< 0.05	< 3.0	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.05	> 0.5

Note: [a] Parameter outside expected limits

The reliability of each individual construct proposed in the model was verified by analyzing the Construct Reliability (C.R.) for each of them. Among them, the smallest C.R. was 0.819, which indicates the reliability of the constructs.

Once more, the convergent and discriminant validities were tested, according to the results presented in **Table 7**. For the convergent validity, the standardized estimate for each item are expected to be above 0.6 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for every construct to be above 0.5. These two conditions were verified, being the smallest standardized estimate of an individual item equal to 0.619 and the smallest AVE of an individual construct equal to 0.602. Therefore, the results suggest adequate convergence in each used scale.

Finally, for the discriminant validity, the correlation coefficients between constructs were analyzed (results are shown above the AVE diagonal in **Table 7**). It was expected that all the correlation coefficients between constructs were below 0.85 (which was verified, with the biggest correlation being equal to 0.742 between Brand Equity and Purchase Intention). Also, it is important that the square of the coefficients (presented below the AVE diagonal) are always below the respective AVE values for each construct. The results are in accordance to what was expected and, therefore, the discriminant validity was verified.

Table 7 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Game XP)

	Identification with eSports	Brand Equity (Oi)	Congruence (Oi/eSports)	Purchase Intention (Oi)
Variable	CR = 0.819	CR = 0.914	CR = 0.902	CR = 0.915
IDeS_1	0.790			
IDeS_2	0.713			
IDeS_3	0.821			
BEOi_1		0.817		
BEOi_2		0.931		
BEOi_3		0.875		
BEOi_4		0.785		
FITOi_1			0.752	
FITOi_2			0.871	
FITOi_3			0.907	
FITOi_4			0.856	
FITOi_5			0.619	
PIOi_1				0.910
PIOi_2				0.795
PIOi_3				0.943
IDeS	**0.602**	0.220	0.198	0.142
BEOi	0.048	**0.729**	0.560	0.742
FITOi	0.039	0.314	**0.653**	0.563
PIOi	0.020	0.551	0.317	**0.783**

Note: Bold numbers diagonally denote the Average Variance Extracted; Numbers below the diagonal denote the square of the correlations between constructs; Numbers above the diagonal denote the correlations between constructs

5.2.4 *Substantive Hypothesis Testing*

To test the hypotheses, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was selected. This technique estimates the loadings in the structural paths hypothesized in the conceptual model. The Structural Model for the Game XP event is presented in **Fig. 4**. Also, the model fit indicators were all inside the expected range, except for PCLOSE, and they can be seen in **Table 8**.
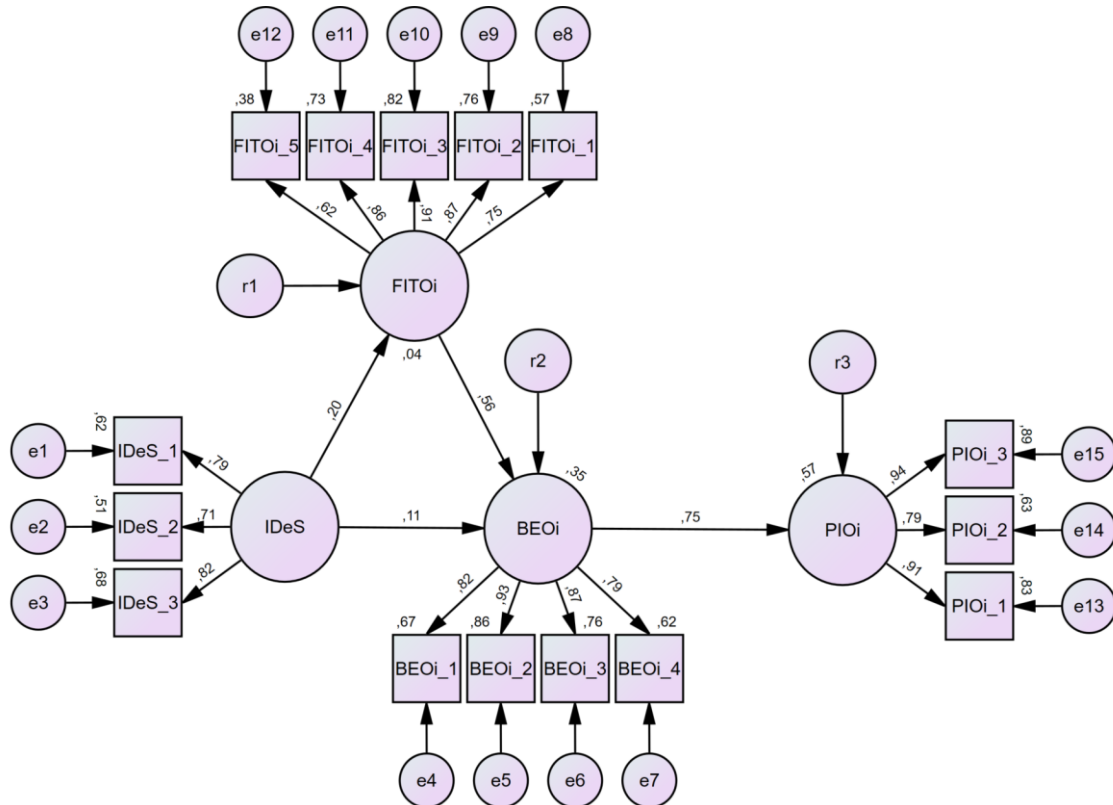
Fig. 4 - Structural Model (Game XP)

Table 8 - Model Fit Indicators for Structural Model (Game XP)

Fit Indicators	χ2	p-valor	χ2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Structural Model	206.991	0.000	2.407	0.940	0.974	0.056[a]	0.142[a]
Suggested limits	< possible	< 0.05	< 3.0	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.05	> 0.5

Note: [a] Parameter outside expected limits

To test the hypotheses, H1 and H2, the relevance and significance of the paths between the constructs was analyzed. For this, were considered the standardized loadings,

C.R. and p-value, being the criterion to support the hypothesis a p-value below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2016). The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in **Table 9**.

Regarding the explained variance of the latent variables, the Brand Equity (Oi) construct had 34,6% of variance explained, while Purchase Intention (Oi) had 56,7%. Testing the hypothesis, the direct influence of Identification with eSports in the spectator's perception of the sponsor Brand Equity was supported and this perception's direct influence in the spectator's Purchase Intention towards the sponsor' products/services was also supported.

Table 9 - Hypotheses H1 and H2 Test (Game XP)

Hypothesis	Path	Hypothetical Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	C.R.	p-value	Outcome
H1	Brand Equity (Oi) ← Identification with eSports	(+)	0.109	2.329	0.020	Supported
H2	Purchase Intention (Oi) ← Brand Equity (Oi)	(+)	0.753	17.679	***	Supported
	Brand Equity (Oi)		0.346[a]			
	Purchase Intention (Oi)		0.567[a]			

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; [a] (R^2) - explained variance of the latent variable.

To test hypothesis H3, the Four Steps Method (Baron & Kenny, 1986) and the Sobel Test (Sobel, 1982) were performed. Then a bootstrap is performed to validate the results of the previous analysis. The results for the Four Steps and Sobel Test are presented below, on **Table 10**.

Table 10 - Mediation Tests (Game XP)

Steps	Variables	Non Standardized Coefficients	Standar Error	p-value	Sobel Test
Step 1					
Dependent	BEOi	-	-	-	
Independent	IDeS	0.216	0.057	***	
Step 2					
Dependent	FITOi	-	-	-	3.500 ***
Independent	IDeS	0.197	0.056	***	
Steps 3 and 4					
Dependent	BEOi	-	-	-	
Mediator	FITOi	0.554	0.046	***	
Independent	IDeS	0.113	0.054	0.017	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$;

The first step results show that the direct relation between the latent variable Identification with eSports and the variable Brand Equity (Oi) is significant. The second step shows that the direct relation between the latent variable Identification with eSports and the variable Congruence (Oi) is also significant. Finally, steps 3 and 4, provide evidence that when all the constructs are put together, the direct relationship keeps its significance and, therefore, supporting that the Congruence (Oi) exerts a partial mediation in the relationship between Identification with eSports and Brand Equity. Sobel Test also supports the indirect effect from spectator's Identification with eSports on their own perception of the sponsor's Brand Equity.

To validate the mediation results, a bootstrap method was applied with 2,000 samples using the bias-corrected method. The results (**Table 11**) support a total mediation, in contrast with the previous analysis, that indicated a partial mediation.

Table 11 - Effects on the Sponsor's Brand Equity (Game XP)

Hypothesis	Direct (p-value)	Indirect (p-value)	Result
IDeS → FITOi → BEOi	0.113 (0.040)	0.105 (0.001)	Partial Mediation

Finally, the influence of Identification with eSports was assessed so that the direct, indirect and overall effects on the spectator's Brand Equity could be determined (see **Table 12**). The explained variance on the Sponsor's Brand Equity (Oi) is mainly explained by the direct effect of the congruence perception between Oi and eSports.

Table 12 - Effects over Sponsor's Brand Equity (Game XP)

Overall, Direct and Indirect Effects on eSports Spectator's perception of Sponsor's Brand Equity	Standardized Estimates		
	Identification with eSports	Congruence (Oi/eSports)	Brand Equity (Oi)
DE - Direct Effect	0.113	0.532	
IE - Indirect Effect	0.105	-	
OE - Overall Effect	0.218	0.532	
$(DE)^2$	0.013	0.283	0.296
$(IE)^2$	0.011	-	0.011
$(OE)^2$	0.048	0.283	0.331
	Explained Variance[a]		0.320

5.3 Data Analysis from the Data Collected during CBLoL event

This section details the results from the data analysis performed with the database generated from the data collected during CBLoL, on September 7th, 2019.

5.3.1 *Sample Characteristics*

During CBLoL, 232 questionnaires were collected and all of them were in accordance to the criteria for a valid questionnaire. Therefore, all 232 questionnaires were used. To characterize the sample, the criteria used was gender, education level, previous experience as an in-person spectator of eSports events and of CBLoL itself, and previous experience as a Dell (event's sponsor) client. The details are presented in **Table 13.**

Table 13 - Sample Profile (CBLoL)

Variable	F	F%
Total Interviews	232	100%
Male	189	81.5%
Female	43	18.5%
Stated that likes eSports	226	97.4%
Went to the event accompanying someone	6	2.6%
Had previously eSports in-person	129	55.6%
Had previously attended CBLoL	54	23.3%
Had previously had a Dell computer	108	46.6%
'1° Grau'	29	12.5%
'2° Grau'	147	63.4%
'Superior'	56	24.1%

In general, if we look to the percentages, the numbers are very similar to the Game XP percentages. For instance, the majority of the interviews collected during the event was from male respondents, around 81.5%. Considering what had been previously shown in the Game XP sample characterization, the female portion of the sample (18.5%) seems to be reasonable, based on the results from the study from Interpret.

Just a few people indicated that they were there just to accompany someone (2.6%), with almost the whole sample (97.4%) indicating that they like eSports. In comparison to Game XP, a greater share of the sample in CBLoL had previously watched eSports in-person (55.6%). Differently from Game XP, this event was an eSports specific event, with the competition itself being the main attraction.

Regarding the previous experience with CBLoL, only 23.3% had already been to other edition of the event. Differently from Game XP (that was still on their early years), this was the 15th CBLoL event that could be watched in-person. However, it does not happen always in the same city. This edition was the 2nd held in Rio (the other one was in 2014). Some reasons might explain the fact that almost half of the people interviewed had never watched in-person eSports events before, such as the fact that in-person eSports competitions are not so frequent in Rio and they are usually broadcast with high quality on the internet. Also, people that had previously owned a computer from Dell were 46.6% of the sample, which might influence their perception of the brand.

The distribution of the sample by age is presented below (**Fig. 5**). The mean is higher than the one from Game XP, indicating an attendance a little bit older. This might help to explain why the education portion of the sample is the one that is the most different

from the other event, with a much higher share of people in the '2° Grau' category and a much lower shar in '1° Grau'
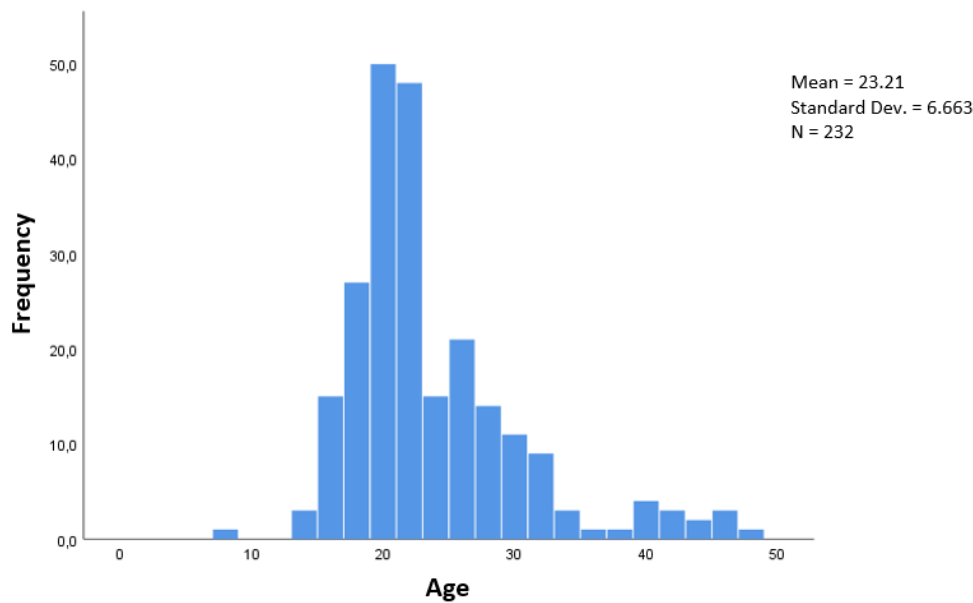
Fig. 5 - Age Distribution (CBLoL)

5.3.2   *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

The same procedures performed for the EFA in the item 5.3.2 were repeated for the database with data collected during CBLoL event. Differently from the EFA from Game XP, this time the items assembled as expected in four different factors initially, with the extraction method of Principal Axis Factoring based on the eigenvalue and the rotation method Direct Oblimin. The main results of the Pattern Matrix generated by the analysis is presented below in **Table 14**.

Table 14 - Exploratory Factor Analysis (CBLoL)

	Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin Rotation					
	Identification with eSports	Brand Equity (Dell)	Congruence (Dell/eSports)	Purchase Intention (Dell)		
Variable	$\alpha = 0.619$	$\alpha = 0.887$	$\alpha = 0.898$	$\alpha = 0.888$	M.S.A	Communalities
IDeS_1	.811				.631	.645
IDeS_2	.537				.588	.284[a]
IDeS_3	.515				.720	.304[a]
BEDell_1		-.776			.874	.600
BEDell_2		-.886			.852	.844
BEDell_3		-.733			.883	.654
BEDell_4		-.781			.826	.597
FITDell_1			.681		.859	.581
FITDell_2			.821		.840	.676
FITDell_3			.883		.844	.814
FITDell_4			.770		.871	.716
FITDell_5			.748		.869	.504
PIDell_1				-.850	.839	.754
PIDell_2				-.742	.872	.636
PIDell_3				-.900	.787	.873
Explained Variance	6.60%	12.28%	36.37%	7.97%		

Note: [a] Communality < 0.50

The KMO indicator for this analysis was 0.837 (inside the suggested interval between 0.50 and 1.00) and the p-value for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 0.000 (inside the expected value of p-value < 0.05), suggesting that the factor analysis was

satisfactory. The criteria selected to validate the weights calculated in the analysis was that they should be above 0.50, and all of them were above 0.515. The explained variance was 63.23%.

Besides the factor loadings, more results were analyzed in order to confirm the EFA adequacy, and the reliability and validity of the constructs. At first the MSA indexes were analyzed for each item (in order to verify the EFA adequacy) and the Cronbach's alphas were analyzed for each construct. For the MSA, values above 0.5 were expected, and they were all above 0.588, suggesting the EFA adequacy. Regarding the Cronbach's alpha, the reference value to verify the reliability of the constructs is $\alpha > 0.7$, and the Identification with eSports construct presented a value below that threshold (0.619). This might have happened due to the fact that the scale was trying to measure the identification with eSports in general (i.e. one item asks about considering itself a fan of many different eSports), and for this specific event, the public was focused on a specific eSports competition (League of Legends), differently from Game XP. Then, the communality was analyzed, with values expected to be above 0.5 for each item individually. Two items inside the Identification with eSports construct were below the expected value of 0.5: IDeS_2 and IDeS_3 , presenting values of 0.284 and 0.304, respectively.

Finally, the convergent and discriminant validities were verified through the Correlation Matrix (**Table 15**). For the convergent validity of the scales, it is expected that for the items that belong to the same scale present a correlation above 0.3 between them, while for the discriminant validity, the correlation between items from different scales is expected to be below 0.3.

Regarding the convergent validity, only one correlation between items from the same scale was outside the expected range (above 0.3), the one between IDeS_2 and IDeS_3, with 0.288. For the discriminant validity, the correlation between items from different scales were analyzed and many of the items from the constructs Brand Equity, Congruence and Purchase Intention had correlations above 0.3 between them, although with less intensity than for Game XP data. Similarly to what happened with Game XP data, the higher values appeared between Brand Equity and Purchase Intention and, as mentioned before, the model hypothesizes that there is an influence among them. Overall, the results suggests that the utilization of EFA was adequate, with the constructs being consistently measured by the proposed items.

Table 15 - Correlation Matrix (CBLoL)

			Identification with eSports			Brand Equity				Congruence					Purchase Intention		
Item	Mean	SD	IDeS_1	IDeS_2	IDeS_3	BEDell_1	BEDell_2	BEDell_3	BEDell_4	FITDell_1	FITDell_2	FITDell_3	FITDell_4	FITDell_5	PIDell_1	PIDell_2	PIDell_3
IDeS_1	6.25	1.084	**1.000**														
IDeS_2	5.67	1.497	**.422**	**1.000**													
IDeS_3	5.29	1.612	**.419**	**0.288[a]**	**1.000**												
BEDell_1	4.92	1.482	.045	.040	.184	**1.000**											
BEDell_2	4.51	1.617	.052	.115	.196	**.711**	**1.000**										
BEDell_3	4.06	1.731	.072	.104	.155	**.601**	**.757**	**1.000**									
BEDell_4	4.88	1.656	.051	.051	.199	**.608**	**.692**	**.621**	**1.000**								
FITDell_1	5.08	1.793	.119	.103	.209	.274	.401[b]	.396[b]	.221	**1.000**							
FITDell_2	5.29	1.595	.188	.176	.182	.199	.357[b]	.258	.283	**.651**	**1.000**						
FITDell_3	5.45	1.643	.206	.044	.148	.264	.344[b]	.305[b]	.201	**.660**	**.725**	**1.000**					
FITDell_4	5.09	1.620	.271	.160	.178	.313[b]	.398[b]	.356[b]	.320[b]	**.673**	**.630**	**.751**	**1.000**				
FITDell_5	6.13	1.478	.106	.128	.102	.209	.223	.179	.254	**.468**	**.602**	**.629**	**.604**	**1.000**			
PIDell_1	5.66	1.562	.096	.091	.091	.326[b]	.408[b]	.444[b]	.340[b]	.377[b]	.265	.387[b]	.355[b]	.194	**1.000**		
PIDell_2	5.69	1.444	.116	.060	.140	.249	.361[b]	.367[b]	.264	.382[b]	.360[b]	.477[b]	.433[b]	.239	**.675**	**1.000**	
PIDell_3	5.69	1.575	-.021	.017	.054	.436[b]	.485[b]	.476[b]	.377[b]	.339[b]	.201	.323[b]	.280	.153	**.799**	**.698**	**1.000**

Note: [a] Correlation < 0.30 between same scale items; [b] Correlation > 0.30 between items from differente scales

5.3.3 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed to validate the measurement model for the CBLoL database. To determine the estimation technique, histograms were generated for each variable (see Appendix 9) and kurtosis analysis was performed, both for individual items and multivariate kurtosis. The C.R. was 29.2, which is unable to support the multinormality of data, and, therefore, ADF (Asymptotically distribution-free) technique is recommended for the CFA. However, also due to the size of the sample, this study used ML technique to analyze the data.

There were 36 parameters to be estimated in the model. Therefore, in the CBLoL sample, there were around 6.4 cases per parameter. The measurement model used in the analysis was specified according to the one in **Fig. 6**.
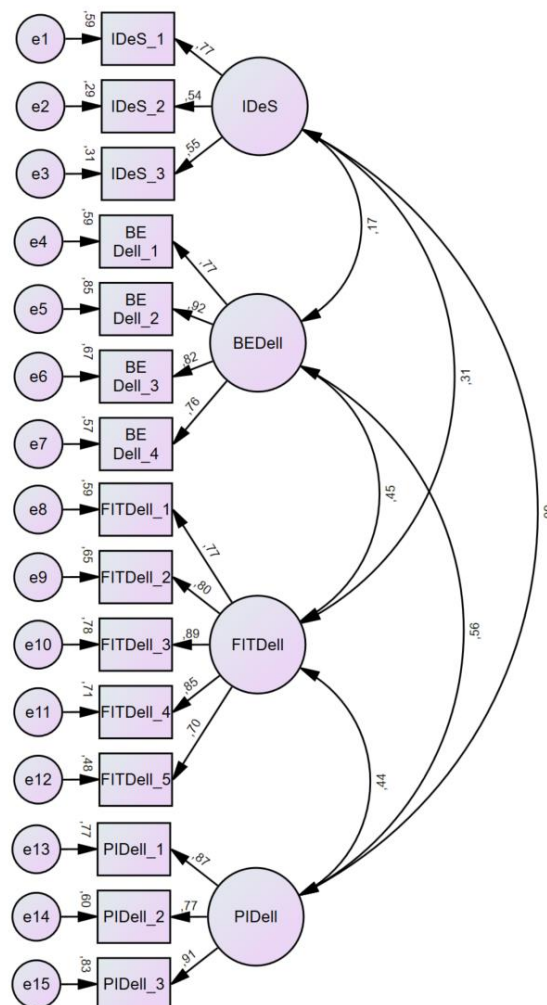

Fig. 6 - Measurement Model (CBLoL)

The model fit indicators from the proposed model were: chi square equal to 204.874, normed chi square equal to 2.439, GFI equal to 0.902, CFI equal to 0.938, RMSEA equal to 0.079 and PCLOSE equal to 0.000. These results are presented below in **Table 16**. Some model fit indicators were outside the expected range.

Table 16 - Model Fit Indicators for Measurement Model (CBLoL)

Fit Indicators	$\chi2$	p-valor	$\chi2$/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Measurement Model	204.874	0.000	2.439	0.902	0.938	0.079[a]	0.000[a]
Suggested limits	< possible	< 0.05	< 3.0	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.05	> 0.5

Note: [a] Parameter outside expected limits

The reliability of each individual construct proposed in the model was again verified by analyzing the Construct Reliability (C.R.) for each of them. Among them, the smallest C.R. was 0.655, for the Identification with eSports, which might indicate that this construct is not as reliable as the others.

Once more, the convergent and discriminant validities were tested, according to the results presented in **Table 17**. For the convergent validity, the standardized estimate for each item are expected to be above 0.6 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for every construct to be above 0.5. Again, for Identification with eSports, two items were below the expected threshold for standardized estimates: IDeS_2 and IDeS_3 (0.540 and 0.553) and AVE for this construct was also below expected (0.394). Therefore, the results suggest some convergence issues with the Identification with eSports scale when applied to CBLoL database, which may be explained by the fact that the construct is trying to measure identification as an eSports fan in general in a specific eSports competition, differently from Game XP.

Finally, for the discriminant validity, the correlation coefficients between constructs were analyzed (results are shown above the AVE diagonal in **Table 17**). It was expected that all the correlation coefficients between constructs were below 0.85 (which was verified, with the biggest correlation being equal to 0.556 between Brand Equity and Purchase Intention). Also, it is important that the square of the coefficients (presented below the AVE diagonal) are always below the respective AVE values for each construct, which was verified.

Table 17 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CBLoL)

Variable	Identification with eSports CR = 0.655	Brand Equity (Dell) CR = 0.891	Congruence (Dell/eSports) CR = 0.900	Purchase Intention (Dell) CR = 0.890
Confirmatory Factor Analysis | Maximum Likelihood Estimates
IDeS_1	0.765			
IDeS_2	0.540[a]			
IDeS_3	0.553[a]			
BEDell_1		0.766		
BEDell_2		0.923		
BEDell_3		0.819		
BEDell_4		0.755		
FITDell_1			0.770	
FITDell_2			0.804	
FITDell_3			0.886	
FITDell_4			0.845	
FITDell_5			0.696	
PIDell_1				0.875
PIDell_2				0.772
PIDell_3				0.910
IDeS	**0.394[b]**	0.166	0.309	0.092
BEDell	0.028	**0.674**	0.450	0.556
FITDell	0.095	0.203	**0.645**	0.442
PIDell	0.008	0.309	0.195	**0.730**

Note: [a] Standardized Coefficient < 0.6; [b] AVE < 0.5 Bold numbers diagonally denote the Average Variance extracted; Numbers below the diagonal denote the square of the correlations between constructs; Numbers above the diagonal denote the correlations between constructs

5.3.4 *Substantive Hypothesis Testing*

Again, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was selected to test the hypothesis. The Structural Model for CBLoL is presented in **Fig. 7**. Also, the model fit indicators can be seen in **Table 18**. The model fit indicators related to the structural model for CBLoL were outside the expected range.
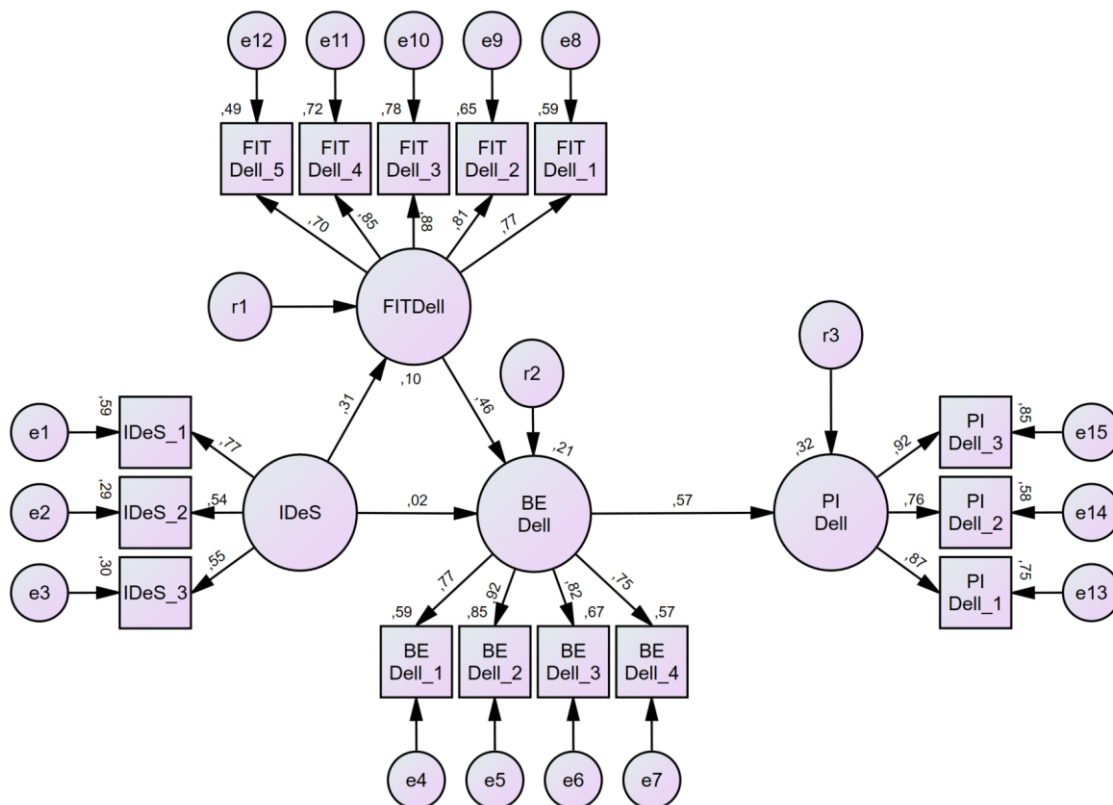

Fig. 7 - Structural Model (CBLoL)

Table 18 - Model Fit Indicators for Structural Model (CBLoL)

Fit Indicators	χ2	p-valor	χ2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Structural Model	216.609	0.000	2.519	0.896[a]	0.933[a]	0.081[a]	0.000[a]
Suggested limits	< possible	< 0.05	< 3.0	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.05	> 0.5

Note: [a] Parameter outside expected limits

To test the hypotheses, H1 and H2, the relevance and significance of the paths between the constructs was analyzed. Again, were considered the standardized loadings, C.R. and p-value, being the criterion to support the hypothesis a p-value below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2016). The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in **Table 19**.

Regarding the explained variance of the latent variables, the Brand Equity (Dell) construct had 21,4% of variance explained, while Purchase Intention (Dell) had 32,2%. Testing the hypothesis, the direct influence of Identification with eSports in the spectator's perception of the sponsor Brand Equity was not supported and this perception's direct influence in the spectator's Purchase Intention towards the sponsor' products/services was supported. This results might be explained by the fact that Dell is an endemic sponsor when sponsoring eSports and, therefore, the value spectator's perceive in the brand is highly attached to the congruence they perceive between the brand and eSports.

Table 19 - H1 and H2 Hypotheses Testing (CBLoL)

Hypothesis	Path	Hypothetical Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	C.R.	p-value	Outcome
H1	Brand Equity (Dell) ← Identification with eSports	(+)	0.023	0.275	0.783	Not Supported
H2	Purchase Intention (Dell) ← Brand Equity (Dell)	(+)	0.567	8.271	***	Supported
	Brand Equity (Dell)	0.214^a				
	Purchase Intention (Dell)	0.322^a				

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; [a] (R^2) - explained variance of the latent variable.

Again, to test hypothesis H3, the Four Steps Method (Baron & Kenny, 1986) and the Sobel Test (Sobel, 1982) were performed. Then a bootstrap is performed to validate the results of the previous analysis. The results for the Four Steps and Sobel Test are presented below, on **Table 20**.

Table 20 - Mediation Tests (CBLoL)

Steps	Variables	Non Standardized Coefficients	Standar Error	p-value	Sobel Test
Step 1					
Dependent	BEDell	-	-	-	
Independent	IDeS	0.220	0.108	0.041	
Step 2					
Dependent	FITDell	-	-	-	2.985 ***
Independent	IDeS	0.478	0.140	***	
Steps 3 and 4					
Dependent	BEDell	-	-	-	
Mediator	FITDell	0.435	0.069	***	
Independent	IDeS	0.044	0.134	0.742	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$;

The first step results show that the direct relation between the latent variable Identification with eSports and the variable Brand Equity (Dell) is significant. The second step shows that the direct relation between the latent variable Identification with eSports and the variable Congruence (Dell) is also significant. Finally, steps 3 and 4, provide evidence that when all the constructs are put together, the direct relationship loses its significance and, therefore, supporting that the Congruence (Dell) exerts a total mediation in the relationship between Identification with eSports and Brand Equity. Sobel Test also supports the indirect effect from spectator's Identification with eSports on their own perception of the sponsor's Brand Equity.

To validate the mediation results, a bootstrap method was applied with 2,000 samples using the bias-corrected method. The results (**Table 21**) support a total mediation, in accordance with the previous analysis for the CBLoL database.

Table 21 - Effects on the Sponsor's Brand Equity (CBLoL)

Hypothesis	Direct (p-value)	Indirect (p-value)	Result
IDeS → FITOi → BEOi	0.028 (0.694)	0.137 (0.000)	Total Mediation

Finally, the influence of Identification with eSports was assessed so that the direct, indirect and overall effects on the spectator's Brand Equity could be determined (see **Table 22**). Reinforcing the results from Game XP, the explained variance on the Sponsor's Brand Equity (Dell) is mainly explained by the direct effect of the congruence perception between Dell and eSports.

Table 22 - Effects over Sponsor's Brand Equity (CBLoL)

Overall, Direct and Indirect Effects on eSports Spectator's perception of Sponsor's Brand Equity	Standardized Estimates		
	Identification with eSports	Congruence (Dell/eSports)	Brand Equity (Dell)
DE - Direct Effect	0.028	0.442	
IE - Indirect Effect	0.137	-	
OE - Overall Effect	0.165	0.442	
$(DE)^2$	0.001	0.195	0.196
$(IE)^2$	0.019	-	0.019
$(OE)^2$	0.027	0.195	0.223
Explained Variance[a]			0.204

5.4   Summary of Results

This section presents a summary of the empirical results regarding the substantive hypotheses investigated in this study. They are presented below, on **Table 23**.

Table 23 - Summary of the Results for the Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path	Hypothetical Relationship	Game XP	CBLoL
H1	Brand Equity ← Identification with eSports	(+)	Supported	Not Supported
H2	Purchase Intention ← Brand Equity	(+)	Supported	Supported
H3	Brand Equity ← Congruence between Sponsor and eSports ← Identification with eSports	(+)	Supported	Supported

6   FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section presents the final considerations about this study and its findings. First, the executive summary from this study is presented. Then, the answers for the research questions are presented, focusing on the theoretical implications. The third section, focus on the managerial implications. Finally, the limitations of this study are presented, and then suggestions are given for future studies to enrich the knowledge in the field.

6.1   Executive Summary

This study has investigated the influence of the eSports spectator identification with eSports in general on his own perception of the eSports event sponsor brand equity, and the influence of this perception of brand equity on the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsor's products or services. Also the mediating influence of the congruence perception between the sponsor and eSports on the relationship between the spectator's identification with eSports and his perception of the sponsor's brand equity. This study contributes to eSports marketing literature and use as main theoretical reference the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979), Associative Network Theory (Collins & Loftus, 1975) and Schema Theory (Axelrod, 1973). The research questions were operationalized through three substantive research hypotheses regarding the relationship between the studied constructs.

Data was collected through surveys that were asked in-person at the entrance of two events that hosted eSports competitions: Game XP and CBLoL. Both events were held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Game XP had a wider variety of attractions so attending the event to watch eSports was a filter question. Each event generated a unique sample, being the data analyzed separately for each specific event. During four days of Game XP, 446 valid questionnaires were collected and in one day of CBLoL, 232 valid questionnaires were collected.

To analyze the data, first was performed an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), followed by a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The reliability was assessed, together

with the constructs' convergent and discriminant validities. To test the substantive hypotheses, a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis was performed, using the Asymptotically Distribution-Free (ADF) technique. Also, to support the mediating effect of the congruence between the sponsor and eSports were also performed the Four Steps proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the Sobel Test (1982) and bootstrapping.

For both events, two of the substantive hypotheses were supported, with the direct influence of the spectator identification with eSports on his own perception of the sponsor's brand equity not being supported on the presence of congruence between the sponsor and eSports as a mediator. This mediating influence being supported, it was verified to be a total mediation.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

This section presents this study's academic contributions, by answering the research questions.

6.2.1 *Question 1: Does the spectators' identification with eSports influences the sponsor's brand equity?*

The results from this study pointed to contradictory answers for that question. In fact, they suggest that the spectators' identification with eSports influences the sponsor's brand equity, but indirectly through the mediation of the congruence perception between the sponsor and eSports.

However, when looking specifically to the direct influence, which is what this research question intended to investigate, the results from one event supported it (even if weak), while the other event pointed to a non-significant relation between the variables. eSports is a relatively recent field and academic research is still incipient, but we can speculate over the reasons for this contradiction. It might be explained due to the classification of the sponsors as endemic or non-endemic brands, but further research is still required to provide more evidence to this possibility. While Dell is undoubtedly an endemic brand when related to eSports, since they produce computers, Oi is not an endemic brand, despite the fact that they are internet providers. Oi also provides a variety of services that are not related to eSports and when you ask about the brand, the internet services might not come to people's minds initially. Therefore, this contextualization

might explain that, when in the presence of congruence, the value spectator's perceive in Dell's brand (an endemic brand) is explained by that congruence perception, differently from Oi.

The results suggest that, it may be the case that when the sponsor is an endemic brand, the congruence perception is responsible for the enhancement of the value perceived in the brand by the spectator, reinforcing the importance of fit between sponsor and sponsored entity.

Also, the events were different and attracted different people. Game XP is an event with a variety of attractions related to games (in which eSports competition is just a small portion), while CBLoL is an event entirely dedicated to eSports and, even more, to a specific game (League of Legends). This differences may have influenced the identification with eSports variable, that tried to measure identification as a eSports fan in general, instead of as a fan of a specific game.

It is also intriguing about this results in this specific relationship is also related to the fact that in one event it was non-significant while the other, although supported, indicated a weak relationship. This results also leave room to speculate if the spectator's identification with eSports is really relevant to influence directly his perception about the sponsor's brand equity, but once more, further research is required to test this possibility.

6.2.2 *Question 2: Does the sponsor's brand equity influences the spectator's purchase intention towards the sponsor's products/services?*

The results from this study support the existence of the influence of the sponsor's brand equity on spectator' purchase intention towards the sponsor's products/services. This conclusion is intuitive, pointing to the fact that the more value someone perceives in a brand, higher are his/hers intention to buy (or hire) from that company.

The direct influence of brand equity on consumer's purchase intention have been widely supported in different contexts, with different kinds of products and services, such as hotels and cleansers (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), flights (Hsin Chang & Wen Chen, 2008), bank credit cards, mobile telecommunication and ADSL (Chang & Liu, 2009). Jalilvand et al. (2011) even found evidence to support the influence of each individual component of brand equity, as proposed by Aaker (1991) on consumer's purchase intention.

That influence had also been previously supported in the literature in sponsorship contexts (Alrayees & Saleh, 2019; Chanavat et al., 2009; Ngoc Khuong & Chau, 2017; Pope & Voges, 2000), even with the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention (Düsenberg et al., 2016; Pornpitakpan, 2004). However, little, if any, evidence was found in previous literature to support this relationship in an eSports context and this study's findings support this influence in this specific context. Therefore, supporting the existence of the hypothesized relationship in the eSports context, reinforces the findings from previous studies that verified the same relationship in different contexts.

6.2.3 *Question 3: Does the spectators' perception of congruence between eSports and the sponsor's brand has a mediating effect in the relation between the spectators' identification with eSports and the sponsor's brand equity?*

The results suggest that congruence exerts an important mediating effect on the sponsorship relation, reinforcing previous findings that the perception of congruence between sponsor and sponsored entity might influence attitude towards the sponsor (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Speed & Thompson, 2000), sponsor's image and recognition (Grohs et al., 2004; Koo et al., 2006), and, specifically for this study, purchase intention (Close Scheinbaum & Lacey, 2013). Some interesting discussions can also be raised from the results for this hypothesis.

First, it is interesting to observe that the moderating variable, or the perceived congruence between the sponsor and eSports, has a stronger contribution to the brand equity perception than the spectator's identification with eSports. This reinforces the importance of congruence between sponsor and sponsored entity (in this study's case, eSports events), specifically if enhancing the branding equity is one of the sponsorship objectives.

Other thought provoking discussion that emerges from the results of the analysis performed in this study is related to the different roles that congruence plays while mediating the relationship between identification with eSports and the perception of sponsor's brand equity. In the Game XP event, with an non-endemic brand (Oi), congruence plays a partial mediator role, with the direct influence of identification on brand equity keeping its significance (although the indirect influence is still much stronger). However, for the CBLoL database, with an endemic brand (Dell), congruence

works as a total mediator, which means that the all the effect of identification on brand equity was indirect, being mediated by congruence.

In summary, the results suggest that congruence perception, being it natural or built by the brand, strengthens the intensity with which the sponsorship enhances the sponsor's brand equity. This seems in line with the Associative Network Theory and the Schema Theory, since through the lens of those theories the congruence perception is related to concepts being closer to each other in people's minds and the closer they are, less connections the sponsor needs to build in people's minds to connect their brand with eSports and benefit from the good feelings consumer's have associated with this concept in their minds. This results reinforce previous findings in the literature regarding the importance of congruence in sponsorship (Coelho et al., 2019; Henseler, Wilson, Götz, & Hautvast, 2007).

6.3   Managerial Implications

Sponsors that invest in eSports entities with the objective of bringing value to their brands will have much more success if they are capable of creating, promoting and capitalizing on a mental connection that associates their brand with the sponsored entity somehow. This connection can be natural (as in the case of Dell and other endemic brands), or can be forged over time. In summary, looking for endemic sponsorships makes life easier for sponsors. However, independently of the sponsorship being endemic or not, communication is vital to create and sustain the connections on consumers' minds.

The findings that emerge from this study provide insights and have practical implications for people who work with eSports marketing, events or sponsorships and even for companies who invest in sponsorship.

6.3.1   *For Companies that Sponsor (or are willing to) eSports*

Sponsorship investments tend to be expensive, require planning and detailed objectives. However, if they are successful, they can be significantly profitable. Therefore, thinking on optimizing the return on the sponsorship investment, being capable of having the same return with lower investments (both in capital and labor) is a significant advantage.

Also, this study's results suggest that when the sponsor is an endemic brand, the congruence perception is responsible for enhancing the value the spectator perceive in the brand, reinforcing the importance of fit between the sponsor and the sponsored entity. This is enough of an argument to support the search for endemic sponsorship opportunities or the ones that are closest to your brand, product or service.

It is important to mention that a company can profit from a non-endemic sponsorship, but it will require much more investment and effort from the company side, since a congruent sponsorship is much more natural and fluid on consumer's minds, while a non-endemic sponsor will have to work on developing a connection between their brand and the sponsored entity somehow. Therefore to worth the investment, the market needs to be big and consolidated, and the eSports market is moving rapidly towards that direction. This can be verified by the amount of big non-endemic brands, such as Coca-Cola and Mercedes that have moved their eSports investment from experimental marketing budget to the core sponsorship lineup, helping to fuel market growth (D. Singer & Chi, 2019). These big non-endemic companies have higher sponsorship budgets and are gradually increasing their presence in the eSports market.

Despite the fact that brand activation is key for every sponsor, for the non-endemic companies, saving a share of their budget for brand activations during the events and other initiatives that can help forge unnatural connections between their brand and the eSports market is vital, since their distance to eSports in consumer's mind is bigger than from endemic brands. In other words, they have a longer way to travel to reach the same destination. Also, for both classifications of sponsors being able to understand the eSports audience might facilitate their life and allow companies activations to be more assertive.

Finally, having the relationship between the perception of brand equity and consumer's purchase intention supported can help marketing professionals to support sponsorship decisions, since this implies that enhancing brand equity can increase sales.

6.3.2 *For Entities responsible for organizing eSports events*

eSports is a fast growing market both in terms of audience and financial returns. Therefore, to keep growing it is important that they can reach new people and bring new fans to keep it growing. eSports events' organizers have been focusing on providing an in-person experience that differentiates the event from watching the competition through

streaming at home. In this difficult task to provide a completely differentiated experience for those who watch an eSports event in person, companies may be interesting partners, not only for the money they invest in sponsorship that allow companies to elaborate attractions for the event, but being creative with their activations during the event and providing interesting experiences to entertain the spectators.

In summary, for the eSports industry as a whole, it is fundamental that sponsorship grows together with the audience, in order to provide financial support to keep the industry growth sustainable and to provide visibility to eSports as a whole.

6.4   Limitations of the Study

This section presents the study limitations that are related to some options that were made regarding method. Specifically, they are divided in: (a) limitations regarding the conceptual model; (b) limitations regarding the operationalization of the scales; (c) limitations regarding the sample and data collection; and (d) limitations regarding the methods selected to analyze the data.

6.4.1   *Limitations regarding the Conceptual Model*

Among the constructs present in the model, the sponsor's brand equity in the consumers' perspective and the purchase intention towards the sponsor's products are usually affected by many other variables that weren't considered in the model. For instance, sponsorship activations level during the event (O'Reilly & Horning, 2013) and spectator's previous attitude towards the sponsor (Koo et al., 2006) are variables that also influence the spectators' perception of sponsor's brand equity and, if were considered in the model, would probably lead to different results.

The study considers two different kinds of sponsors with one sponsor focused on products and one focused on services, and also two different kind of events, being one a games-themed festival that also includes eSports competitions and the other an event totally focused on the eSports competition. This provides evidence of the proposed relations between constructs in different situations in the eSports context. However, the results of this study cannot be generalized for contexts in which asymmetry is verified between the sponsor's and the event's brand equity.

6.4.2 *Limitations regarding the Operationalization of the Scales*

Preference was given to scales that were already tested in previous studies, always looking for scales that were even tested in Brazil. No previous studies using the selected identification scale were found in Brazil. However, due to the intention to measure the identification as a general eSports fan. In general, scales related to identification in sports marketing are related to identification with a specific sport modality, a specific team/club or a specific player. Therefore, due to the lack of other scales for the desired construct, that scale was selected. Also, the fit scales from Speed and Thompson (2000) was developed to measure event-sponsor congruence, but it was adjusted to measure the sponsor's fit with eSports in general.

Also, previous tests were found of the scales in studies related to the traditional sports context, which is slightly different from the eSports context, although evidence have been provided in previous studies to support the similarities between eSports and traditional sports (Pizzo et al., 2018).

6.4.3 *Limitations regarding the Sample and Data Collection*

This study randomly picked people while they were arriving to two different events as a sample. However, the samples are very different, since Game XP holds competitions from many different eSports while CBLoL only provides the spectator the opportunity to watch a competition of League of Legends. Therefore, to extrapolate the results of this study to other events should be done with caution.

During both events, the data collection was made specifically with people arriving at the event and, at that point, they were not yet impacted by the sponsor's activations inside the event. Therefore, their perceptions regarding the sponsor could have been different if they were interviewed while exiting.

It is also important to highlight the impact of having many different interviewers in the study. Even though they were trained, when using different interviewers it is possible that a bias caused by the interviewer might occur. Therefore, the influence of the variety of different characteristics of the different interviewers in the final answers should be recognized (Malhotra et al., 2017).

6.4.4 *Limitations regarding the Selected Methods*

The Structural Equations Modeling was the technique selected to test the substantive hypotheses of the study, because this technique allows to explore a series of interrelated relations to be explored simultaneously and also to estimate latent variables. This technique requires the multivariate normality of the data which was not supported in this study. However, due to the size of the sample (that was not recommended for ADF), the Maximum Likelihood (ML) technique was applied.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

6.5.1 *Applying the model in different contexts*

It would be interesting to test the proposed model in different eSports events, with bigger audiences, different sponsors, in different cities and countries to see if the results converge. Besides that, the literature about sponsorship in eSports is still incipient and any addition to the knowledge is important. Also, more evidence to support the mediating effect between identification and the sponsor brand equity, or even between the sponsor brand equity and any antecedent variable, is interesting.

Also, this study is conducted through the lens of the Social Identity Theory. Therefore, the background that supports the study as a whole is the theory itself and the contextualization of how the fan identification and the other variables studied interact with his own perception of belonging to a social group and how this feeling influences his life and personality.

6.5.2 *Opening brand equity components*

Similar to what Jalilvand et al. (2011) did, it would be interesting to add a little bit of complexity to the model and break the brand equity construct in the components proposed by Aaker (1991). This would allow the investigation of the influence of identification with eSports with each individual component of brand equity and their respective influence on spectator's purchase intention, adding to the findings in the literature.

6.5.3 *Including new antecedents for brand equity*

Other antecedents can be added to the model and investigated in order to understand what are important factors that sponsoring companies might want to focus on when sponsoring eSports in other to potentialize their returns on the sponsorship investments. It would also be interesting to investigate deeper eSports spectator's motivations, since this would help sponsors to understand better this audience.

6.5.4 *More robust scale for identification*

The scale used in this study for identification with eSports was brought from the sports marketing context to measure the spectator's identification as a general eSports fan. However, the scale had only three items and for the CBLoL database the consistency of the scale was not robust as expected and, with three items the scale is not flexible in terms of removing items.

6.5.5 *Investigating the mediating effect of demographic variables*

It would be also interesting to better understand the effect of demographic variables such as gender, culture, age, education and others. Future studies might investigate the existence of a mediating effect exerted by this variables and even find different results when focusing on different groups divided by demographics.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consumer Decision Process Model from Kotler and Keller (2015)
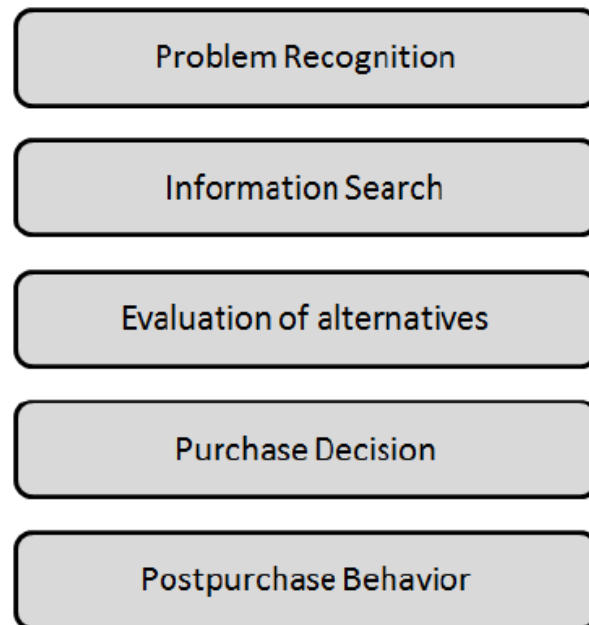
Fig. 8 - The consumer decision process model.

Appendix 2 – Game XP attractions map from Game XP website

Fig. 9 - Representation of the Game XP attractions.

Appendix 3 - Identification Scale

Table 24 - Original Points of Attachment Index, from Shapiro et al. (2013)

Dimensions	Items in English
Identification with the players	*I am a fan of the individual players on the team* *I am a big fan of specific players* *I consider myself a fan of certain players*
Identification with the team	*Being a fan of (university) football team is very important to me* *I am a committed fan of (university) football team* *I consider myself to be a "real" fan of the (university) football team*
Identification with the coach	*I am a big fan of (head coach)* *I would experience a loss if (head coach) was no longer the coach* *Being a fan of (head coach) is very important to me*

Identification with the university	*I feel connected to numerous aspects of the university*
	I feel that I am part of the university community
	I support the university as a whole
Identification with sport	*First and foremost I consider myself a football fan*
	Football is my favorite sport
	Of all sports, I prefer football
Identification with the community	*I feel connected with the numerous aspects of the community*
	I feel that I am part of the community
	I support the community as a whole
Identification with the Athletic Department	*I connect with numerous aspects of (university) athletics*
	I am a fan of all (university) teams
	Being a fan of all (university) teams is very important to me
Identification as a general sport fan[a]	*I am a sport fan in general*
	I am a fan of lots of different sports
	Being a sport fan is very important to me
Identification with level of sport	*I am a fan of college football regardless of who is playing*
	I consider myself a fan of college football, and not just one specific team
	I am a big fan of college football

Note: [a] Only dimension used in the study, adapted for eSports.

Appendix 4 - Brand Equity Scale

Table 25 - Original Overall Brand Equity Scale, from Yoo and Donthu (2001)

Items in English

It makes sense to buy X instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.

Even if another brand has the same features as X, I would prefer to buy X.

If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X.

if another brand is not different from X in any way, it seems smarter to purchase X.

Appendix 5 - Congruence Scale

Table 26 - Original Sponsor-Event Fit Scale, from Speed and Thompson (2000)

Items in English

There is a logical connection between the event and the sponsor.

The image of the event and the image of the sponsor are similar.

The sponsor and the event fit together well.

The company and the event stand for similar things.

It makes sense to me that this company sponsors this event.

Appendix 6 - Purchase Intention Scale

Table 27 - Original Purchase Intention Scale, from Ohanian (1991)

Levels of commitment towards the product

Inquire about

Consider purchasing

Actually purchasing

Appendix 7 - Original Questionnaires

INFLUÊNCIA DA IDENTIFICAÇÃO COM eSPORTS
NO VALOR DA MARCA DO PATROCINADOR E NA
INTENÇÃO DE COMPRA DO ESPECTADOR COM
RELAÇÃO AO PRODUTO DO PATROCINADOR

Luiz Felipe Gonçalves – luiz.goncalves@coppead.ufrj.br
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Telefone: (21) 3938-9848

<Ler para o entrevistado> O Instituto COPPEAD de Administração está realizando um estudo sobre eSports. As perguntas não levam mais de 5 minutos para serem respondidas. O importante é a sua opinião, seja ela qual for. As informações fornecidas por meio deste questionário serão mantidas em sigilo e você não será identificado.

1. Você gosta de eSports?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
2. Você já assistiu a algum evento de eSports presencialmente?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
3. Você hoje veio assistir a alguma das competições de eSports?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
4. Você participou de alguma edição da Game XP?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
5. Se sim, assistiu a alguma competição de eSports?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
6. Você usa ou já usou algum serviço da Oi?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
7. Escolaridade: ( ) 1° grau incompleto 0 ( ) 1° grau completo 1 ( ) 2° Grau completo 2 ( ) Superior 3	
8. Quantos anos você tem?	9. Sem perguntar. Gênero: ( ) Masculino 0 ( ) Feminino 1

<Instrução> Caso a resposta à pergunta 3 seja negativa, agradecer a atenção e encerrar a entrevista. Caso seja afirmativa, entregar o cartão com a escala para o entrevistado.

<Ler> Por favor, responda de acordo com o cartão com números que variam de 1 (discordo totalmente) a 7 (concordo totalmente). Por favor, avalie cada uma das frases.

10. Eu sou fã de eSports em geral.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
11. Eu sou fã de vários eSports diferentes.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
12. Ser um fã de eSports é muito importante para mim.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

<Ler> Os próximos itens são referentes à sua avaliação geral da Oi. Tendo em consideração a sua experiência própria, por favor, avalie cada uma das frases.

13. Vale a pena usar Oi, mesmo quando os serviços são iguais aos de outras operadoras.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
14. Mesmo que outras operadoras tenham as mesmas características, eu prefiro usar Oi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
15. Mesmo que haja outra operadora tão boa quanto, eu ainda prefiro usar Oi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
16. Se outra operadora não apresenta nenhuma diferença, parece mais inteligente usar Oi.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

Fig. 10 - Original Questionnaire (Oi/Game XP) - Page 1 of 2

<Ler> Os próximos itens são referentes à sua opinião sobre a relação entre a marca patrocinadora do evento e o eSports, em outras palavras se faz sentido a Oi patrocinar eSports.

17. Há uma ligação lógica entre a Oi e os eSports.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
18. A imagem da Oi e a imagem dos eSports são compatíveis.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
19. A Oi e os eSports combinam bem juntos.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
20. A Oi e os eSports inspiram ideias semelhantes.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
21. Para mim, faz sentido que a Oi patrocine os eSports.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Com relação aos serviços oferecidos pela Oi:

22. Eu consideraria a possibilidade de adquirir os serviços da Oi.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
23. Eu buscaria mais informações sobre os serviços da Oi.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
24. Eu contrataria os serviços da Oi.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Caso você tenha interesse em receber o resultado dessa pesquisa, por favor, informe seu e-mail.

E-mail

<Ler> Muito obrigado pelo seu tempo.

Dados da Entrevista

Data:		Região:		Entrevistador:	

Fig. 11 - Original Questionnaire (Oi/Game XP) - Page 2 of 2

INFLUÊNCIA DA IDENTIFICAÇÃO COM eSPORTS
NO VALOR DA MARCA DO PATROCINADOR E NA
INTENÇÃO DE COMPRA DO ESPECTADOR COM
RELAÇÃO AO PRODUTO DO PATROCINADOR

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<Ler para o entrevistado> O Instituto COPPEAD de Administração está realizando um estudo sobre eSports. As perguntas não levam mais de 5 minutos para serem respondidas. O importante é a sua opinião, seja ela qual for. As informações fornecidas por meio deste questionário serão mantidas em sigilo e você não será identificado.

1. Você gosta de eSports ou veio só para acompanhar alguém?	( ) Gosta 0 ( ) Acompanhante 1
2. Você já assistiu a algum evento de eSports presencialmente?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
3. Você participou de alguma edição do CBLoL?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
4. Você tem ou já teve um computador da Dell?	( ) Sim 0 ( ) Não 1
5. Escolaridade: ( ) Ensino Fundamental 0 ( ) Ensino Médio 1 ( ) Ensino Superior 2	
6. Quantos anos você tem?	7. **Sem perguntar.** Gênero: ( ) Masculino 0 ( ) Feminino 1

<Ler> Por favor, responda de acordo com o cartão com números que variam de 1 (discordo totalmente) a 7 (concordo totalmente). Por favor, avalie cada uma das frases.

8. Eu sou fã de eSports em geral.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
9. Eu sou fã de vários eSports diferentes.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
10. Ser um fã de eSports é muito importante para mim.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Os próximos itens são referentes à sua avaliação geral da Dell. Tendo em consideração a sua experiência própria, por favor, avalie cada uma das frases.

11. Vale a pena comprar um Dell, mesmo quando o computador é igual ao das outras marcas.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
12. Mesmo que outras marcas tenham as mesmas características, eu prefiro comprar um Dell.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
13. Mesmo que haja outra marca tão boa quanto, eu ainda prefiro comprar um Dell	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
14. Se outra marca não apresenta nenhuma diferença, parece mais inteligente comprar um Dell.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Os próximos itens são referentes à sua opinião sobre a relação entre a marca patrocinadora do evento e o eSports, em outras palavras se faz sentido a Dell patrocinar eSports.

Fig. 12 - Original Questionnaire (Dell/CBLoL) - Page 1 of 2

15. Há uma ligação lógica entre a Dell e os eSports.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
16. A imagem da Dell e a imagem dos eSports são compatíveis.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
17. A Dell e os eSports combinam bem juntos.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
18. A Dell e os eSports inspiram ideias semelhantes.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
19. Para mim, faz sentido que a Dell patrocine os eSports.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Com relação aos computadores da Dell:

20. Eu consideraria a possibilidade de adquirir um computador da Dell.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
21. Eu buscaria mais informações sobre os computadores da Dell.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
22. Eu compraria um computador da Dell.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

<Ler> Caso você tenha interesse em receber o resultado dessa pesquisa, por favor, informe seu e-mail.

E-mail

<Ler> Muito obrigado pelo seu tempo.

Dados da Entrevista

Data:		Região:		Entrevistador:	

Fig. 13 - Original Questionnaire (Dell/CBLoL) - Page 2 of 2

Fig. 14 - Auxiliary Card used during interviews

Appendix 8 - Sample Histograms (Game XP)
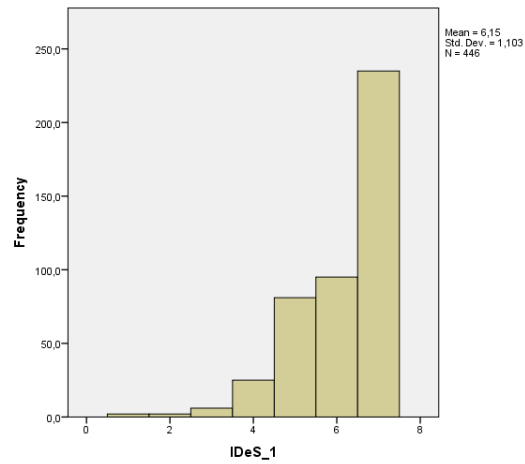
Fig. 15 - Histogram Game XP IDeS_1
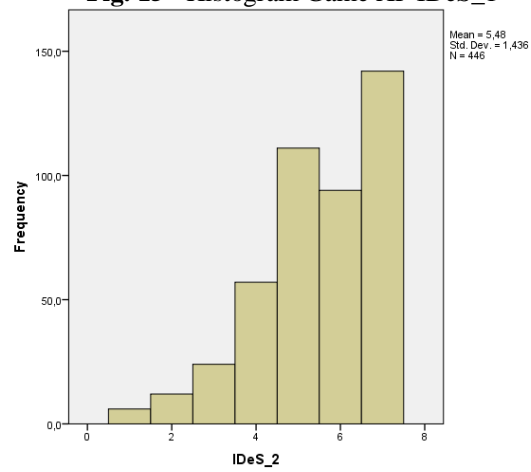
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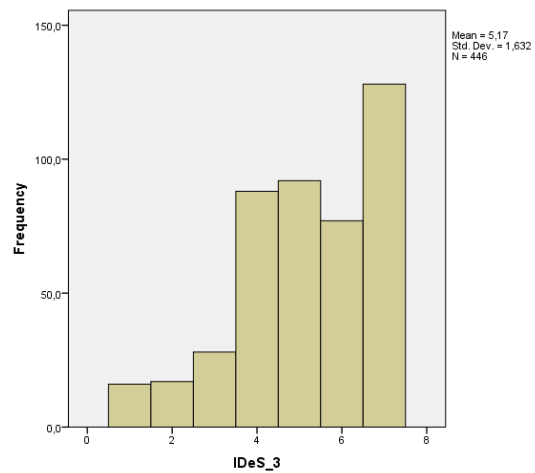
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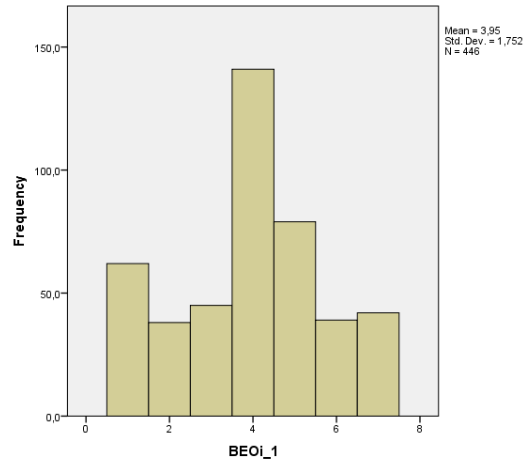
Fig. 18 - Histogram Game XP BEOi_1
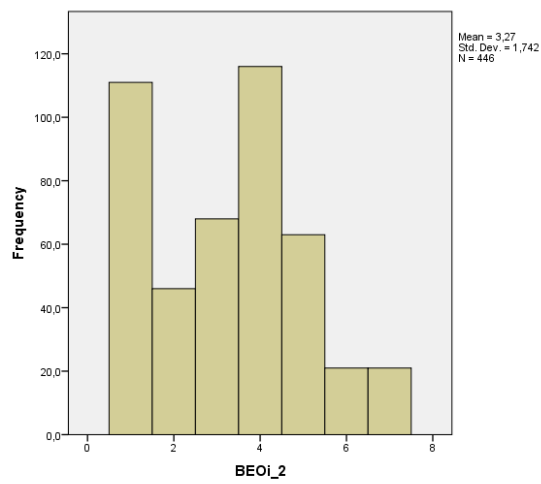
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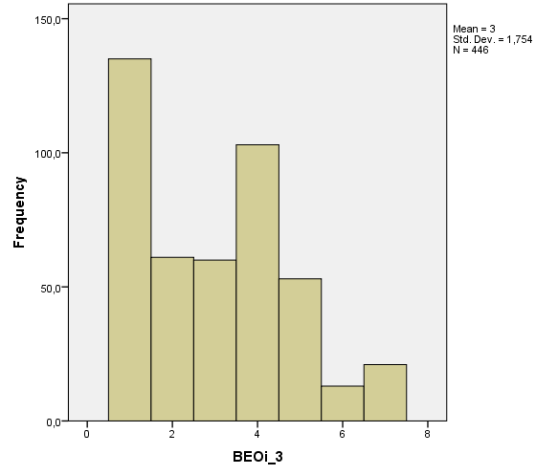
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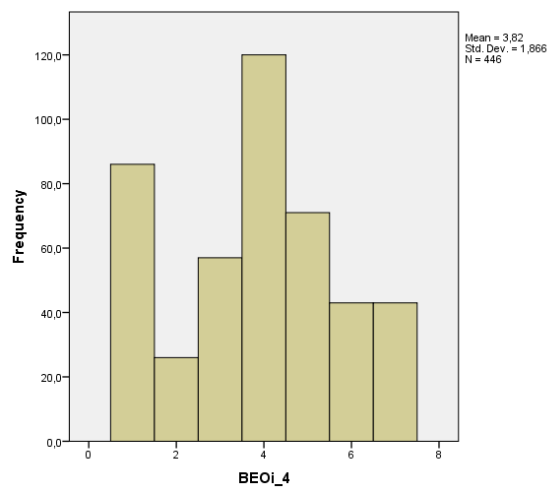
Fig. 21 - Histogram Game XP BEOi_4
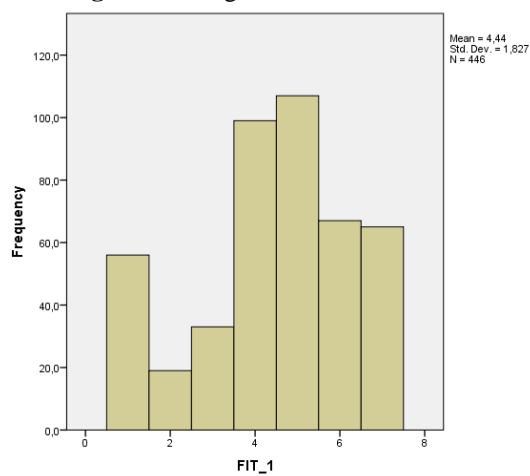
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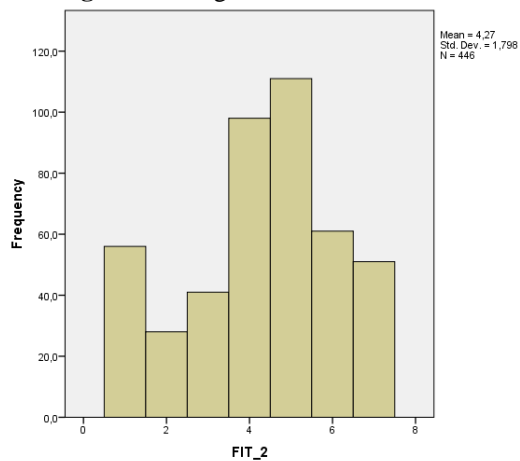
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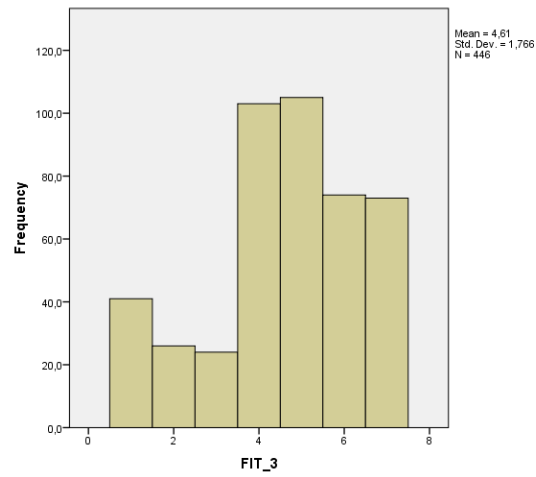
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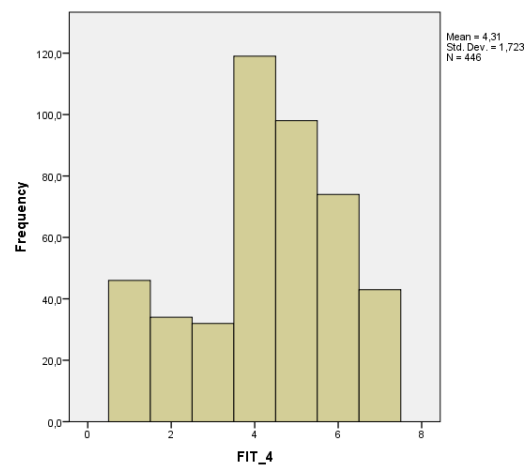
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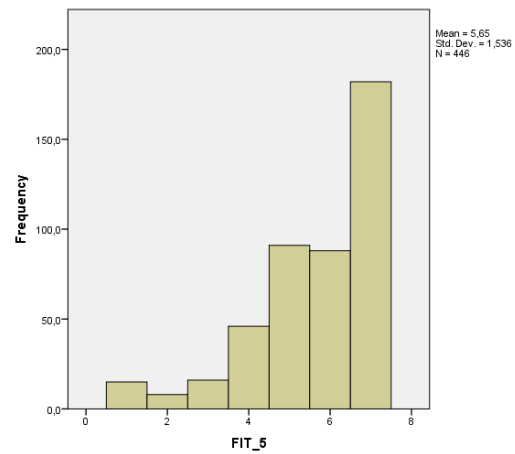
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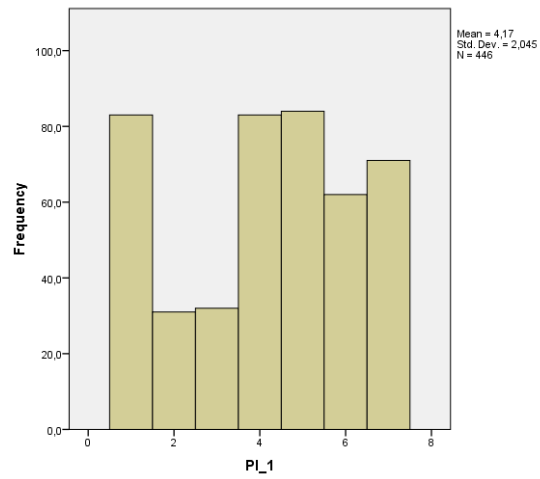
Fig. 27 - Histogram Game XP PIOi_1
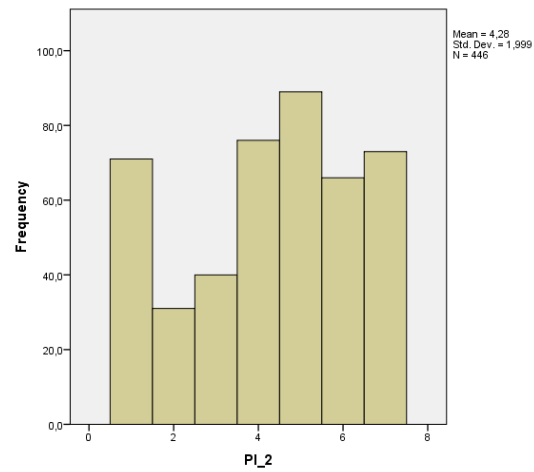
Fig. 28 - Histogram Game XP PIOi_2
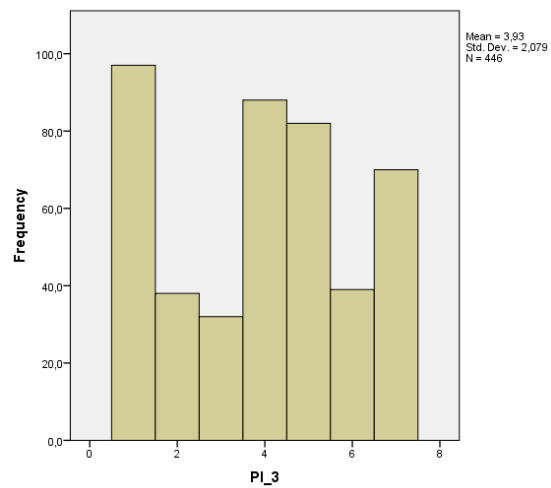
Fig. 29 - Histogram Game XP PIOi_3

Appendix 9 - Sample Histograms (CBLoL)
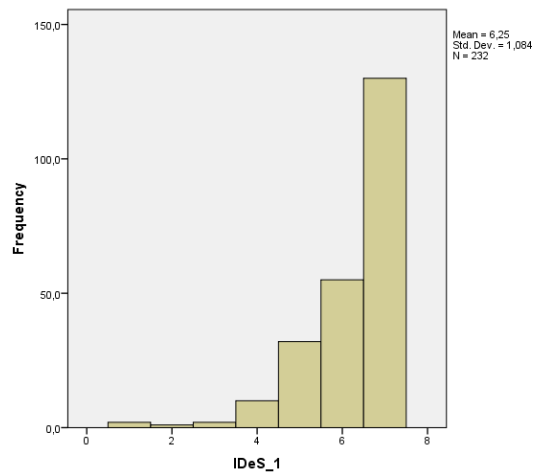
Fig. 30 - Histogram CBLoL IDeS_1
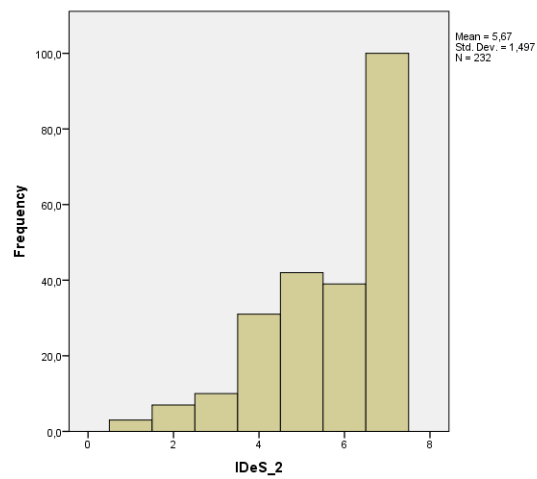
Fig. 31 - Histogram CBLoL IDeS_2
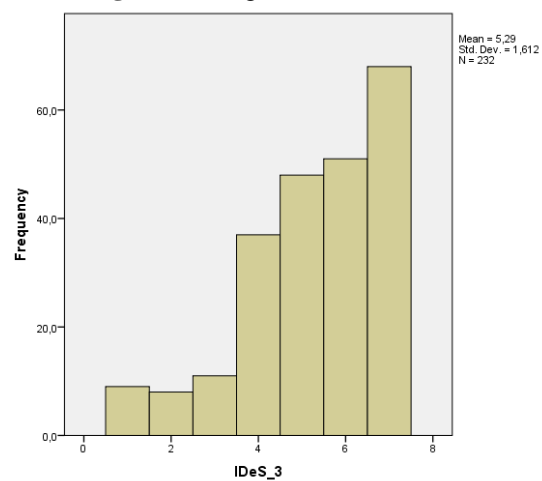
Fig. 32 - Histogram CBLoL IDeS_3

Mean = 4,92
Std. Dev. = 1,482
N = 232

Fig. 33 - Histogram CBLoL BEDell_1

Mean = 4,51
Std. Dev. = 1,617
N = 232
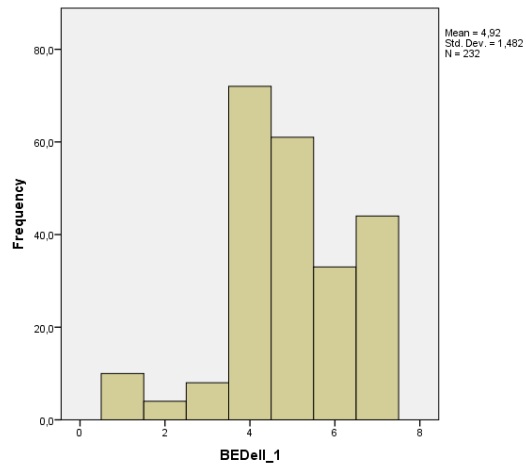
Fig. 34 - Histogram CBLoL BEDell_2
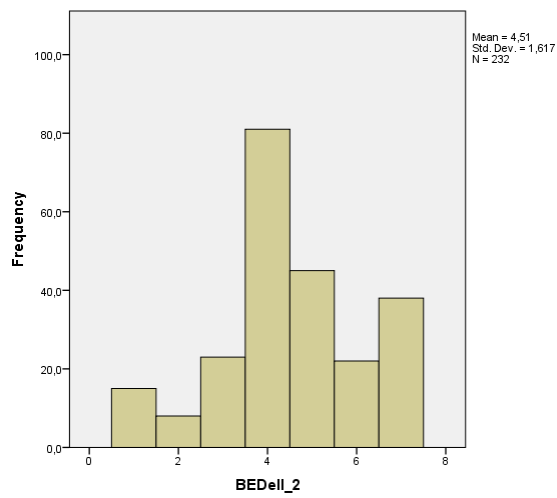
Mean = 4,06
Std. Dev. = 1,731
N = 232
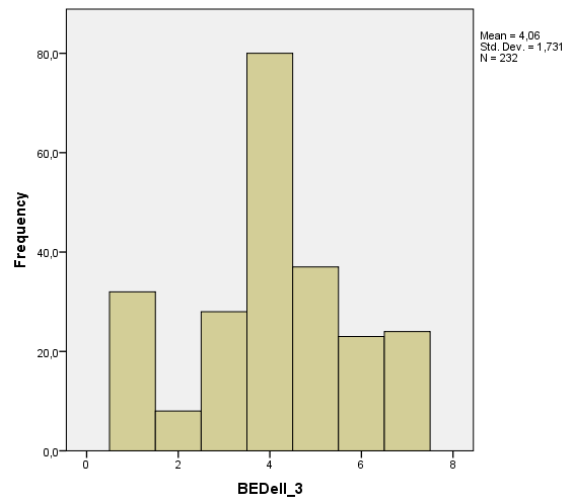
Fig. 35 - Histogram CBLoL BEDell_3
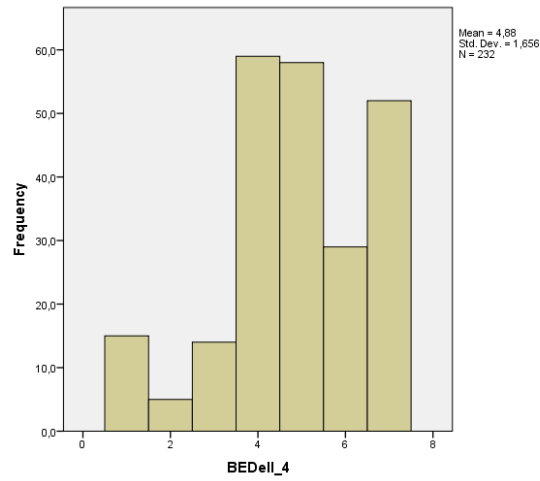
Fig. 36 - Histogram CBLoL BEDell_4
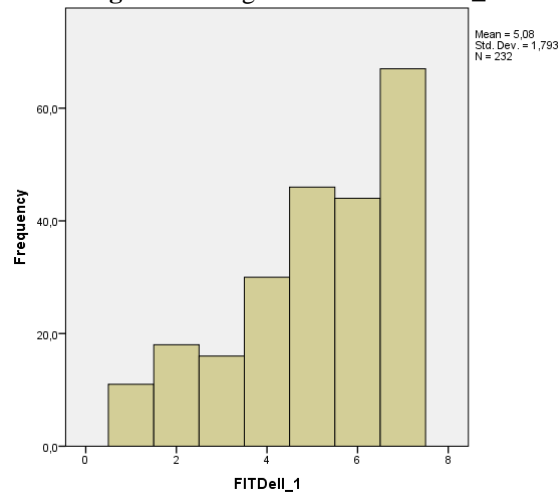
Fig. 37 - Histogram CBLoL FITDell_1
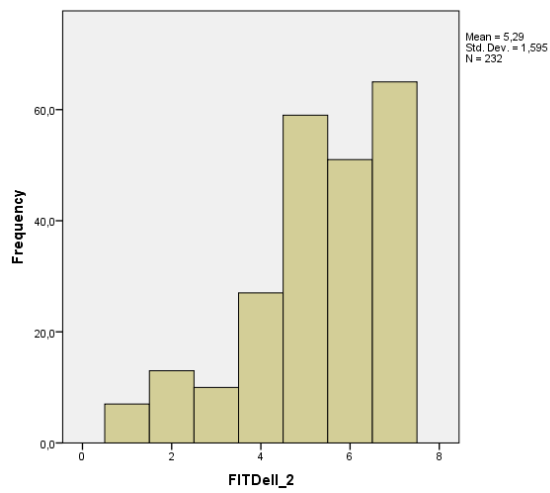
Fig. 38 - Histogram CBLoL FITDell_2
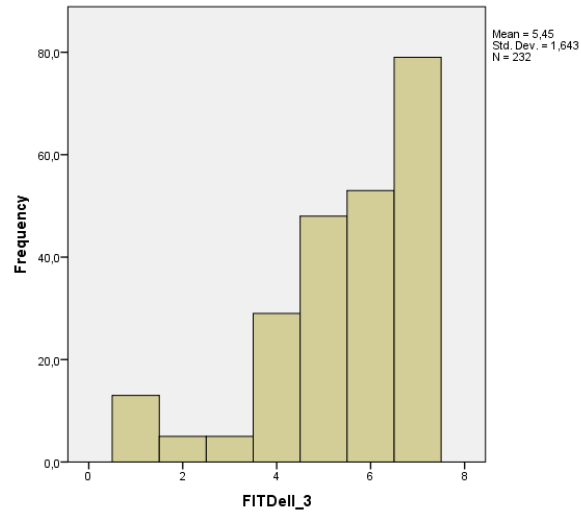
Fig. 39 - Histogram CBLoL FITDell_3
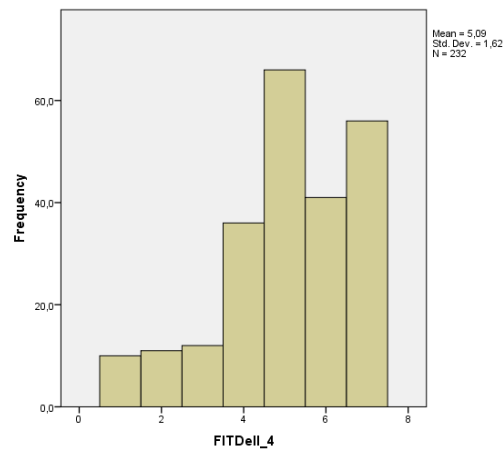
Fig. 40 - Histogram CBLoL FITDell_4
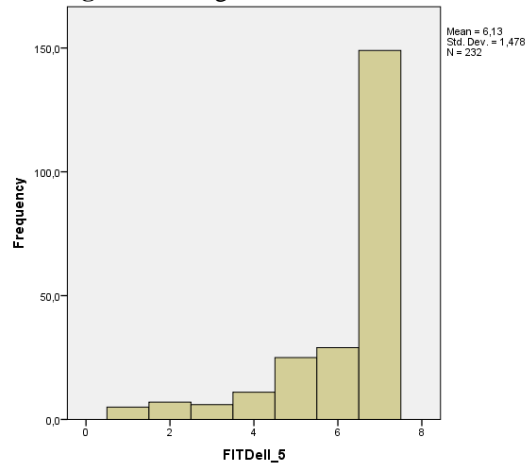
Fig. 41 - Histogram CBLoL FITDell_5

Mean = 5,66
Std. Dev. = 1,562
N = 232
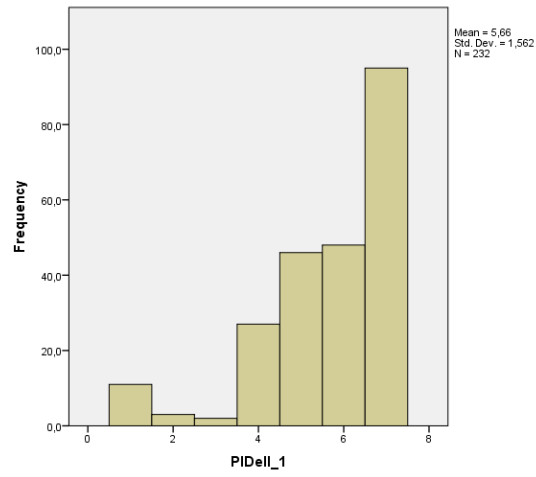
Fig. 42 - Histogram CBLoL PIDell_1

Mean = 5,69
Std. Dev. = 1,444
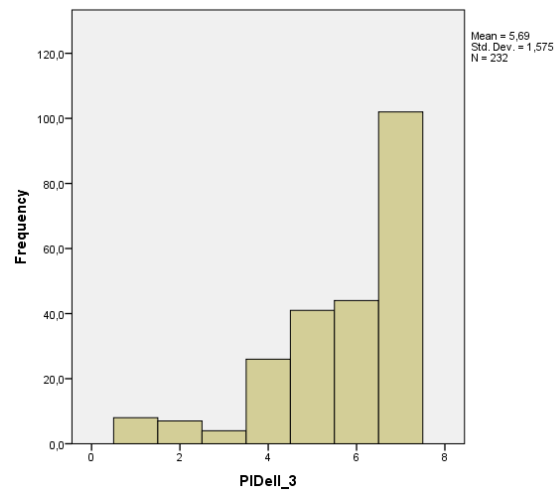N = 232
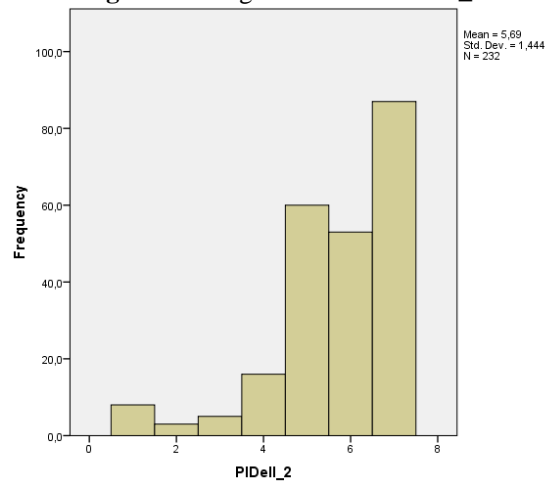
Fig. 43 - Histogram CBLoL PIDell_2

Mean = 5,69
Std. Dev. = 1,575
N = 232

Fig. 44 - Histogram CBLoL PIDell_3