Typology of eSports Crowdfunding Donors and Their Behavioral Outcomes

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There are diverse types of fundraising practices, one of which is crowdfunding (CF). It means external finance received from a large audience, referred to as a “crowd,” by collecting a small amount from each individual (Belleflamme, Lambert & Schwienbacher, 2014). From a limited perspective, the domain of crowdfunding involves open calls for financial resources to the “Internet crowd” on internet-based service platforms (Gerber, Hui, & Kuo, 2012). In sports, the most successful crowdfunding is observed in eSports. For example, the Valve Corporation raised 21 million dollars as prize money for the DOTA 2 World Championships 2016 (http://dota2.prizetrac.kr/international2016). The basement prize was $1.6 million, and users contributed 19 million dollars to the prize money. Compared to other types of World Championships in sports, which are mostly sponsored by corporations, this championship raised money solely through the contributions of users. Despite such successful projects, few studies have focused on crowdfunding in sports. Therefore, in this study, we intend to analyze the motives for crowdfunding eSports events and watching eSports, as well as propose the user typology of crowdfunding participants. In addition, we will examine how behavioral intentions differ for each type of user.

Bretchneider et al. (2014) suggested two different drives for crowdfunding: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic versus extrinsic framework originates from the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), which explains that behaviors aimed at achieving noteworthy goals are motivated by extrinsic drives, while actions for inherent pleasures are intrinsically motivated. In addition, researchers distinguish motivations at social levels. Hemetsberger (2002) suggested a self- and others-oriented framework. Self-oriented motivation is the connection between an individual and the task that directly drives their behavior. Other-oriented motivation relates to social interactions that the individual has to engage in owing to a collective relationship with the tasks (Doenyas, 2017). Based on the two different frameworks outlined above, recent studies proposed a two-by-two matrix (intrinsic vs. extrinsic and self-oriented vs. others-oriented) based on motivations (Bagheri et al., 2019; Ryu & Kim, 2016). The motives of eSports spectators function similar to those in traditional sports, and aspects of eSports events are interchangeable with their counterparts in traditional sports (Pizzo et al., 2018). In this study, eSports event donors are segmented using a multi-dimensional axis: crowdfunding motives and eSports spectators’ motives. Based on the typology of fans, the differences in outcome variables, team (player) identification, media consumption intention, and behavioral loyalty between segments will be compared.

We will collect data from an online survey distributed on online fan forums of DOTA2. We will measure six-factor CF motives (Rye & Kim, 2016), sports spectator motives (Pizzo et al., 2018), team identification (Trail & James, 2001), media consumption intention (Kim et al., 2008), and attitude towards eSports events (Barksdale and Darden, 1972). Participants will be segmented by applying a 2-dimensional K-means clustering analysis, and the difference in outcome variables between groups will be analyzed using ANOVA.