

## Study of Esports in Sports Epistemology Perspective

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**ABSTRACT:** Esports is a strong phenomenon, especially in the world of children, youth, and youth. This study aims to contribute new ideas, ideas, and perspectives in the debate on Esports discourse in the world of sports, as well as in order to raise the awareness of sports academics to study more deeply about esports from various points of view of sports science. The research method used is library research. Data collection techniques by conducting a review study of books, literature, notes, journals and reports. Judging from the three main elements in sports, physical, competition and institutional, Esports cannot be identified as a sport mainly because of the physical activity missing in Esports. Although the movements that look amazing cannot be ascribed to Esports players, they require some motor skills in playing the game including hand-eye coordination and speed of action with strategic and tactical understanding but that is still considered lacking and still far from being a sport. Besides that, there is an element of addiction and symptoms of lack of movement, if you play video games too often, it is also a consideration in determining Esports as a sport. It is necessary for the role of various stakeholders and appropriate government institutions to handle esports so that they can develop and contribute as expected.

**KEYWORDS:** esport, sports epistemology

### INTRODUCTION

At first glance, perhaps people will not be so interested in studying the meaning of sport. The turmoil in the sports body has not subsided to define itself from various perspectives of practitioners and experts in the sports space; a strong phenomenon has emerged in the world of sports with the presence of the discourse of Esports. Esports are the same as sports in general but are mediated by a set of computers such as the following opinion "Esports is a form of sport in which electronic systems facilitate the main aspects of sports; player and team input and output from eSports systems are mediated by human-computer interfaces (Reitman et al., 2020). Games that can be included in the eSports category are games that have a competitive element, where at the start all players are in the same state and have the same probability of winning the match" (Funk et al., 2018); (Holden et al., 2017). To succeed in eSports games, motor skills and abilities, especially fine motor skills of hands and fingers, as well as eye-hand coordination and local endurance, are crucial (Thiel & John, 2018).

Most people see E-Sport as a form of Sport involving the definition of Sport found in the Oxford English Dictionary, where the sport is defined as an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes with others for entertainment. While playing video games, there is a rise in basal blood pressure, and during competition and training video games, athletes exhibit signs that are perceived as a physical effort to follow the routine of an athlete or video game professional. These signs are correlated with the definition of sport because, during tournament activities, E-sport athletes also show the same physical signs as athletes in general (Kane & Spradley, 2017); (Marelič & Vukušić, 2019); (DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al., 2019). Another statement is seen from the skills possessed by E-Sport athletes, were to become an athlete, one must have a variety of skills and techniques to improve their competence in winning a match.

The development of eSports has also begun to get support from various international federations, which for the first time will be inaugurated as an official sport at the 2019 Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines, and the plan is also to become an official sport at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou. The growth and development of this eSports sport do not only occur in the Asian region, but throughout the world, even some media reports that eSports world championships such as the League of Legends World Championship and The International 2018 beat the number of spectators for sports in general such as the NBA, Baseball World Series, and Stanley Cup (Rosenthal, 2021).

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Recently, several studies in esports have focused on the psychological similarities and differences between esports and traditional sports (Himmelstein et al., 2017); (Polman et al., 2018). Esports athletes must be able to maintain a high level of attention and make important decisions under time pressure, underscoring the psychological similarities between esports and established sports (Bányai et al., 2019); (Pedraza-Ramirez et al., 2020). From a health perspective, it turns out that there are findings that esports players also experience health problems as stated by Hallie Zwibel in an article published by mediaindonesia.com on October 31, 2020, Zwibel and the team observed that esports athletes usually practice three to 10 hours per day to perfect their strategies and reflexes in the game. Previous research found that 56% of esports athletes experienced eye fatigue, 42% reported neck and back pain, 36% wrist pain, and 32% hand pain. In addition, 40% of them admitted to not doing any physical activity on any given day and only 2% of them admitted to having sought or requested medical treatment. Some of the disorders encountered, for example, metabolic dysregulation due to sitting too long (Zwibel et al., 2019).

Zwibel's opinion above is also almost the same as research conducted on East Java mobile legend athletes written by Sinatra & Rochmania (2022) saying that from the results of questionnaire data 77.8% of esports athletes experienced an increase in eye health disorders, 66.7% of E athletes Sports experienced health problems in the back, 77.8% had health problems in the wrist, 72.2% had health problems in the fingers, 77.8% had health problems in the neck and 27.8% had health problems in the feet. From the results of the questionnaire data, 94.4% of esports athletes did not consult the health problems they experienced with the medical side.

Sports are all systematic activities to encourage, foster, and develop physical, spiritual, and social potential. Sport is identical to physical activity, with the material object being the human motion (Cairney et al., 2019). When e-sports entered one of the sports that were contested in an exhibition at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia, a question arose among the public. Is esports a sport? This phenomenon invites pros and cons in the practical and academic spheres of sports in Indonesia. Some believe that it is part of an activity that can be categorized as a sport, but on the other hand, not a few reject it. In fact, the sports world and its academics are trapped in a physiological practical tactical discourse in studying Esports itself. Within the scope of academia, it seems unfair to look at a new phenomenon only from one point of view to define or categorize a phenomenon that is strongly symptomatic in the world of sports, something must be viewed holistically from various points of view in order to find the right slices to define it. a phenomenon.

It is also worth tracing the links between sports and other elements that are constantly evolving, given that sports as a scientific field also requires the study of other fields of science, we also agree and believe that it is impossible for something to emerge from nothing. The question that then arises is "Can a game activity be said to be a sport when viewed from the physiological practical tactical element, or more fundamentally, namely from the value of the sport contained in a game activity?" Too complicated indeed, considering how complex the knitting of civilizations that have been strung up to date. From the discussion of problems in the sports body above, both by definition of sport which is not as easy as we interpret sport as "only" as a competition activity related to achievement, as well as the emergence of a new phenomenon about the emergence of the Esport phenomenon that tries to match itself with sports activities, researchers try to inspire a return to mater Scientiarum or the "mother of science" to re-sharpen the blade of "motherhood" from the point of view of sports epistemology in order to find the right slices in studying Esports from the perspective of sports epistemology.

## METHOD

The type of research used is library research, which is collecting data or scientific papers related to the object of research or collecting library data. As library research, the data sources of this research are books that discuss the basic epistemology of science, followed by a study of the epistemology of sports and journals that discuss the epistemology of sports. The Esports discussion uses sources from several journals and books that discuss the definition of esports or the study of the esports phenomenon. The steps to be applied in the data analysis method are, respectively, 1) data reduction; 2) data classification; 3) data display; 4) interpret and interpret and draw conclusions.

## FINDING AND DISCUSS

Entering the analysis and discussion sub-chapter, the researcher will try to analyze the data collected through the sources that the researcher found, but then before discussing further we need to first equate the perception of the term or definition of sport used in this study. Sports in general can be interpreted as, "Sports are institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards" (Sakthi, 2018); (Lebed, 2022). "...institutionalized competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills, by individuals whose participation is motivated by the combination of the intrinsic

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satisfaction associated with the activity itself and the external rewards earned through participation” (Varathan, 2018); (Manickam, 2021). From this opinion, we can mean that sport is an organized physical activity and requires physical ability in conducting its competition or competition that is fought for with physical ability and skill.

The emergence of Esports creates new challenges for sports scientists in expressing an attitude of "accepting" or "rejecting" the existence of Esports in sports science. Talking about philosophy, supporters of Esports can enter sports, it is not easy to say that Esports is included in sports, it is necessary to expand the definition of the sport itself so that Esports can really enter into sports. The proponents of esports getting involved in sports eventually came up with the term esports as virtual sports and real sports or in-real-life sports, but they admit that the definitions of esports and in-real-life sports are different and do not have a strong enough wedge to make a difference. Esports are included in real sports; it is necessary to redefine esports and expand the definition of real sports so that the intersection of these two sciences can melt into one or Esports can become a sub-category in the real sports (McCutcheon et al., 2017).

The emergence of the idea of esports being included in sports is possible due to the daily habit of people freely using the language of sports for competitive activities and sportsmanship for individuals/groups who compete/compete without considering the philosophical aspects of competition occur. There is no problem with the community considering it as a sport, but if it is viewed in philosophy, especially in the clear ontology aspect, Esports does not qualify as a science that is included in the sports science (Willimczik, 2019); (Leis et al., 2021). This means that esports activities are not sports in the true sense of the body of independent science, which consists of body activities in formation and education.

### Esports is Not A Sport

Parry (2019) in his article entitled E-sports are Not Sports describes that esports is not a sport in terms of human, physical, skills, rule-governed, and Institutionalized elements. All sports are based on rules made by independent institutions or associations. Calls the sets of rules the 'source', and he points out that the source of sports and the source of computer games differ in important respects. In sports, the source is created by the rule-making powers of an organization having the power to lay down the rules of the game (Abanazir, 2019); (Parry, 2020). But in computer games, the source is the video game, which consists of the "code" (so the code developer is the rule-maker) and the audiovisual representations (controlled by the publisher, who is an incorporated body within a particular jurisdiction).

Sources of sports regulations are created by associations or institutions consisting of member associations per country or owners of sports teams that form legal entities with a view to establishing the sources of rules for games and tournaments. In esports, the game rules are regulated by game developers such as Bluehole the PUBG PC game developer, Tencent the PUBG mobile game developer, Valve, and the Dota game developer blizzard. Jim Parry calls this "executive ownership" or executive ownership, because sports can only be managed, regulated, and supervised (but never owned) by the company, the status of the sport cannot be compared with the status of esports determined by "executive ownership" (Parry, 2019).

Switching from sports and physical activity its core elements to eSports. Esports as "a form of sport in which the main aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; input from players and teams as well as output from eSports systems are mediated by human-computer interfaces (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017); (Baltezarević & Baltezarević, 2018); (Malik, 2019). eSports "describes video games competitively [while] the games themselves can vary in nature such as shooting (FPS), strategy (MOBA), sporting games (Hindin et al., 2020); (Jang & Byon, 2020). The OCA calls it a "relatively new form of sport". The Cambridge Dictionary (2017) defines esports as "the activity of playing computer games against others on the internet, often for money, and often watched by others using the internet (streaming), sometimes on special occasions". Neither of these three definitions mentions physical activity as any component of eSports.

In addition, the acceptance of esports as a sport because esports currently only has elements as an economic opportunity and the potential to become a sport is very small (Hallmann & Giel, 2018). In Ukraine, esports were developed on a large scale but only prioritized the commercial side with business benefits (Lokhman et al., 2018). Quoted from coil.com (2018), ESPN President, John Skipper, argues that eSports is not a sport but just a competition. This argument is supported by a journal released by the Johan Cruyff Institute, which explains that eSports is nothing more than a business tool. Other definitions do not describe eSports as a form of sport; for example, it is described as "the activity of playing computer games against others on the internet, often for money, and often watched by others using the internet, sometimes on special occasions" (Yin et al., 2020). Just playing computer games is an activity in the context of eSports. Referring to the definition of sport, it would be easy to conclude at this point that eSports cannot be a sport, as it does not include any specific physical activity.

### Esports is Sports

Esports is a catchall term for games that resemble conventional sports insofar as they have superstars, playoffs, fans, uniforms, comebacks, and upsets. But all the action in e-sports occurs online, and the contestants hardly move. There are many

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definitions of eSports in both academic and non-academic literature. Unfortunately, they are all stipulative and untested; and thus cannot serve as a definition from a philosophical point of view. However, they are generally sufficient from a 'work definition' point of view (McCutcheon et al., 2017). Karhulahti (2017) neatly summarizes the working definition of esports with nuance; they all view esports through two criteria: technology specificity (computers, cyberspace, electronics) and advanced competitions (athletics, professionalism, sports). These criteria are directly related to the video game culture so that esports is recognized as "an extension of the game." Therefore, the working definition can be filtered into two general views on eSports; eSports are computer-mediated competitive sportsmanship and sportsmanship.

In public discourse, eSports have established themselves as a specialized form of sporting competition. However, the debate over whether eSports can be defined as a sport in a more narrow sense is far from resolved. Reflections on the spread of virtual competitions said that if we look at the practice of eSports, it's not easy to distinguish it from established sports, first of all, eSportsmen call themselves sportsmen. In addition, all the eSports mentioned are competitive arrangements where teams or players compete for victory, determined through a certain point system (Rosell Llorens, 2017); (Wohn et al., 2018). Athletes to succeed in eSports games, motor skills and abilities, excellent motor skills of hands and fingers, as well as eye-hand coordination and endurance, are crucial (Nagorsky & Wiemeyer, 2020); (Thiel & John, 2018). Achieving the best performance in eSports requires game-specific perception and reaction skills, closely linked to the ability to coordinate the action physically. As in classic sports, systematic eSports training increases the motor and cognitive capabilities and skills that are characteristic of the game. In addition, game-specific tactical knowledge plays a decisive role in success in eSports competitions.

Esports games are competitive video games, which means that esports games can be classified as a sport in which there is an element of competition between players with one or teams with one. Esports comes from the abbreviation electronic esports because esports games use gaming as the main competitive field for professional players (Seo & Jung, 2016). Esports requires the performance of motor skills with athletic body readiness with types of movement skills (Hilvoorde & Pot, 2016). The reality in esports today is that video games have a competitive nature. The characteristics of esports, which can be said to be sports, are pragmatic thinking with the definition of esports. At the same time, the contents contained therein are organizing, competition, and skills.

Connecting esports with sports is not just a justification, but judging from the characteristics of esports, it deserves to be included in the sport. Because this electronic sport has a competitive nature (DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al., 2019) and contains characteristics (1), it requires motor skills, (2) it has a pulse rate that is equivalent to a marathon athlete, (3) it requires training for body position, (4) good nutrition and nutrition control, and (5) have age restrictions. This explanation is needed to study esports, which can be said to be a sport with its characteristics. So with this Literacy study, esports provides a bright spot where its existence is in sports. Furthermore, to become an esports player or athlete does not necessarily only play games for a long duration of time, but requires 8 hours of training a day, having coaches, nutritionist staff, and even having income as professional players (Merwin et al., 2018). So it is clear that esports can be included in the sports category. Esports can be said to be a sport because it has a competitive nature, players must have mental and physical readiness, skills that need to be honed continuously, and esports has rules that every player must obey (Jenny et al., 2017); (Brock, 2017). Esports can also build its ecosystem along with technology development as an alternative to finding income. So with that, the players must have honed skills to become professionals. In addition, the benefits of esports in a social environment can create social and emotional interactions in the form of inclusive teamwork (Baltezarević & Baltezarević, 2018). Esports can be categorized into sports by applying the values and characteristics of the sport. Such as being competitive, having rules, carrying out physical activity, training according to the program from the coach, paying attention to the nutrition of players, as well as the professionalism of players in carrying out the game. It's different from playing video games for teenagers and young people. This is because playing video games only has an unmeasurable purpose of pleasure.

Sport is an institutionalized competitive activity involving rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards. With Coakley's statement, we can easily judge that Esports is not a sport when viewed from the involvement of physical exertion in competing because in playing esports, the players only control their avatars or virtual characters to run, but the players don't actually run, press the command button. To run. While in sports, an athlete's physical ability is very influential in competing with other athletes; where if athlete A wants to beat athlete B in a match, athlete A will train his physical abilities and skills to produce victory in the race. Plus the institution that makes game regulations in esports is not an independent institution but uses the rules that have been implemented by the game makers themselves, so institutionally, this sport is a bit flawed.

Suppose we refer to the opinion of Field Parry (2019), which states that sport is a human effort to compete with each other in sports competitions either individually or in teams. In that case, this opinion also strengthens the reason why esports is not a sport because humans do not compete directly, but are mediated by a virtual world where players only control their avatar to

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compete. Jim Parry said that physicality in sports requires that human physical movements have a direct relationship with the outcome of matches in sports. The real movements that are made must bear fruit. There may be physical action and effort in video game play. Still, the question is the physical activity involved enough to be said to be compatible with physical activity in sport? It seems that physical activity has little effect on the outcome of matches in esports.

Discussing institutions, Parry (2019) also states that the sources of sports regulations are made by associations or institutions consisting of association members per country or sports team owners who form legal entities to establish the source of game and tournament rules. In esports, the game rules are regulated by game developers such as Bluehole, the PUBG PC game developer; Tencent the PUBG mobile game developer; Valve, and the Dota game developer blizzard. Jim Parry calls this "executive ownership" or executive ownership because sports can only be managed, regulated, and supervised (but never owned) by the company, the status of the sport cannot be compared to the level of esports determined by "executive ownership." Jim Parry also said that another problem with esports is the fast pace of change in the esports mode, tournament organizers easily replace video games that lose popularity to be replaced with games that have high popularity in the market or are becoming a trend to be contested.

The development of esports has made them compete in various sporting events, with the aim of attracting public interest in sporting events. However, this raises a new debate, because it raises the perspective that everyone who is playing esports is considered to be exercising. Through this research, researchers hope that there will be vigilance obtained by academics and sports developers toward the phenomenon of the emergence of esports. Of course, as it is realized that things that arise are always in the concept of binary opposition, namely two things that are fused and cannot be separated, there will definitely be darkness and light, old and young, positive and negative. So with the emergence of esports, there must also be positives and negatives. We can support and develop the positive side, however, the negative side must not be lost or separated from vigilance and then find solutions to limit or reduce it. Furthermore, in this chapter, several findings from the search results of the researchers will be presented on the excavated literature sources, which will be presented in succession based on the grouped themes.

## CONCLUSION

Although most of the research focused on esports is qualitative and exploratory it cannot be generalized, but esports has become a scientific topic that is described from a different perspective. Based on the definition of sport, Esports cannot be identified as a sport mainly because of the physical activity missing in Esports. Coupled with Jim parry's opinion that the first requirement for an activity to be called a sport is humans, in my opinion as a researcher this is very basic where humans are the main drivers and main actors in sports, this is also the reason why MotoGP, F1, and WRC rally have not competed in the Olympics. Although the movements that look amazing cannot be ascribed to Esports players, they require some motor skills in playing the game including hand-eye coordination and speed of action (responsiveness) with strategic and tactical understanding but that is still considered lacking and still far from being a requirement to be a sport. , plus the element of violence in video games which was highlighted by IOC president Thomas Bach is very far from Olympic values. Not to mention the effects of addiction and verbal violence in the world of video games which are a scourge for parents in supervising their children when accessing and playing online games, not only children, adults are not immune from the addictive effects of playing video games.

Even if esports is categorized as a recreational sport, it is still far from the description of recreational sports according to the law of the Republic of Indonesia number 3 of 2005 concerning the national sports system in chapter 1 of the general provisions of article 1 paragraph 12 which states that recreational sports are sports carried out by the community with a passion for sports. and abilities that grow and develop in accordance with the conditions and cultural values of the local community for health, fitness, and joy. Where it relies on points for health and fitness, Esports itself seems to be far from that point, because in the discussion in the previous chapter there were many health problems if you play video games for too long.

Suggestions for academics to be careful about the translation of various forms of new terminology in sports, including those that use the word "sports" is it true that it can be interpreted as a "sports" which we have recognized with all its forms of nobility. Advice for practitioners and policymakers, It cannot be denied, that esports on the other hand is a technology product that offers various opportunities. Many young Indonesians can take part in the world of esports, either as professional players, developers, or other roles that are economically very promising.

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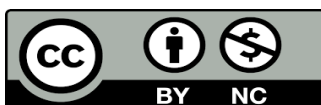
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