Zürcher Hochschule
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School of
Management and Law

eSports Switzerland 2021

A study by the Institute of Marketing Management under the direction of Marcel Hüttermann

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Foreword

Esports Switzerland 2021 is the second of our representative studies on eSports in Switzerland. We would like to thank Dr. Adrienne Suvada, Reto Heierli, Valerio Stallone, and Maximilian Leh for helping us conduct the study. Our sincere thanks also go to our sponsors, Sunrise UPC, Touring Club Switzerland, and the Baloise Group, for their trust and support. The Institute of Marketing Management wishes you an exciting read and new insights about the fascinating subject of eSports.

Management Summary

The eSports market has been growing for several years, with revenues likely to top USD 1 billion this year. This great potential has been recognized by a variety of companies investing in that market, and their interest has also caused eSports to become more professionalized. This is the second of our representative studies on eSports in Switzerland. Like the first, which was published in 2019, it investigates the status quo in e-sports in Switzerland and deals with issues that are relevant to market participants, such as the perceptions of companies in an eSports context, the professionalization of eSports in Switzerland, and the gaming, purchasing, and information-gathering behavior of eSports enthusiasts.

In general, the awareness level, popularity, and professional standing of eSports, as well as its acceptance as a sport by the Swiss, have increased considerably:

- 43.5 percent of Swiss residents know exactly what eSports is.
- 41 percent have stated that, in their opinion, eSports should be considered as a sport.
- 79.5 percent recognize that eSports in Switzerland is becoming more professional.
- 565,620 Swiss residents are eAthletes (+ 248,530 people compared to 2019).
- More than 110,000 succeed in gaining money with esports (+ 67,500 people compared to 2019).
- The growth of the eSports phenomenon is sustainable and seems unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Esports is mainly played or watched on PCs and laptops. Having fun is given as the main reason for playing eSports and gaming. According to eSports enthusiasts, eSports and gaming mainly train players' reaction time. The most popular type of eSports in Switzerland are MOBA (multiplayer online battle arena) games.

49.1 percent of eSports enthusiasts stated that they regularly watch eSports games and tournaments, with the use of streaming platforms increasing significantly compared to 2019. 68.5 percent of respondents watch eSports via streaming platforms such as Twitch, YouTube, or similar providers, which means an increase of 36.3 percent; this is more than twice as much as back in 2019. 18.6 percent of eSports enthusiasts follow individual streamers. Companies are mainly perceived as being involved in streams or as sponsors of live events. Esports players and gamers spend almost CHF 523 a year on their passion, mainly on hardware, games, and fan merchandise.

In the future, it will be exciting to see how eSports will develop in Switzerland and what new products and services will be launched. 45.5 percent of all 16- to 29-year-olds are in favor of promoting eSports in clubs, and 32.1 percent of Swiss residents imagine that it will be possible in the long term to find paid work within the eSports industry.

1. The Global eSports Market

The eSports market has an ecosystem that not only includes the big players in the eSports market but also its consumers and fans, as well as the companies that, through their products, services, and strategic partnerships, contribute to the transformation of this ecosystem. Some of these stakeholders are active in several market segments, with fluid boundaries between the individual segments. On the fringes of this ecosystem are other organizations that interact with the eSports industry at different levels of intensity. These include government institutions, hardware suppliers, and event organizers.

Players in the eSports market generate income by participating in leagues and tournaments as well as performing professionally in competitions. The eSports market has five main areas that generate revenue streams for the stakeholders of the core ecosystem (Deloitte, 2020):

1. Sponsoring deals with eSports teams, leagues, or organizers, on the one hand, and strategic partners (investors/sponsors), on the other;
2. Advertisements, either on site at live events or during broadcasts of eSports competitions;
3. Income from media rights to broadcast eSports content;
4. Ticket sales at live events and proceeds from eSports merchandise; and
5. Fees paid by publishers both to independent eSports organizers for hosting events and to eSports teams for marketing rights.

A steady growth trend has been observed in eSports for several years. Esports is considered to be one of the most important pillars of the sports industry in terms of sales potential (PwC, 2020). Global sales in the eSports market are expected to break the USD 1 billion mark in 2021. Goldman Sachs is forecasting sales of almost USD 3 billion for 2022 (Goldman Sachs, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative short-term impact on the eSports market, among other things because no offline events can take place. According to forecasts, however, the pandemic will lead to a long-term increase in sales in the eSports market. In 2020, sales amounted to approximately USD 950 million (Newzoo, 2020). A continuous annual increase of 10 percent is forecast for the next few years, which is estimated to reach up to USD 1.5 billion in 2023 (Newzoo, 2020). Sponsorship income currently represents more than 50 percent of sales (Newzoo, 2020).

The eSports audience numbered almost 500 million people in 2020 (Newzoo, 2020) and is, therefore, already as large as the entire following of the popular and well-established US sport of baseball. Similarly, the number of followers is also forecast to grow by 10 percent per year. A worldwide eSports audience of almost 650 million people is expected for 2023 (Newzoo, 2020).

Depending on the country or continent, preferences in terms of specific games vary. In Europe, FIFA is the most popular game with a game frequency of 47 percent, while League of Legends ranks fifth with 32 percent (Globalwebindex, 2019). In the APAC countries (Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the People's Republic of China), League of Legends is the most popular game with 48 percent. This shows that markets must be viewed individually if marketing measures are to reach a broad, or even a specific, customer group.

Esports is recognized as an official sport in over 60 countries worldwide (BASPO, 2018). Alas, this is not (yet) the case in Switzerland. Awareness and acceptance of eSports are expected to increase once it becomes an Olympic discipline. This development is becoming more and more likely as the International Olympic Committee is opening up to the topic of eSports; recently, sports simulations were given an opportunity to become part of the Olympic Games in the foreseeable future (SportBusiness, 2019).

2. eSports in Business and in Research

Current research is primarily concerned with the effects and perception of eSports sponsoring (Elasri-Ejjaberi et al. 2020; Hüttermann et al. 2020; Rogers et al. 2020). In this context, researchers mainly distinguish between endemic and non-endemic sponsors (Cornwell, 2020). Endemic sponsors sell products used in eSports, such as gaming equipment, while non-endemic companies are not, at a first glance, associated with eSports. This includes banks, insurance companies, or automotive corporations trying to appeal to the large, passionate global fan base of eSports - a young and lucrative target group (Nielsen, 2019).

Although the eSports audience has potential, it is often difficult for sponsors to reach. One reason for this is that there is a trend for eSports fan base to disconnect from, for example, traditional media platforms such as cable television. Instead, content is consumed increasingly online via streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube Gaming (Nielsen, 2019). This development must be viewed critically, for sponsorship is the primary source of income in eSports and accounts for over 40 percent of total market income (Newzoo, 2019).

"Sponsors recognize the value of eSports consumers – as a way for mature and established companies to rejuvenate their brands."

In the past, sponsorship revenues were largely driven by the growing number of sports organizations diversifying into the eSports industry (Funk, Pizzo, & Baker, 2018). This includes prominent sports brands from around the world such as Pizza Roma, the Los Angeles Lakers, the New York Yankees, Paris Saint-Germain, the Philadelphia 76ers, and even the Swiss soccer club FC Basel (Hershey, 2020). These organizations have financial capital and established sponsoring partnerships with which they can generate income in the eSports market (Singer & Chi, 2019).

Sponsors are beginning to see opportunities for connecting with consumers of the youth- and technology-centric eSports industry. They include both endemic and non-endemic companies. Esports has been receiving an overwhelming surge of support from non-endemic companies – also from outside the technocentric video game industry. The growing list of non-endemic sponsors includes major global brands such as Adidas, Anheuser-Busch, BMW, Coca-Cola, JP Morgan Chase, John Deere, Michelin, and Nike (Hayward, 2019). These sponsors have recognized the value of eSports consumers - wealthy young adults passionate about competition-oriented video games (Nielsen, 2019) – as a way for mature and established companies to rejuvenate their brands (Aaker, 2003) by connecting to the young, technocentric eSports industry. On the other hand, eSports consumers demand authenticity (Pizzo, Jones, & Funk, 2019), which raises concerns about how non-endemic sponsors are perceived in the eSports context.

Esports inhabits an environment where consumers focus exclusively on gaming (Deloitte, 2019; Paradise, 2018). The audience is made up of some of the hardest-to-reach consumers, including those who, for example, eschew traditional linear television programming in favor of on-demand and streaming content (Singer & Chi, 2019). In addition, eSports consumers are highly critical of sponsors perceived to try to exploit them (Deloitte, 2018). However, sponsorship is the most important source of income for the eSports industry. And the continued growth of this sector depends on non-endemic sponsors continuing to work with sports and eSports organizations to promote their products and services (Nielsen, 2019). However, as more and more non-endemic sponsors seek to capitalize on eSports, there are growing concerns about the effectiveness of that type of sponsorship (Nielsen, 2019; Singer & Chi, 2019). Still, as Hüttermann et al. (2020) showed, non-endemic sponsors can benefit from sponsorship through improved attitudes, perceived goodwill, and higher product purchase intentions.

In recent years, eSports has also attracted increasing attention in the Swiss economy as well as among the Swiss research community. In 2017, only 5.3 percent of the companies surveyed stated that they support eSports. Esports was, therefore, considered to be one of the least sponsored sports in Switzerland (Labaronne, 2018). Yet of all sports, eSports was predicted to have the greatest growth in sponsorship participation (Labaronne, 2018).

The present study takes these developments into account as it takes up the topic of companies and sponsoring and examines the status quo in eSports in Switzerland, as well as the perception and potential of sponsors.

"The eSports audience is made up of some of the hardest-to-reach consumers, including those who, for example, eschew traditional linear television programming in favor of on-demand and streaming content."

3. Video Gaming Behavior

In Switzerland, 41.7 percent of the population engage in playing video games at least once a week - an increase of 7.8 percent compared to 2019.

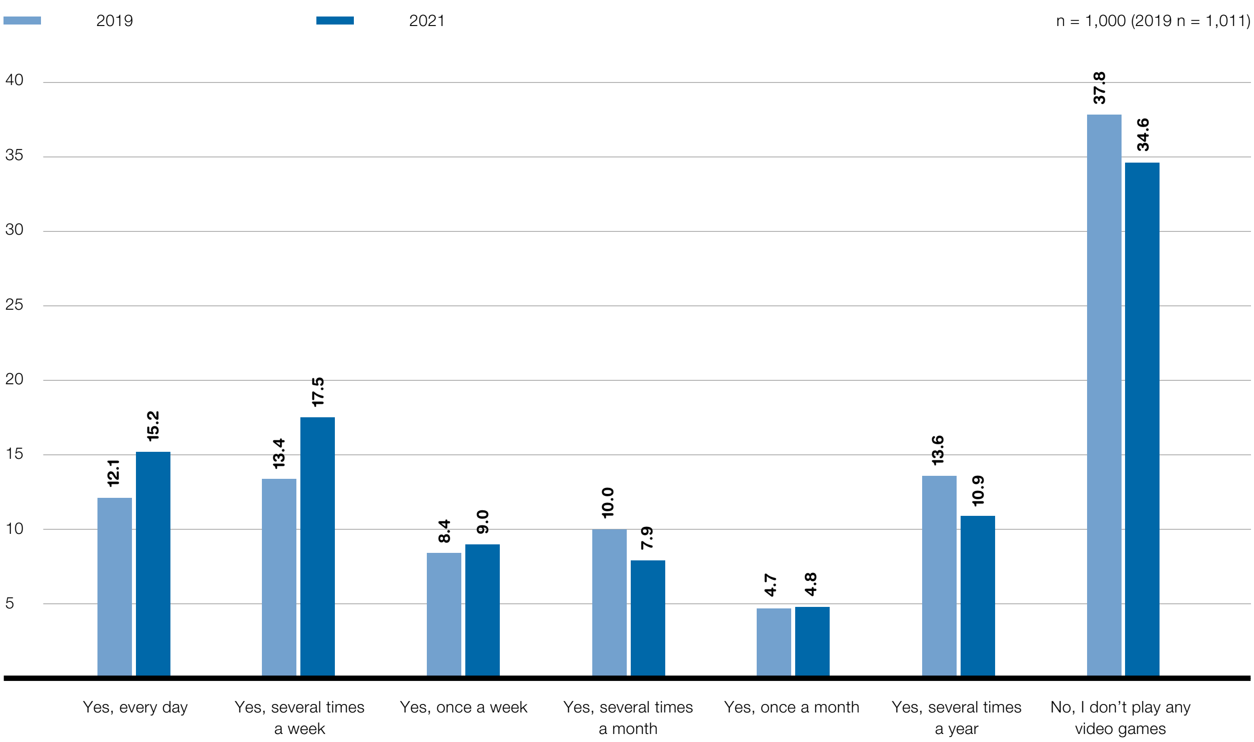
Back in 2019, 33.9 percent of Swiss residents stated that they played video games at least once a week. Since then, a 7.8 percent increase to 41.7 percent could be observed. Overall, a clear trend can be observed that the frequency with which video games are played is increasing. At the same time, the group that plays no video games at all has decreased by 3.2 percent. Extrapolated to the whole of Switzerland, almost 275,000 Swiss residents have taken up playing video games.

Notably, playing video games is not, as one might think, only something for the young generation. It turns out that the age group of 30- to 44-year-olds plays almost as regularly as the 16- to 29-year-olds. 50 percent of 30- to 44-year-olds in Switzerland play video games at least once a week, compared to 57.7 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds. It was also shown that video games are more popular with men than with women. 76.6 percent of men play video games while only 54.8 percent of women are familiar with the controller, keyboard, or joystick.

Figure 1: Do you play video games?

41.7 PERCENT OF THE SWISS POPULATION PLAY VIDEO GAMES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.

Frequency in %



The smartphone continues to be the most popular device on which to play video games.

51 percent of the Swiss population not only use their smartphones to make phone calls and chat, but also to play games at home and on the go (2019: 46.5 percent; +4.5 percent). PCs or laptops remain equally popular: 46.1 percent use these devices to play video games - an increase of 2.2 percent compared to 2019.

In third place in terms of popularity is the Playstation 4 with 36.7 percent. The Sony game console is also the device that has seen the most growth compared to 2019. While in 2019, 30.1 percent used the Playstation 4, in 2021 it will be 36.7 percent, an increase of 6.6 percent compared to 2019.

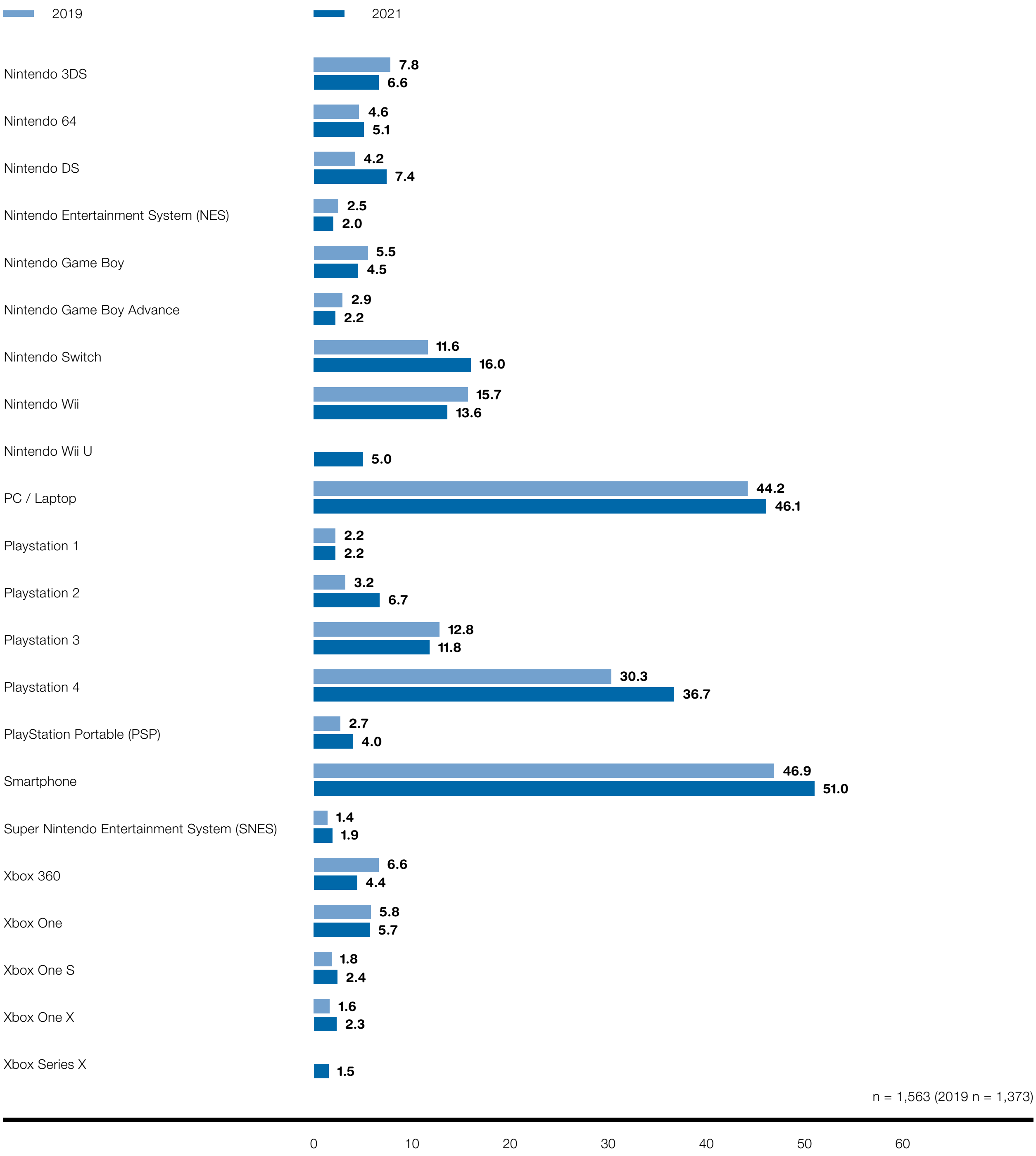
It will be interesting to see how these figures develop over the next few years. Most game developers increasingly rely on the smartphone, our constant companion. Sooner or later, this will have an impact on the figures. The question is how dominant the smartphone will actually become in the area of eSports and gaming, and what effect this will have on the use of other consoles and devices.

"Most game developers increasingly rely on the smartphone, our constant companion. It will be exciting to observe which devices end consumers will rely on in the future."

Figure 2: What device do you use to play video games?

MY FAVORITE DEVICE FOR PLAYING VIDEO GAMES IS MY SMARTPHONE.

Frequency in %



4. The Term "eSports"

In Switzerland, 43.5 percent of the population know exactly what eSports is.

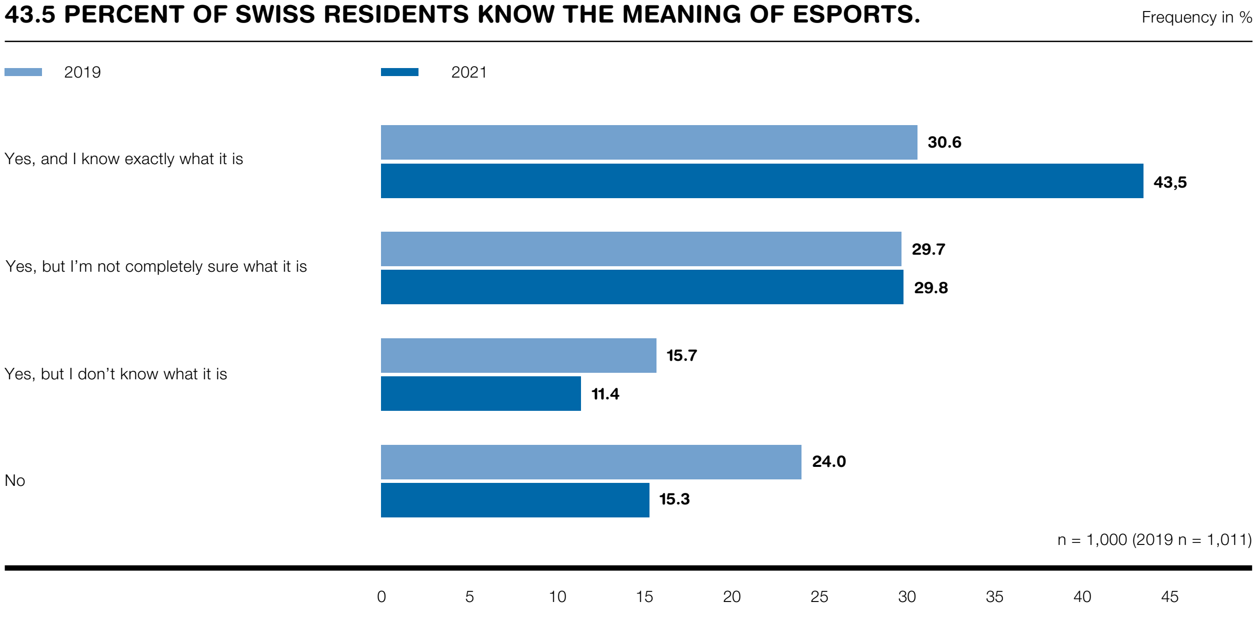
Compared to 2019, this constitutes a significant increase of 12.9 percent. Only 15.3 percent (compared to still 24 percent in 2019) have never heard of eSports.

The number of people who know the term but are either not entirely sure of its meaning (29.8 percent; 2019: 29.7 percent) or do not know what it means (11.4 percent; 2019: 15.7 percent) is also decreasing. These figures clearly show that the term eSports is becoming more and more established in Switzerland.

It is not surprising that the younger generation, with its affinity for digital solutions and technology, knows the meaning of the term eSports. 64.1 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds and 50.3 percent of 30- to 44-year-olds have a very clear understanding of the term. Interestingly, however, it is also becoming better known among the older age groups. For example, while 42.3 percent of people over the age of 60 still had no idea what it meant in 2019, this was only 29.1 percent in 2021.

Figure 3: Have you heard the term eSports?

43.5 PERCENT OF SWISS RESIDENTS KNOW THE MEANING OF ESPORTS.



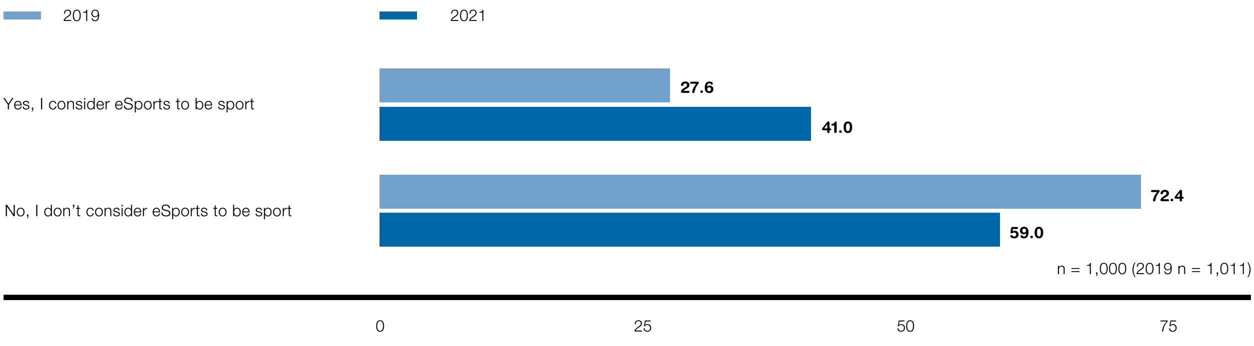
Among the Swiss population, eSports is increasingly accepted as a sport.

Whereas in 2019, 27.6 percent agreed with the statement that eSports is considered a sport, this was already 41 percent in 2021 - a considerable increase of 13.4 percent. Here, too, there are significant differences within the age and gender groups. More than half of 16- to 44-year-olds (16- to 29-year-olds = 50.9 percent (2019 = 34.5 percent); 30- to 44-year-olds = 50.6 percent (2019 = 33.3 percent)) recognize eSports as a sport. Here, too, there has been a significant increase compared to 2019. In contrast, 89.1 percent of people over the age of 60 do not consider eSports to be a sport.

In this regard, there is also a significant difference between men and women in Switzerland. More than half of the men (50.8 percent), but only one third of the women (31.6 percent), consider eSports a sport. Compared to 2019, both groups of people have a higher recognition of eSports as a sport. The results show that the younger generation, and men in particular, recognize eSports as a sport, which will generally become the norm for future generations.

Figure 4: Do you consider eSports to be a sport?

THE SWISS POPULATION INCREASINGLY RECOGNIZES ESPORTS AS SPORT. Frequency in %



"The results show that the younger generation, and men in particular, recognize eSports as a sport, which will generally become the norm for future generations."

In Switzerland, 6.6 percent of the population identify as eSports players or eAthletes, who in some cases even earn money with it (1.3 percent).

This may appear to be a small percentage, but if extrapolated, it means that 565,620 Swiss residents are eAthletes, and more than 110,000 people even earn money with it. In comparison: In 2019, 317,090 (+ 248,530 people) Swiss citizens identified themselves as eSports enthusiasts. An increase of 248,530 people compared to 2019. Around 42,500 people stated that they earned money with eSports in 2019. An increase of 67,500 people compared to 2019.

Another 6.3 percent of the Swiss population state that they watch eSports without even playing themselves. Here, the number increased by 0.8 percent from 2019 to 2021, and this phenomenon is likely to continue. "Fortnite" was the game that was watched rather than played much more often in 2019; this has been replaced by "Among us", a game that has triggered a real hype in the last few months. As in 2019, games are generally watched more frequently than they are played. "FIFA" is the only game in Switzerland that is played more than it is watched. Chapter 7 deals with the question of what channels and what formats are used to consume eSports.

Figure 5: Consider the following statements and choose the one that most applies to you.

MORE THAN 500,000 SWISS RESIDENTS CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE ESPORTS PLAYERS.

Frequency in %

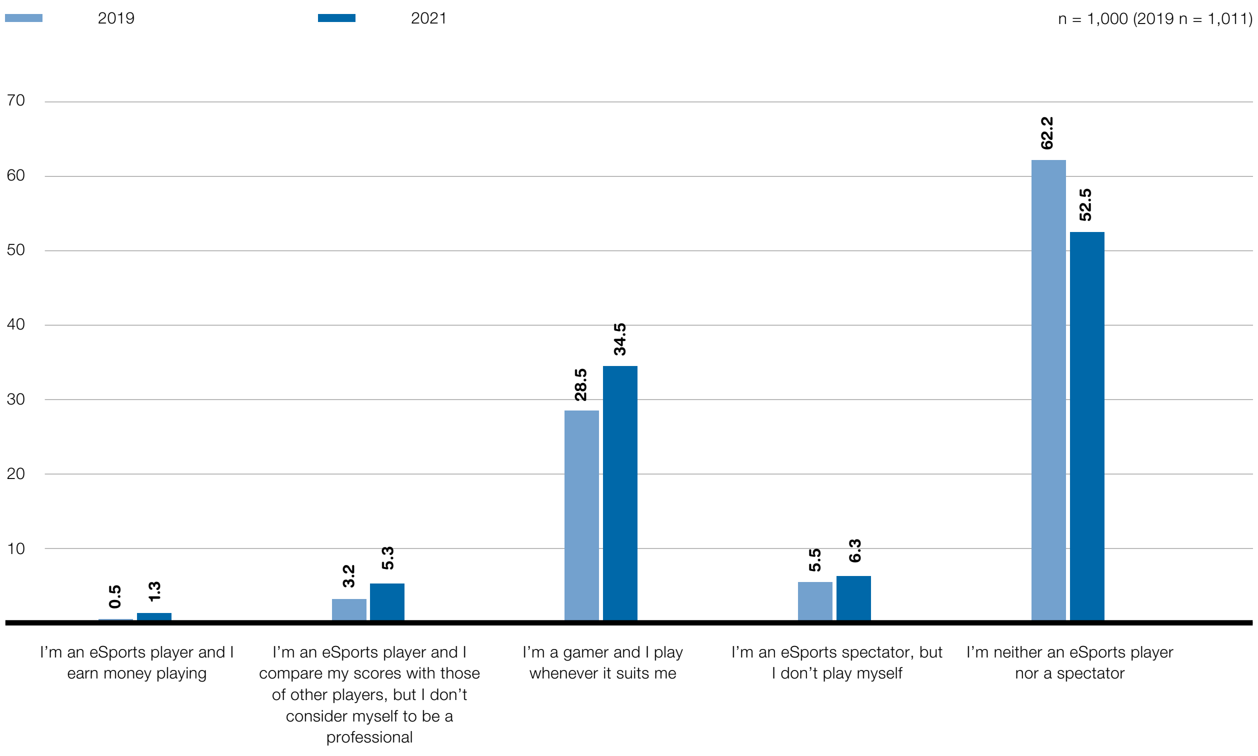
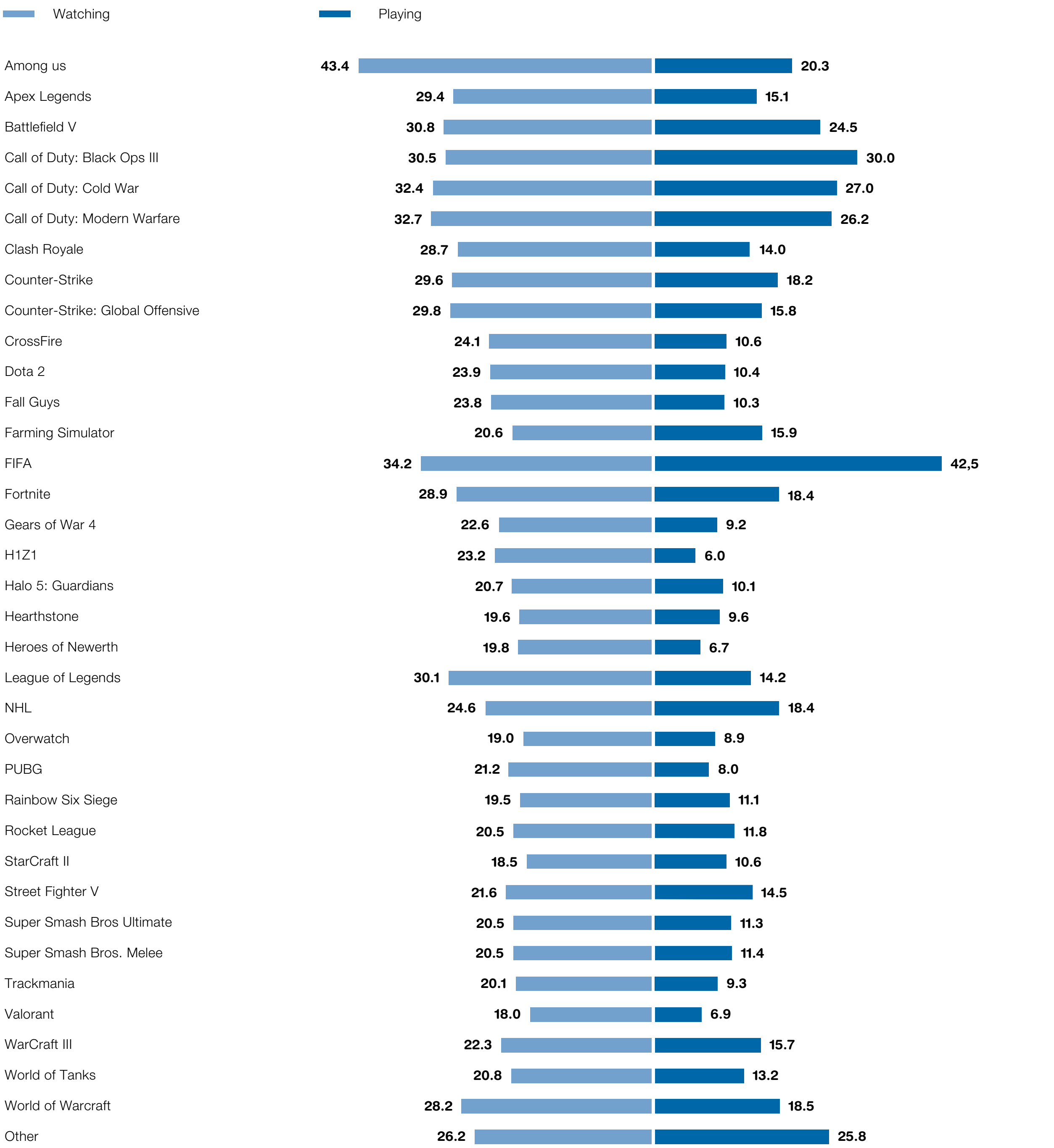


Figure 6: What games to you play / watch?

“AMONG US” IS THE MOST WATCHED GAME IN SWITZERLAND, WHILE “FIFA” IS THE MOST PLAYED GAME.

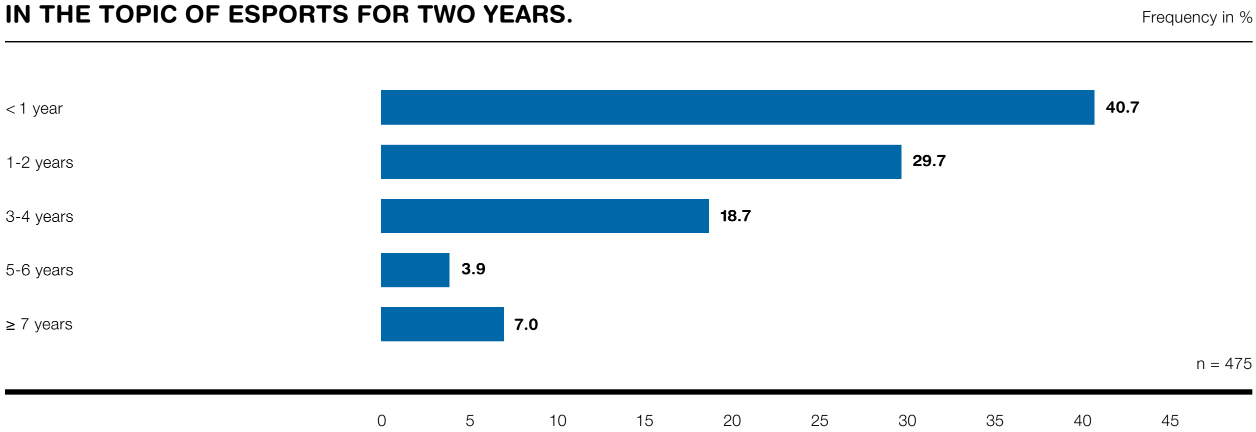
Frequency in %



n = 3,636 / 2,209

Figure 7: How long have you been actively involved in eSports?

70.4 PERCENT OF THE ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE TOPIC OF ESPORTS FOR TWO YEARS.



70.4 percent of the eSports enthusiasts have actively pursued eSports for two years.

Esports as a topic has grown considerably in importance over the last two years. This is shown by respondents' answers to the question of how long they have been actively pursuing the topic of eSports. 40.7 percent indicated that they have been following events around eSports for less than a year, 29.7 percent for one to two years. It should be noted that especially the group of over 45-year-olds has engaged with the topic of eSports in the last two years. Mainly women became involved in eSports for the first time last year. 53.3 percent of the women surveyed stated that they had been actively following eSports events for less than a year - a global trend which, therefore, also applies in Switzerland.

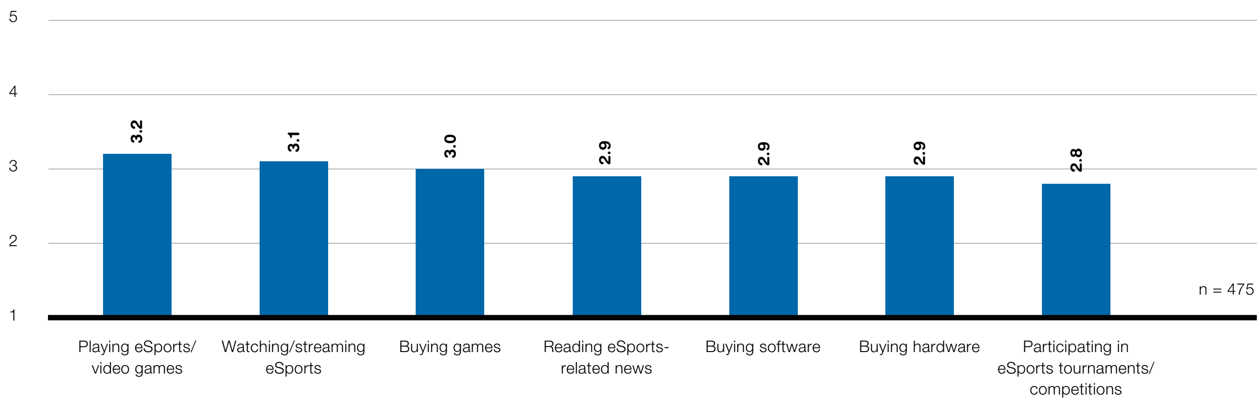
As the above data shows, eSports is male-dominated - not only in Switzerland. Female eSports players are catching up, however, and have been becoming increasingly active in the scene.

"53.3 percent of the women surveyed stated that they had been actively following eSports events for less than a year. The primarily male-dominated scene is therefore likely to become more and more heterogeneous."

Figure 8: How has your involvement in eSports changed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

GROWTH IN ESPORTS IS SUSTAINABLE AND OCCURS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Mean values

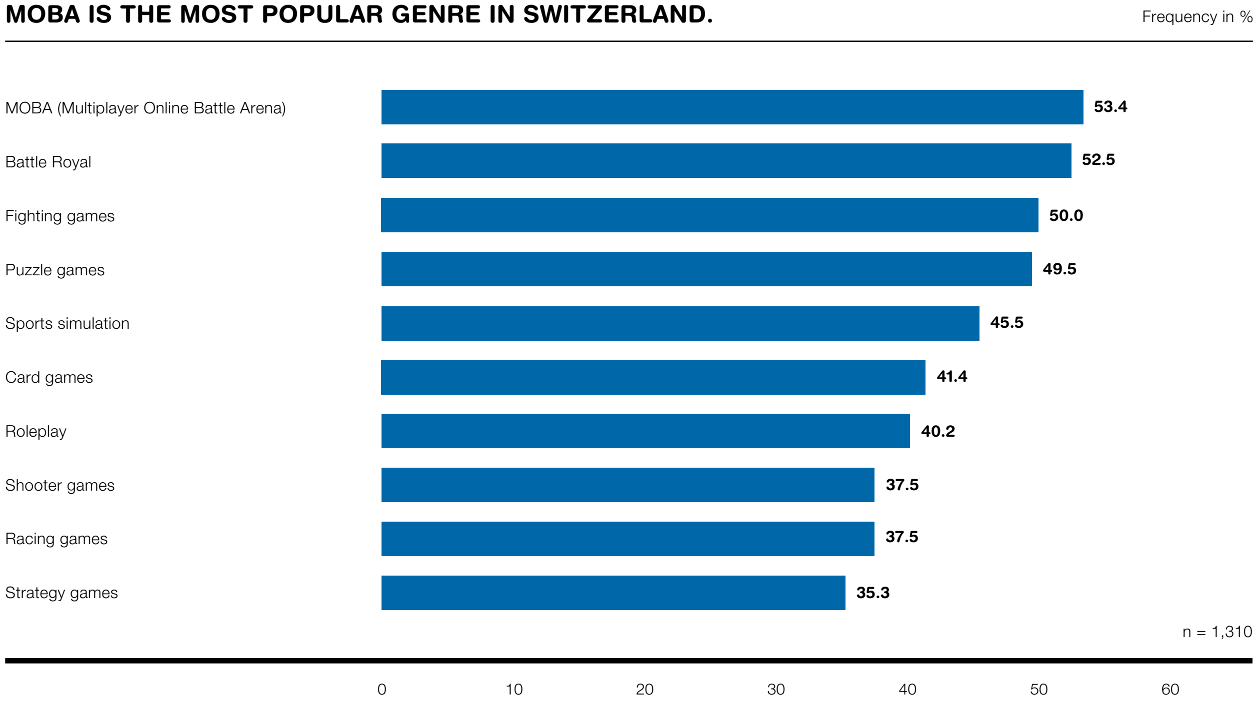


The growth of the eSports phenomenon is sustainable and seems unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the point of view of the Swiss residents surveyed, the pandemic and the impact it has had on their lives, such as social distancing, have hardly influenced eSports consumption, and this across all age groups. On a scale of 1 - 5, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they have consumed more (= 5) or less eSports (= 1) since the outbreak of COVID-19. Their answers show that the Swiss population has played and watched marginally more games on TV or on streaming platforms. Software and hardware have been bought marginally less, however. This can be seen as a sign that eSports is growing regardless of COVID-19. Numerous studies have shown that COVID-19 is making eSports even more popular (e.g., Deloitte, 2020). This cannot be fully confirmed for Switzerland, however. Rather, the results point to sustainable growth in eSports in Switzerland.

Figure 9: What genres interest you?

MOBA IS THE MOST POPULAR GENRE IN SWITZERLAND.



The MOBA genre is the most popular in Switzerland.

Even if the sports simulation game “FIFA” is the most popular game played in Switzerland, MOBA games are generally the most popular (53.4 percent). These are games in which a minimum of two teams compete against each other on an arena-like playing field (map). The most successful MOBA games, which are known all over the world, are games like “DOTA 2” (Defense of the Ancients) and “League of Legends” (LoL). Right behind the MOBA games on the popularity scale is the “Battle Royal” genre (52.5 percent). "Fortnite", in particular, has made the genre even more popular in the past two or three years.

5. Professionalization of eSports

79.5 percent of the eSports enthusiasts acknowledge the growing professionalization of eSports.

In particular, 86.9 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds see a positive development. This has mainly to do with professionally run events (offline and online), the steadily growing prize money at eSports tournaments, and the growing number of viewers in streams or live events. It should be noted in this context that the eSports enthusiasts are less aware of a higher TV presence of eSports content, a growing number of sponsors, or more news about eSports in the media. These points especially could have a strong effect on the further growth of eSports in Switzerland. It can be stated, however, that despite a growing interest in the topic of eSports, TV stations and potential stakeholder companies (as sponsors) find it difficult to position themselves in the context of eSports, even though eSports offers great opportunities for companies to differentiate themselves from competitors. Especially 16- to 29-year-olds consume television, for example, very differently than 10 years ago. Sponsors also find it difficult to address this young and tech-savvy target group. Esports provides opportunities to address this group of people, but neither TV stations nor potential sponsors are responding. There is a real risk of squandering this opportunity. It will be interesting to see how this situation will develop, which companies will exploit this potential, and which will let it slip away.

Figure 10: Do you think that eSports has become more professional in the last few years?

79.5 PERCENT OF THE ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS ARE AWARE OF A TREND TOWARDS PROFESSIONALIZATION IN ESPORTS.

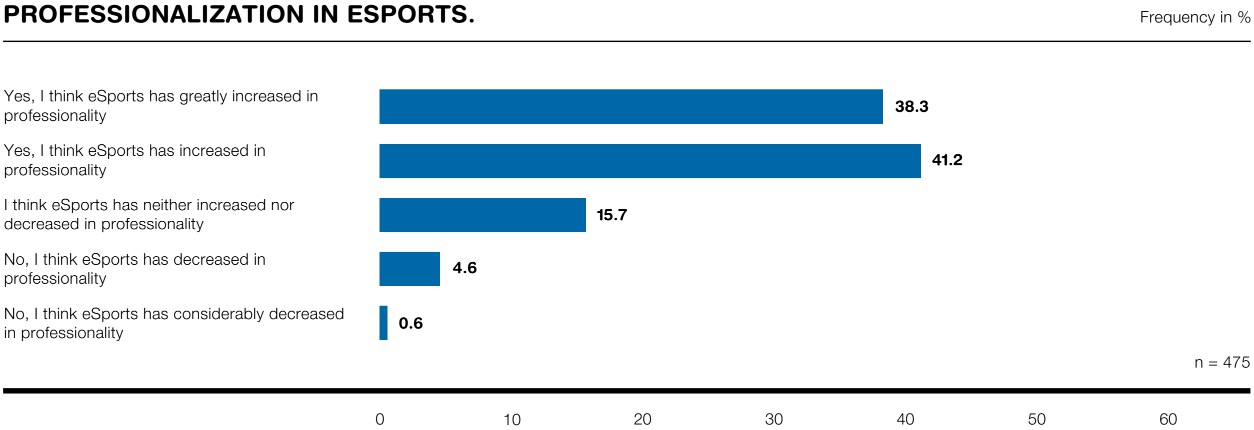


Figure 11: In what way do you think professionality presents itself?

PROFESSIONALIZATION PRESENTS ITSELF MOST CLEARLY IN EVENTS, TOURNAMENTS, AND THE AUDIENCE.

Frequency in %

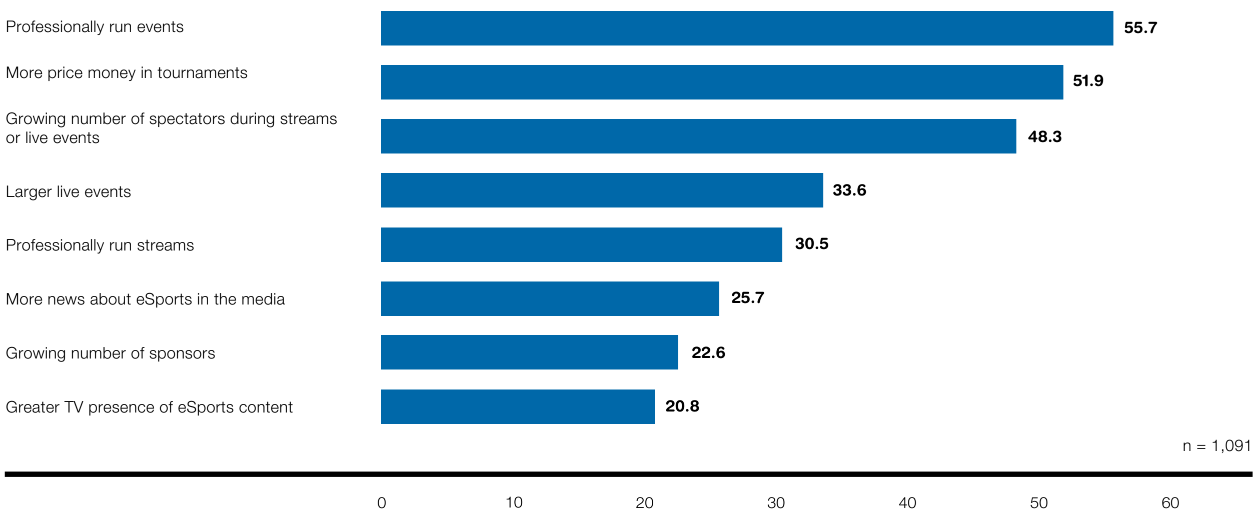
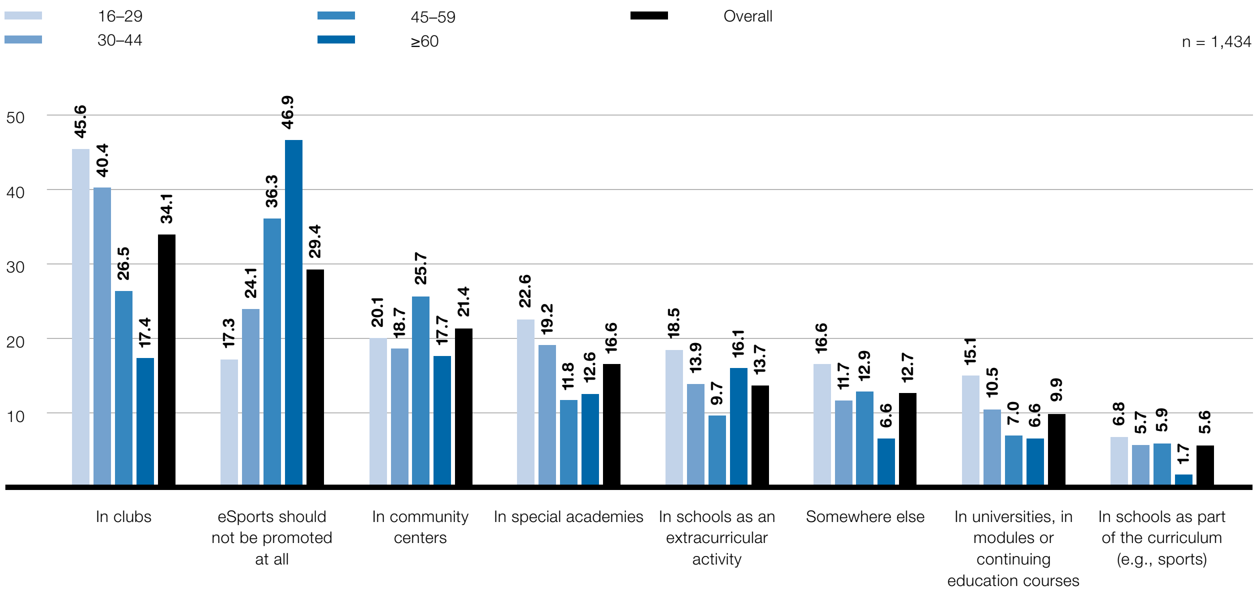


Figure 12: Where, in your opinion, should eSports be promoted?

45.6 PERCENT OF ALL 16- TO 29-YEAR-OLDS WOULD LIKE ESPORTS TO BE PROMOTED IN CLUBS.

Frequency in %



In Switzerland, 45.6 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds would like eSports to be promoted in clubs.

Even if clubs have a long tradition, it is becoming more and more difficult for traditional sports clubs to attract young talent. It is, therefore, surprising that it is precisely the group of 16- to 29-year-olds that is looking for a club in which to pursue eSports and receive active support. On the other hand, eSports has been quite successful in building communities, especially in the digital world. Clubs might be a means to combine the digital and the analog worlds and develop offerings for people with an interest in eSports. The fact that this is relevant not only for young people but, according to their own statements, also for the group of 30- to 44-year-olds (40.4 percent) indicates great potential.

Furthermore, younger people see more of a need to promote eSports than the older generation. 46.9 percent of over-60-year-olds are of the opinion that eSports should not be promoted at all. Only 17.3 percent of the under-30-year-olds share this view.

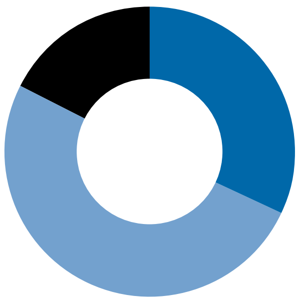
32.1 percent see a long-term possibility of being able to work in the eSports industry.

The Swiss residents who gave this answer see the main job opportunities to be for eAthletes (31.7 percent) or in marketing (31.4 percent). Other options include eSports trainer (19.7 percent) or management consultant (15.7 percent).

Figure 13: Do you think it is possible to work in the eSports industry long term?

32.1 PERCENT SEE LONG-TERM POSSIBILITIES TO WORK AND EARN A LIVING IN THE ESPORTS SECTOR.

Yes	32.1 %
Maybe	50.5 %
No	17.4 %



n = 1,000

It is not surprising that especially younger people (16- to 29-year-olds) see some potential in this field. 44.5 percent of this group say that they see the eSports industry as a long-term career opportunity. In particular, 41.6 percent of the male population see such an opportunity. This information could be very interesting for sponsors looking for new talent via eSports; Hüttermann et al. (2018) were able to show that sports sponsoring can be a useful employer branding tool.

Respondents who chose “maybe” when asked whether the eSports industry might be a long-term career opportunity, stated that only very few will make it (51 percent) or that the eSports industry does not yet have clear career paths (44.8 percent). Of those who see no long-term career opportunities in the industry, 59 percent stated that they considered eSports to be just hype.

6. Companies & Sponsors

The presence of companies is mainly perceived in streams or when they act as sponsors of live events.

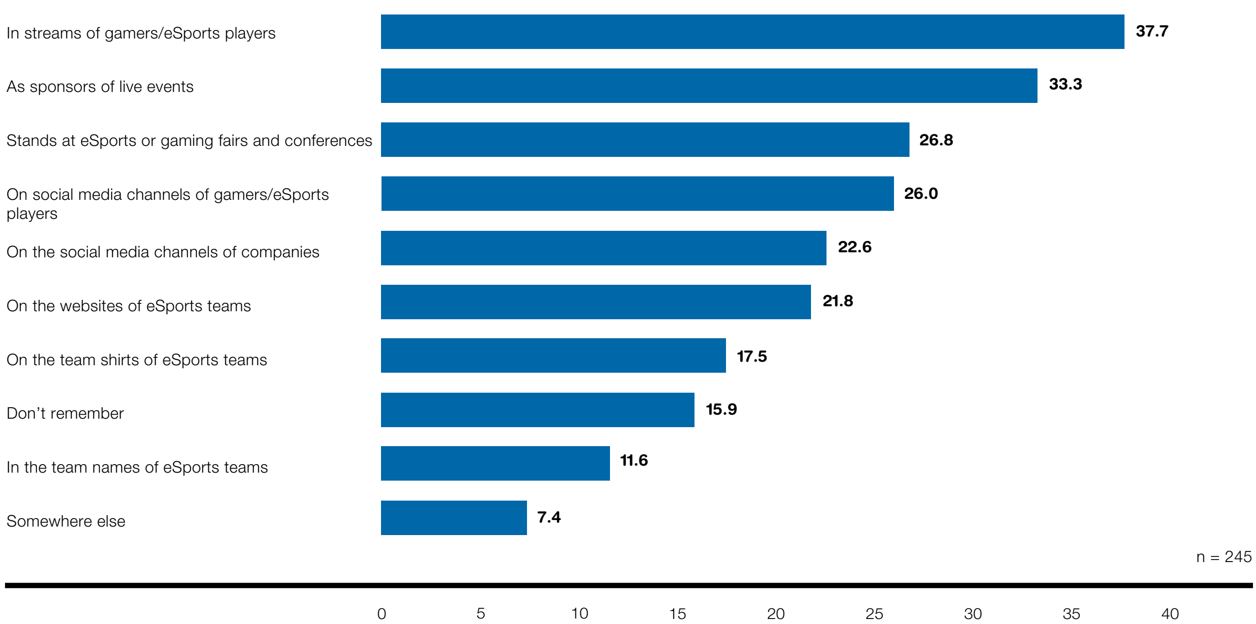
As already mentioned, eSports offers sponsors the opportunity to attract attention especially from a young, tech-savvy, and hard-to-reach target group (Singer & Chi, 2019). The eSports enthusiasts mainly notices companies in streams (37.7 percent) and at live events (33.3 percent). The target group of 16- to 29-year-olds sees companies getting involved in eSports more favorably than the older population groups. A third (33.4 percent) of 16- to 29-year-olds think it is at least good or very good for companies to be involved in eSports.

Companies that are currently hesitant about their involvement in eSports should take advantage of this positive feedback and make use of eSports sponsorship to benefit their corporate image. The findings of Hüttermann et al. (2020) support this. In their study, they showed that sponsorship by non-endemic sponsors can improve attitudes, perceived goodwill, and higher product purchase intentions.

Figure 14: Where have you encountered companies in the context of eSports?

THE PRESENCE OF COMPANIES IS MAINLY NOTICED IN STREAMS OR WHEN THEY ACT AS SPONSORS OF LIVE EVENTS

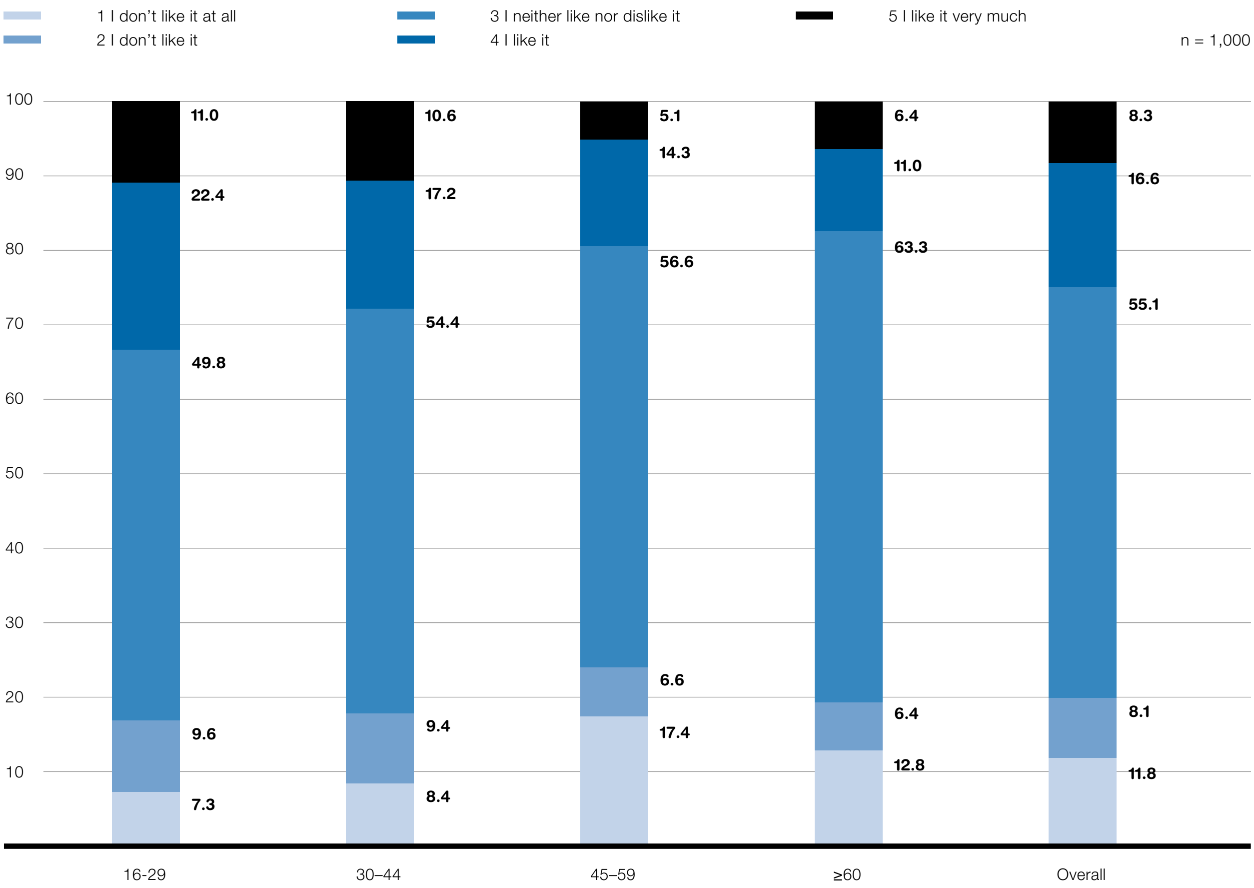
Frequency in %



n = 245

Figure 15: What is your attitude towards companies that participate in eSports?

ESPECIALLY 16- TO 29-YEAR-OLDS HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPONSORING. Frequency in %



"33.4 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds sees companies getting involved in eSports more favorably than the older population groups. Companies that are currently hesitant about their involvement in eSports should take advantage of this positive feedback."

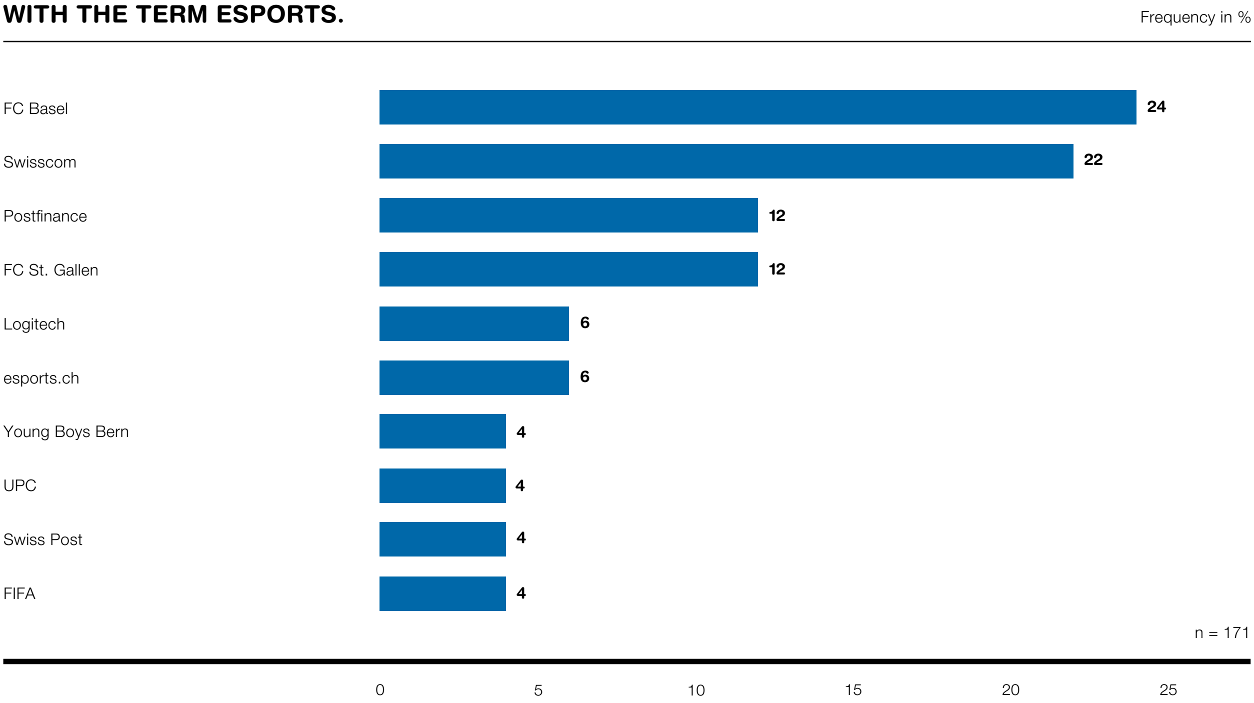
The soccer club FC Basel is the Swiss organization still most frequently associated with the term eSports.

The respondents were asked (unprompted) to name organizations and companies they associate with eSports. As in the 2019 study (Hüttermann, 2019), the answers show that FC Basel is still closely linked with the topic of eSports in Switzerland, closely followed this year by Swisscom.

In 2019, many people also named companies that are not involved in eSports. This has changed. In the 2021 survey, companies were more often correctly assigned to the term. This indicates great potential for companies to position themselves through eSports and to embed themselves in consumers' consciousness. Especially while the number of company mentions are still at a rather low level, there are still good opportunities for companies.

Figure 16: What Swiss companies do you know that are active in eSports?

FC BASEL CONTINUES TO BE THE SWISS ORGANIZATION MOST OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE TERM ESPORTS.



7. Behavior of eSports Enthusiasts

The following provides information about the consumption and information-seeking behavior as well as the gaming behavior of eSports enthusiasts.

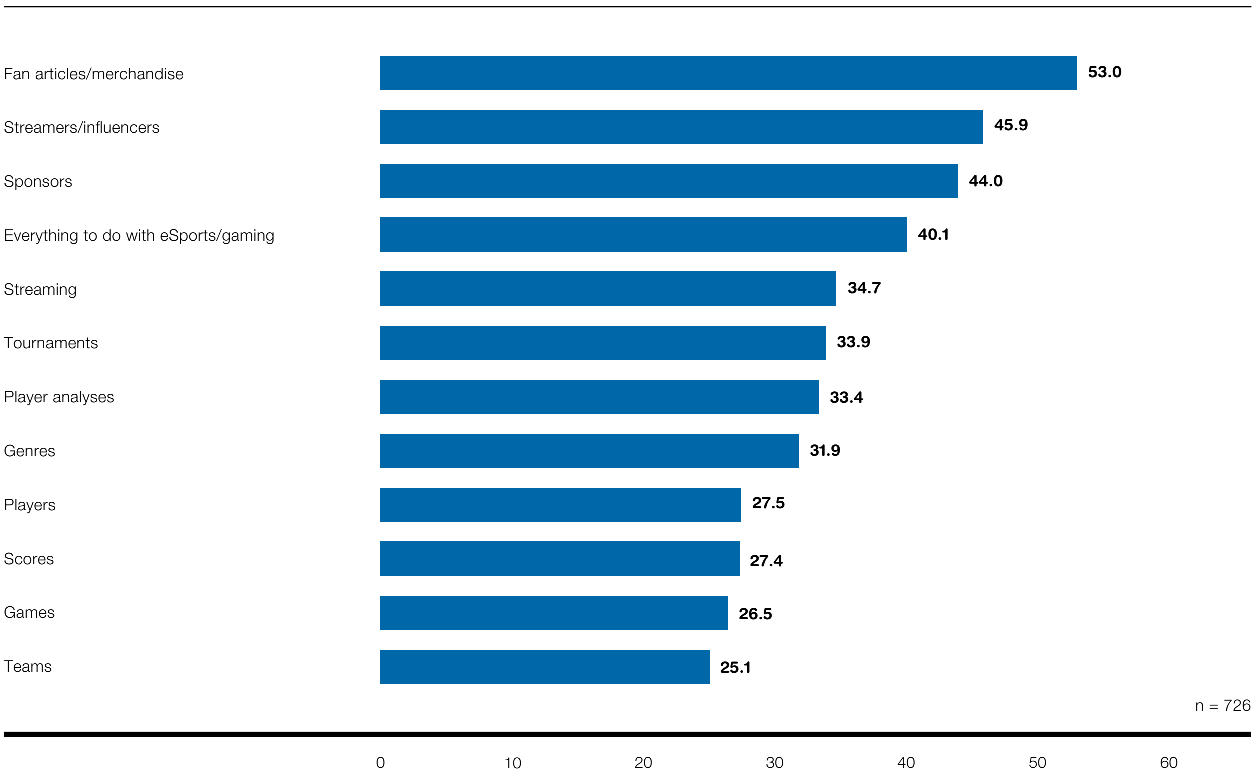
7.1 CONSUMPTION AND INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Esports enthusiasts most often search for information about fan articles, so-called merchandising.

53 percent state that they find out about fan articles on various information platforms (such as websites with eSports-relevant content, company websites, social media channels, etc.). Streamers and influencers (45.9 percent), sponsors (44 percent), and general information about eSports (40.1 percent) provide other relevant content for eSports enthusiasts. Details about teams, individual players or games, and results are less relevant. This may be a big difference to traditional sports, where these issues that take up a lot of space in media coverage. Interest in fan articles also represents great potential. The German soccer club Hertha BSC Berlin, for example, has a shirt from one of the club's eAthletes its online store. Shortly after the announcement that fans could buy shirts with the eAthlete's chosen name in flock print, the club's online store was overrun became temporarily unavailable (Bürgener, 2020). In addition - and (potential) sponsors should not underestimate this - a company’s visibility increases when fan articles with the sponsor's logo are available to the target group.

Figure 17: What type of content do you usually search for?

ESPORTS-ENTHUSIASTS MOST OFTEN SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ON FAN ARTICLES.

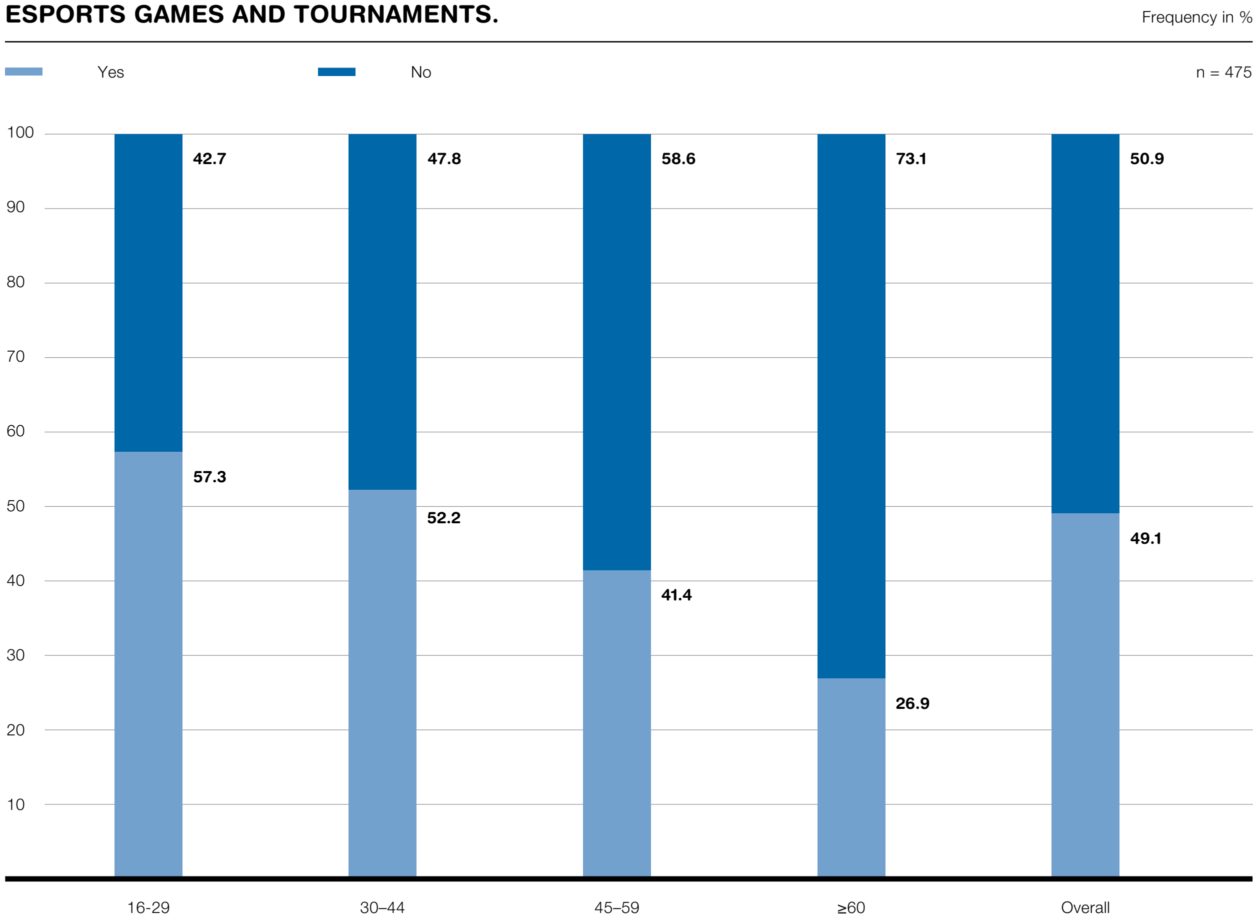


49.1 percent of eSports enthusiasts state that they regularly watch eSports games and tournaments.

The age groups of 16- to 29-year-olds (57.3 percent) and 30-to 44-year-olds (52.2 percent) are particularly keen on this. The devices used most often for watching eSports are PCs or laptops (39.6 percent), followed by smartphones (27.5 percent), and finally TV (23.5 percent). This can also be seen in the following findings.

Figure 18: Do you watch eSports games/tournaments?

49.1 PERCENT OF ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS SAY THEY REGULARLY WATCH ESPORTS GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS.



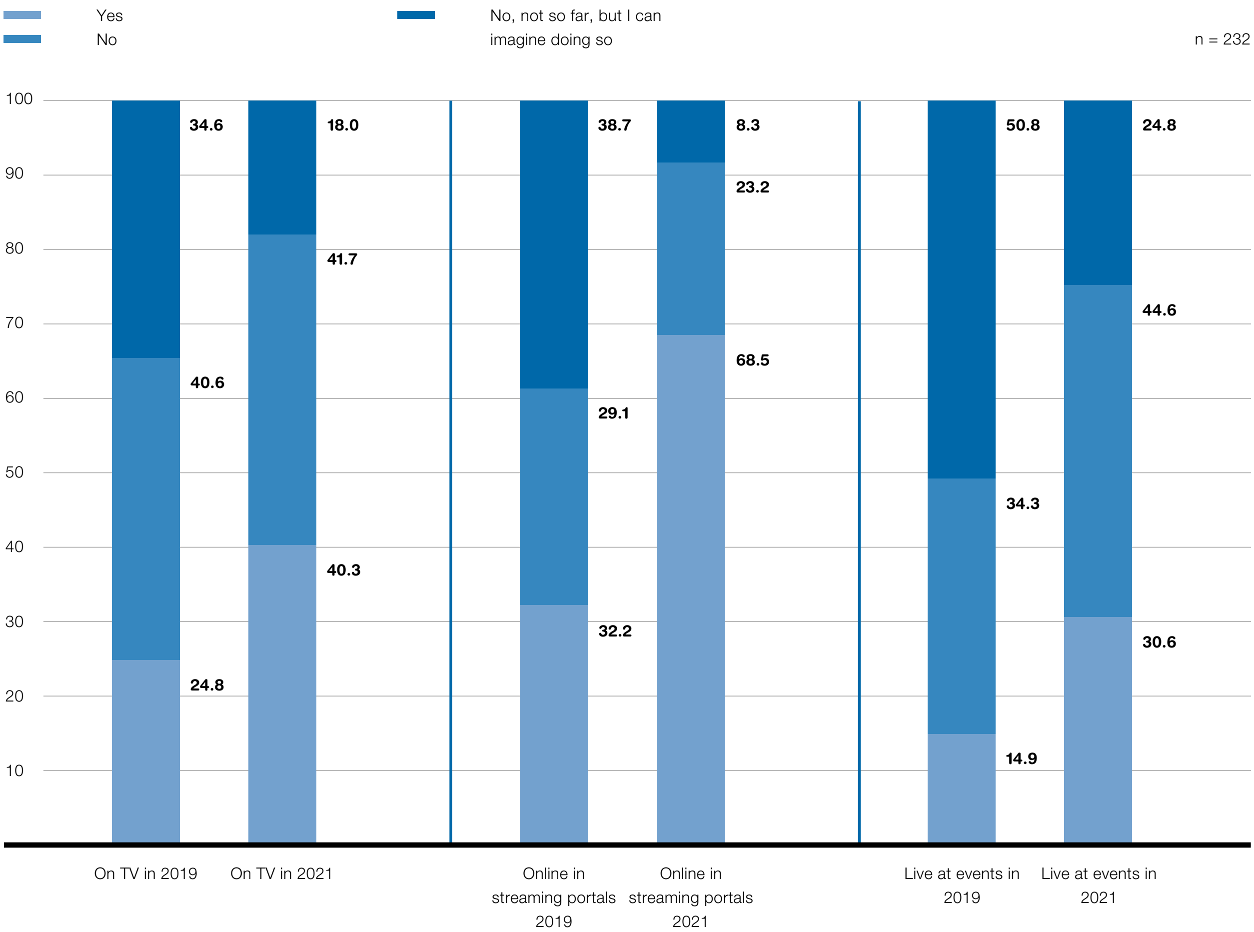
Streaming platforms have increased significantly in popularity since 2019.

When the respondents were asked what platforms they use to watch eSports games, streaming platforms were found to be the clear winners, and their prevalence has increased significantly compared to 2019. While in 2019, 32.2 percent of respondents stated that they watched eSports on a streaming platform like Twitch, YouTube or similar providers, 68.5 percent did so in 2021 – an increase of 36.3 percent and, therefore, more than twice as many people compared to 2019. However, other platforms such as televised or live events are also growing in importance: Classic television increased from 24.8 to 40 percent and live events from 14.9 to 31 percent. It should also be emphasized that while many of the respondents have never consumed eSports content via these channels, they can certainly imagine this. The group that claims that they will probably not want to see any content on these channels in the future is getting smaller and smaller.

Figure 19: Do you follow eSports/games using the following?

STREAMING-PLATTFORMEN LEGEN GEGENÜBER 2019 DEUTLICH ZU.

Frequency in %



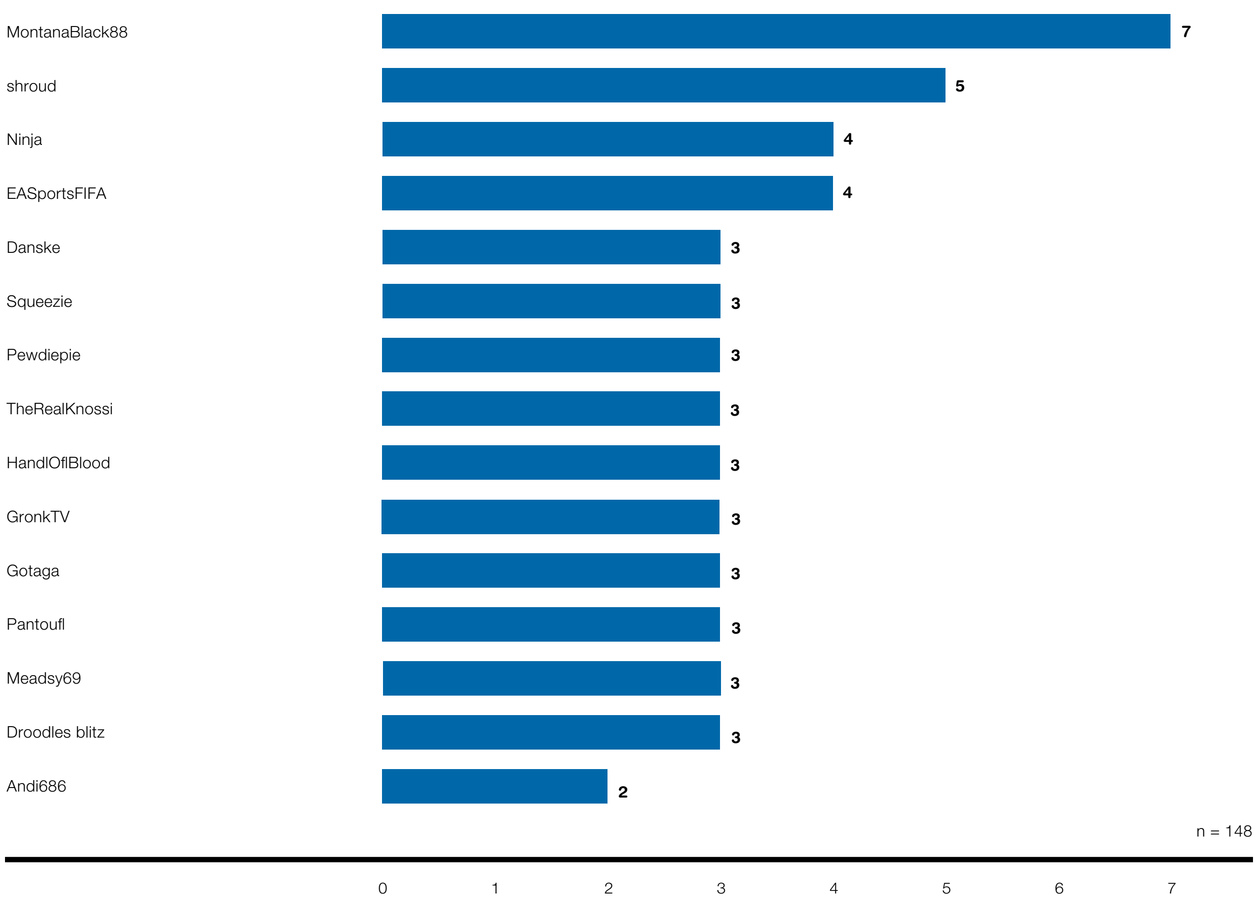
18.6 percent of eSports enthusiasts follow certain streamers.

As already shown above, streamed eSports content is enjoying growing popularity. Almost every fifth person in this group follows certain streamers to find out about different content. This clearly shows that the younger the viewer, the more relevant the streamers become. While 32.1 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds and 22.5 percent of 30- to 44-year-olds agree, this percentage drops significantly for people over 45. Only 4.3 percent of 45- to 59-year-olds state that they follow certain streamers; in the over-60 age group, this is actually zero percent. The most relevant streamer for the Swiss population is “MontanaBlack88” (3.4 million followers on Twitch.tv), followed by “shroud” (8.9 million followers on Twitch.tv). "Andi686" is the only Swiss streamer to make it into the ranking. She has been streaming for more than six years and has 68,685 followers on Twich.tv. It should be noted that this question was unprompted.

Figure 20: What streamers do you follow?

“MONTANABLACK88” IS THE MOST RELEVANT STREAMER FOR THE SWISS POPULATION.

Number of responses ≥ 2, unsupported



7.2 GAMING BEHAVIOR

Esports and gaming mainly take place via a PC or laptop.

As in 2019, most Swiss residents used their PCs or laptops to play eSports in 2021 (61.5 percent). Compared to 2019, this category increased by almost 10 percent (2019 = 51.8 percent). The smartphone (+ 5 percent), the Playstation (+ 3.4 percent), and the Xbox (+ 1 percent) were also used more frequently than in 2019, while the Nintendo Wii has become less important (-3.1 percent).

In this context, the comparison between male and female respondents is relevant. While the smartphone ranks third for both sexes, considerably more women than men play using a smartphone (43.5 percent compared to 27.9 percent). With regard to the differences between the age groups, it can be stated that the over-60-year-olds mostly play using a PC or laptop (82.8 percent). In the 45 to 59 age group, the Playstation is the first choice (55.6 percent), followed by the PC or laptop (51.9 percent).

Figure 21: What device do you use for eSports/gaming?

ESPORTS PLAYERS/GAMERS MAINLY USE A PC OR LAPTOP TO PLAY.

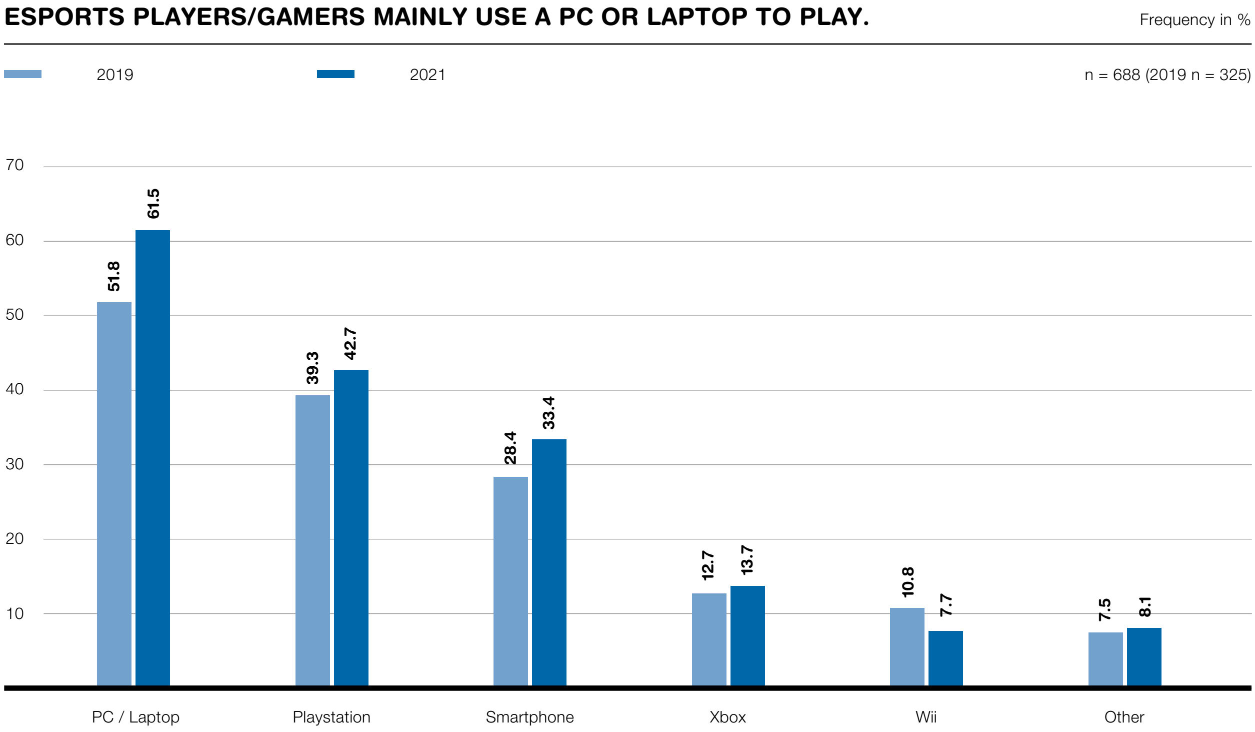
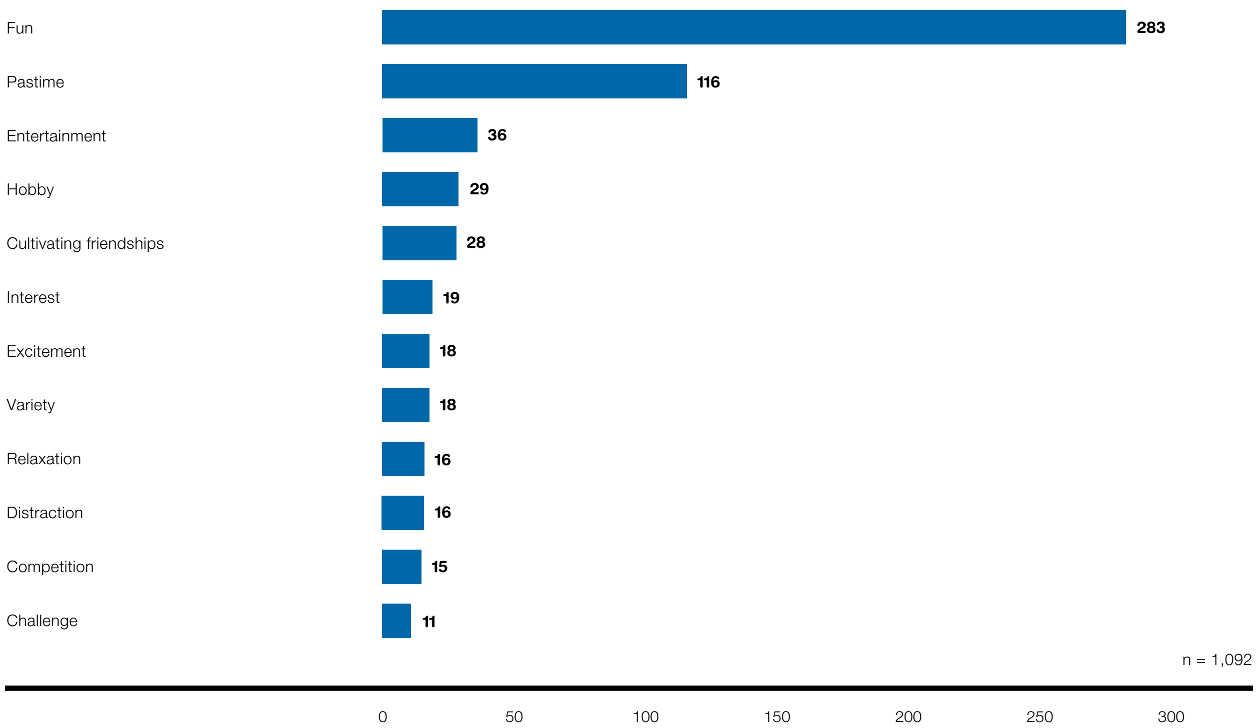


Figure 22: I play eSports/games for the following reasons:

FUN IS THE MAIN REASON FOR PLAYING ESPORTS/GAMING.

Number of responses ≥ 11, unsupported



"Esports and gaming are, contrary to what the general public often assumes or what the media boldly portrays, not an activity that is done alone. On the contrary, friendships are sometimes cultivated digitally. Thus, in times of COVID-19, eSports offers a good opportunity to meet virtually when physical meetings are not allowed."

Having fun is the main reason for engaging in eSports and gaming, and it mainly trains players' reaction time

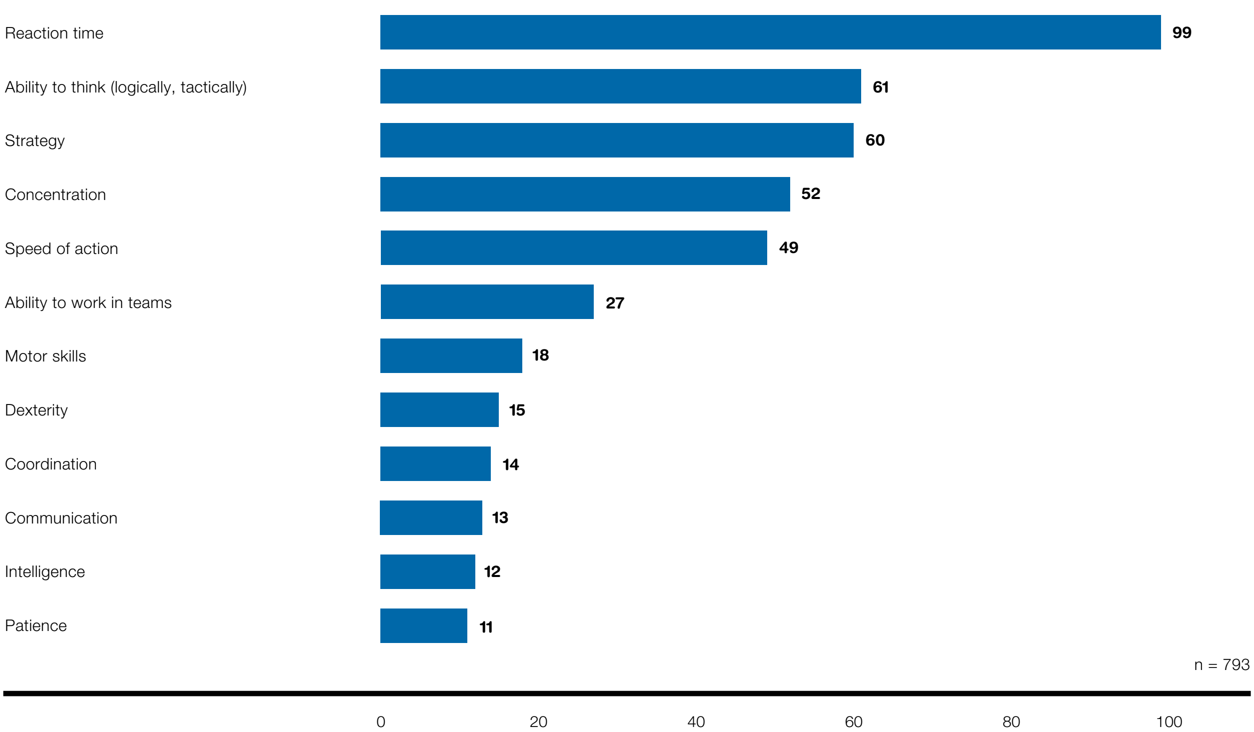
This is the statement of the eSports enthusiasts, who answered both unsupported. Fun, followed by leisure, are by far the top reasons why eSports is played at all. Maintaining friendships was also given as a reason (5th place). This clearly shows that eSports and gaming are not lonely activities, but that online friendships are occasionally cultivated there. In times of COVID-19, eSports therefore offers a good opportunity to meet virtually when physical meetings are not allowed.

The respondents were also asked about the skills that eSports and gaming can promote. Of course, this varies from game to game. In the view of eAthletes, however, reaction time is the most important skill developed by playing eSports. Other skills include thinking skills, strategy, and the ability to concentrate and act quickly.

Figure 23: eSports/gaming promotes the following skills

THE SKILL PROMOTED MOST BY ESPORTS AND GAMING IS REACTION TIME.

Number of responses ≥ 11, unsupported



n = 793

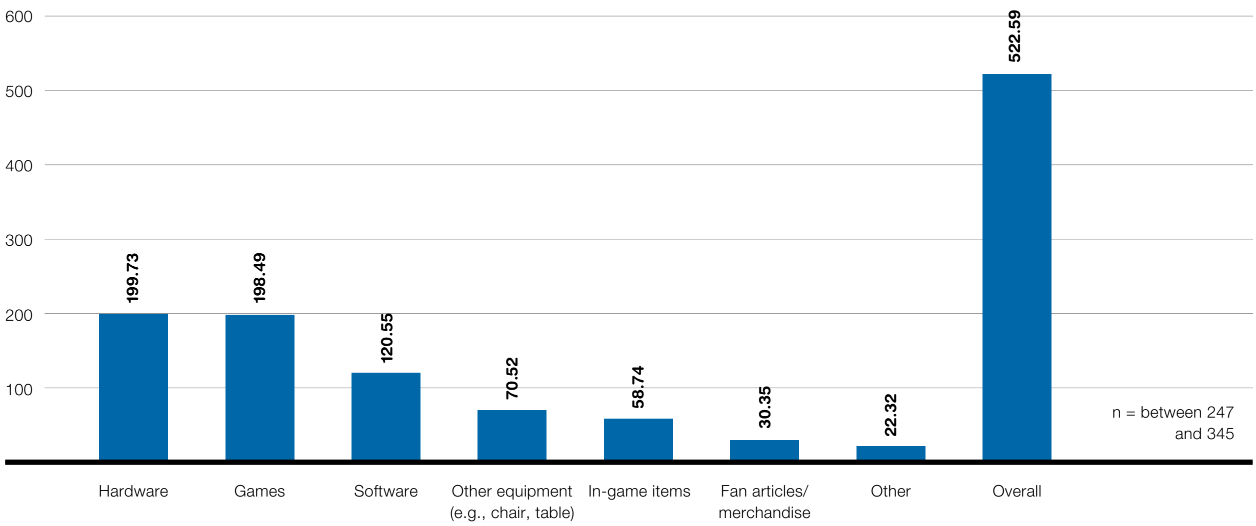
Esports players and gamers spend more than CHF 500 p.a. for their passion.

adding up the individual segments across all individuals, this results in a total amount of chf 700 per person. this appears realistic, especially when the segments are viewed separately. around chf 200 are spent on hardware each year. by comparison, the current playstation 5 costs around chf 600 in switzerland. realistically, players buy a new console every third year. if a player also buys three to five games per year, his or her total expenditure amounts to roughly chf 200.

in this context, the segment of fan articles / merchandising again stands out. here, too, around chf 30 are spent per year. the combination of content that esports enthusiasts inquire about on different channels (53 percent) and the expenditure of chf 30 per year indicate a high sales potential in this segment.

Figure 24: How much do you spend a year on the following in the context of eSports-/gaming?

ESPORTS PLAYERS AND GAMERS SPEND MORE THAN CHF 500 P.A. FOR THEIR PASSION. in CHF



8. Outlook

It will be exciting to see how eSports continue to develop in Switzerland. In any case, there are several areas where action is recommended. There are global trends in eSports, such as the continued growth in the smartphones sector, which game developers increasingly rely on. This growth may intensify with the arrival of 5G. Another trend is the betting market in eSports. Still a niche market today and viewed with suspicion by many, eSports betting could give the entire eSports ecosystem another significant boost.

In addition to global issues, there are also opportunities to utilize the Swiss potential. In Switzerland, 45.5 percent of 16- to 29-year-olds would like eSports to be promoted in clubs. Clubs, an institution that has become somewhat outdated, could experience a revival - especially if the digital and analog world can be linked.

The question also arises as to how Swiss companies will continue to interact with the topic of eSports. Big Swiss brands are already investing more, but the potential is still considerable. This study shows that, for example, TV programs can boost gaming segments in the retail trade or increase the sale of fan articles and market shares. Also, and especially for SMEs, eSports offer excellent opportunities to address a young, tech-savvy, and difficult-to-reach target group. Another question is whether the social and economic situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce sponsorship budgets in traditional sports and increase them in more pandemic-resistant eSports.

"The question also arises of how Swiss companies will deal with the topic of eSports in the future. Major Swiss brands are already investing more, but the potential remains high.Esports offers good opportunities to address a young, tech-savvy and hard-to-reach target group."

9. Study Design

OBJECTIVES AND RESPONDENTS

The aim of this study was to explore the status quo in eSports in Switzerland. It examined the views, attitudes, and behavior of Swiss residents with regard to eSports.

To achieve this aim, a representative online survey across Switzerland with approx. 1,000 Swiss residents was carried out. It represents the different genders, ages, and language regions of the respondents. The 2021 sample was composed as follows (see Table 1).

QUESTIONNAIRE

To guarantee the study's representative nature, respondents were first asked about their socio-demographic characteristics. Following this, and as a smooth transition into the subject matter, they had to answer questions about their behavior concerning video games and about the hardware they use. This was followed by more specific questions about "eSports" starting with the term eSports as such. Next came the topic of "professionalization" as well as questions about companies and sponsors. The next two sections focused on the behavior of eSports enthusiasts: The first section dealt with consumer behavior, the second with gaming behavior. The final section was meant to provide an outlook. The questionnaire included a total of 82 questions and took an average of 15 minutes to answer.

Table 1

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Age	
16 - 29	22%
30 - 44	32%
45 - 59	35%
≥ 60	11%
Language region	
German-speaking part of Switzerland	72%
French-speaking part of Switzerland	24%
Italian-speaking part of Switzerland	4%
Occupation	
Employed full-time	43.1%
Employed part-time	21.0%
Retiree	9.6%
Student (tertiary education)	6.8%
Other	6.5%
Self-employed:	5.5%
Unemployed	5.3%
Student (secondary-level education)	1.2%
Apprentice	1.0%
Qualification	
Apprenticeship, trade school	37.1%
Higher vocational education	16.0%
University	15.4%
University of applied sciences	14.0%
Baccalaureate or similar	10.9%
Primary school	6.3%
Other	0.2%
Without training / indefinite	0.1%
Salary in CHF	
No details	19.5%
Fewer than 40,000	20.2%
40,000 - 60,000	15.2%
60,001 - 90,000	24.2%
90,001 - 120,000	13.0%
120,001 - 180,000	6.6%
Over 180,000	1.4%

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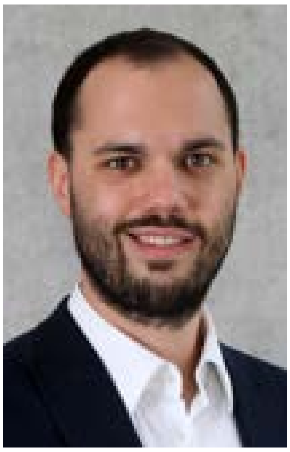
Contact



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Sunrise UPC is a leading provider of communication and entertainment in Switzerland. The company is a subsidiary of British-based Liberty Global (LG) and provides more than 1.1 million residential and business customers with fast and simple connectivity to the digital world – at home and on the go. UPC Switzerland serves around 3 million households with its powerful fibre optic cable network and offers Internet speed of 1 Gbit/s in its entire coverage area – whether in the city or the country. Together with other distribution partners, the company operates the sports channel MySports, which has successfully positioned itself as the "Home of eSports" in Switzerland in the three and a half years of its existence. UPC is also responsible for eSports.ch, the largest Swiss news site for competitive gaming.

The Baloise Group is more than a traditional insurance company. The focus of its business activities is on the changing security and service needs of society in the digital age. The 7,600 or so Baloise employees therefore focus on the needs of their customers. Optimal customer service as well as innovative products and services make Baloise the first choice for anyone who simply wants to feel safe. Based in Basel in the heart of Europe, the Baloise Group acts as a provider of prevention, pension, assistance, and insurance solutions. Its core markets are Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg. In Switzerland, the company also acts as a focused financial service provider with Baloise Bank SoBa, which combines insurance and banking. Baloise operates its innovative pension products business for private customers across Europe from its competence center in Luxembourg. The Bâloise Holding AG share is listed in the main segment of the SIX Swiss Exchange.

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Swiss Esports Federation
Schweizerischer Esports Verband
Fédération Suisse d'Esports
Federazione Svizzera di Esports

The Swiss Esports Federation (SESF) is a non-profit association made up of the most active Swiss esports organizations. Its goal is to promote and professionalize eSports and represent the community. The recognition of eSports as a sport is a priority. The Federation proudly stands for fair play and supports e-sports players - it has a zero tolerance anti-discrimination policy.

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