



LAHDEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Lahti University of Applied Sciences

E-SPORT ORGANIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL GAMERS IN FINLAND

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Quoc Hung Nguyen

Hao Phan

Lahti University of Applied Sciences
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Nguyen, Quoc Hung

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ABSTRACT

E-sports nowadays are considered as a billion dollars industry. Indeed, playing video gaming step by step become a worthy occupation and would bring decent future for any person who have talented and determination.

This thesis describes how e-sports organizations in Finland are structured. Also, it identifies the common characteristics of professional e-sports players in this country. Related on interviews with persons who already have experiences by involve in E-sports, the results of this research would present some properties of Finland E-sport industry in general.

Keywords: e-sports, gamers, video game, sponsorships, Finland, professional, players

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world in which we are surrounded by countless entertainments, there happen to be an issue which creates a lot of arguments relating to its rightness. Whether or not e-sports, also known as electronic sports, competitive (video) gaming, professional (video) gaming or pro-gaming, is qualified to be considered as a real sport, or they are just only seen as a normal fun activity. Therefore our thesis is to defend the statement that e-sports have all rights to be placed equally as other athletic sports. In order to do so, we concentrate on describing the development of gaming industry through the last few decades and providing reasons and examples to show that e-sports and e-sports organizations/players do have all the aspects as well as characteristics equal to a real sport and sports players.

First of all, let us introduce some brief information of the constitution of this sort of entertainment and how it becomes a phenomenon nowadays.

Not long before, only about a half decade ago, sports or so called athleticism was defined by the involvement of physical skills or capabilities, as strength, agility or stamina resulting in performance. There are thousand types of such activities throughout the world and different cultures could be understood as sports, however, to become a profession, they need to be acknowledged by an amount of audience, by having individuals which perform abnormally well in that game. Meanwhile, video gaming was nothing more than just a child's game, it was made due to the fact that computer became more well-known, and there needed to be such type of entertainment which supports the usage of computer. However, video

games are known to serve for mostly children, or as a time-killing activity.

As same as everything which is invented by human, video gaming has evolved. As we know, the most used computer operation system at that time was, no doubt, Microsoft Windows. Small games are often installed by default in this operation system. In addition, console machines and coin-op machines were invented. This is the fact that video game was not only for children, but also approached to people from wild range of age and became a mainstream entertainment. After the programs and artificial intelligence (AI) were invented, players had chance to play more interactive visual games. From that point they did not need to play one-sided games, but already had experience of playing with an opponent (at that time it was mostly AI). The golden age of video arcade game is the 1980s, when overaged people spent time and money in public gaming club or betting shop. People started to have conception of high score record in games. Players invested their time into games in order to beat someone else or even their own highest score. This goal-setting habit was what makes video games more interesting and thus, give players more enthusiasm when playing. Later on, AI seemed to be not enough of challenge, gamers demanded for more competitive playground. Consequently video games started to evolved into more interactive, dividing into different genres and constructing in different platforms.

The idea of having competition for video game started in the 70s. However, they were small but still included winning prizes. At that time most of the games was single player type. Therefore, the winners were chosen by looking at the highest score after every contestant had finished their plays. We could see the same thing in some kind of one-person sports such as snipe shooting or darts. Nevertheless, gaming was not, or more precisely, shall not be called a sport because it still did not have enough attributes to be-

come one. Yet these small scale gaming tournaments did attract attention for this industry, thus brought it to its next evolution.

The biggest move that changed the gaming industry into what it is today was when Blizzard Entertainment gave birth to a new game genre, which is known as real-time strategy video games, and the very first one was StarCraft. The remarkable contributions of Blizzard was not only in their creation of these games, but also in the brilliant way of encouraging developers creating custom maps based on the core game. This leads to the birth of many popular competitive video games in today's time. The foundations of the esports we know nowadays are made upon these new genres, which are multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), firstperson shooter (FPS) and real-time strategy video games (as mentioned above). These new types of game allowed gamers to have interaction when playing, through a local area network (LAN). In other words, more competitive environment was made, and gaming was no more only about one man playing, but rather involved with teamwork and strategy.

Together with the rise of internet technology, online games had become more popular. Gamers now have full experience of a cyber world through online battleground, we can roughly understand this term as "server". Games had become most interesting as ever since the interaction between players reached such high level. The gaming industry is now becoming a promising business. Players spend money buying in-game items. Moreover, it has become a new culture. Profit can be earned through various ways, for examples selling figures or other stuff relating to a popular game is one of them. On the other hand, even gamers nowadays are able to gain benefit from this industry: "streaming" is the act of live video recording in which the hosts show their live game play and share knowledge to viewers. Of course they are professional players, or just simply those with unique style that catches the attention. Some

players do consider playing e-sports as their career, since there are now plenty of organizations which recruit and sponsor gamers. As we can see, this is quite similar as the structure of a football club as well as other sports' organizations. Professional players have chances to take part in competition, from small scale to the international grand tournament.

Global gaming tournaments started in the year 2000. The selected top players from each country meet and compete against each other to win a big prize. Of course, depending on different games the numbers of players or teams are chosen from the local qualification to the grand finale. The most popular and successful game in this cyber world since then until this day are Dota 2, Counter Strike, StarCraft II, League of Legends, and Call of Duty.

2 MOTIVATIVE THEORIES

2.1 Professional gamers aspect

2.1.1 Defining as athletic

The big question is how to distinguish between child's games and a professional sport which last year's revenues is 325 million dollars worldwide (2016 Global e-sport market report, 2016). When playing video game at home, people usually do it for fun, get relaxing individually or maybe with group of online friends after a working day or study. However, with same kind of video game, professional scene is a totally different story. It is the same as traditional sports. For example, we have fun when playing football in back yard with friends, though when playing for a professional club, it does not only require fun anymore but instead, pursuit with any prices to achieve the victory. Anderson, Funk and Griffiths (2004) define professional online players as gamers who compete against each other for money rather than just at home for fun, live on broadcast online game competitions and game shows (Dal Young Jin 2010, p920). Nowadays, along with the development of the internet and social media, video game is no longer considered as trivial kid's jokes but has potential as a direction for youth to become wealthy celebrities. Indeed, gaming skilled kids who used to be recognized as geeks or nerds could earn worthy contract from well-known organization. The authors give an example about one of the most well-known e-sports player today. Sumail "SumaiL" Hassan is a Pakistani Professional Dota 2 player, firstly began play Dota 2 in Pakistan and did not even have his own computer. He was scouted and recruited by Evil Geniuses on January 5th, 2015 when he was fifteen years old after moving with his family to United States of America and at sixteen years old, he became the youngest professional gamer to receive one million dollars as winning in The International 2015 (esportearnings 2016).

2.1.2 Practice as professional gamer

Of course, not every gamer, who admit themselves as talented player could become a successful athlete easily like Sumail. In fact, almost professional gamers and semipro gamers live a hard life with salaries lower than the national average and rough schedule with fourteen to sixteen hours training per day for two to three days to pursuit the glory (Canada Broadcasting Corporation 2007, according to Dal Young Jin 2010, 929.) When decided to involve in Professional scene or at least living with gaming career, many gamers must sacrifice some of their personal hobbies. Dal Young Jin (2010) through his research, has mentioned about pro gamer's life in South Korea, a true empire in professional e-sports Industry nowadays. Successful professional gamers are actually considered to be important element of Korea's digital economy and society in general. The images of pro gamers, particularly star players, also affect the images of companies and the sales of goods of those companies they belong to. For that reason, Korean corporations rigorously control the daily life of pro gamers through the team manager and coaches, keep their gamers in tight and hard schedule to get ready for coming competitions without any distracts from outside. For example, through quoting some Korean managers, gamers must practice hardly for thirteen to fourteen hours on average, keep away from drinking and smoking, dating also be prohibited because of bothering practice. To be more specific, Dal Yong Jin (2010, 1132) gives a particular example about rough schedule of pro gamers. Samsung, the largest corporation in Korea that is also involved in professional e-sports scene, keep their athletes into a dormitory in downtown Seoul in which they train and live together in five days a week. In training day, pro gamers get up at six in the morning, after using breakfast they spend up to thirteen hours to watch the game material to study moves, making finger exercises to improve their agility, train with players online or from other organizations.

2.2 E-sport team aspect

2.2.1 Team owner:

Naturally, gamers individually could not become core element causing the success of e-sports industry. E-sports teams are still remained through individual ownership nowadays (T.L Taylor 2012, p2997). For that reason, team owners or as known as team managers are core component for e-sports teams. They process almost all operation for team such as scouting and recruiting new members, attracting sponsors, looking for new events and tournaments or even running new marketing campaign. In general, they have great enthusiasm in e-sports industry, becoming the owner of e-sport team after realizing that their skills set are not good enough to be involved in professional scene as athletics. Unlikely in traditional sports such as football or basketball, e-sports owners are not necessary wealthy, but in fact many of them are quite young, maybe slightly older than the gamers and even consider their role as the first true job after graduating from college with prior professional experience or training. They claim themselves as mentor, father or even guardian for young players that belong in their team (T.L Taylor 2012, p3033-3044.).

2.2.2 Team operation:

Although the passion for gaming is main reason for every owner for involving e-sport scene, but eventually, financial factor is the main thing to evaluate the success for their organization. People typically focus on the winning prize of tournament that a particular e-sports team achieves. In fact sponsorships are the main revenue for team operations. In general, sponsorships support team in many aspects, from providing computer tools such as key board or mouse, to financial funds for salaries or travel costs. However, sponsorships in e-sports are still limited in technology enterprises such as Intel, SteelSeries or MSI. The others brands which usually related in tra-

ditional sports may still be stuck in stereotypes about “geek or nerd-game” of e-sports industry so that they are very careful when decide to fund in teams operation.

Another direction for e-sport team to guarantee the financial status is selling their own products as known as merchandises to their fans. This is a solid method because due to survey among Reddit, Twitch and Twitter, 76% of e-sport fans have a favourite team, 69% have idol player and 32% watch tournament for teams and players (Christopher D. Winnan 2016, 414).

2.3 Financial aspect:

People claimed that playing video games is no doubt wasting time, the truth is that they have not known how big e-sports is and its insanely developed rate. Esport has become a big business. World’s tournaments are organized for several popular games. Defense of the Ancients (DotA2) is one good example to look at in order to see how big this business has expanded.

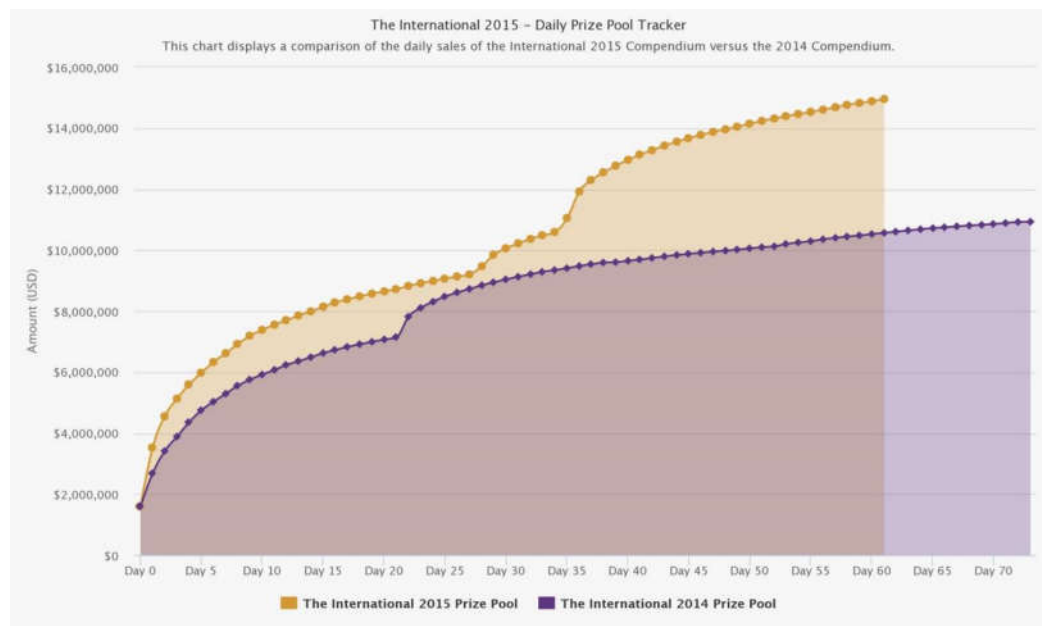


Figure 1 – The International 2015 Daily Prize Pool Tracker

Gamespot is a video gaming website that provides news, reviews, previews, downloads, and other information on certain video games. The above figure 1 displays a comparison of the daily sales of the international 2015 Compendium versus the 2014 Compendium. The international is the biggest tournament for DotA2 which is held annually starting from 2011. According to the rules for raising the prize pool of the tournament from Valve - the developer of DotA2, they let players purchase an in-game collection of items, called the Compendium, for \$10 each. A quarter of each Compendium sale is contributed into the prize pool. Valve started the prize pool by donating 1.6 million dollars. However Valve is still earning a huge amount from the Compendium sales. The amount of money in the prize pool has dramatically increased since 2011 to 2015, which are 350,000 USD in the first year 2011, and 1.6 million USD, 2,8 million USD, 10 million USD, 18 million USD respectively. As it can be seen from the chart, at the end of the tournament, the prize pool has achieved such high amount of money, from which the winning team will get one fourth of the sum. In The International 2015, the prize pool exceeded all expectations, reached 18 million dollars in total, which means Valve gained more than 50 million dollars within just three months. The winning prize money in this new sport's type has already crossed some old popular sports. For example in UEFA's Europa League, the winning prize is 9 million USD, and it is 10 million USD in ICC Cricket World Cup.

Taking another example, League of Legends is the most popular competitive MOBA game nowadays. In the 2014 champion ship, there were more than 27 million people watching it on ESPN channel. The audience size in e-sports is equal, even higher than some traditional sports. Twitch.tv is the gaming video web site which has most followers for the past 4 years. Professional players use this

service as a place to communicate with players and fans from all over the world. They perform their in-game strategies and skills through streaming live video. In 2013, it was recorded that there were about 45 million monthly viewers accessing to this site.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Problem

This research aims to study the e-sports model in Finland and examines what are the common characteristics of Finnish e-sports players, thereby, the researchers introduces how an e-sports organization operating and also clarify personality of Finish gamers in general. The data is based on face to face interviews with a manager of a well-known Finnish e-sports organization and couple professional e-sports athletes in Finland. Based on these objectives, the writers attempts to answer these following research questions:

- What is an e-sports model and its operation in Finland?
- What are the common characteristics of Finnish e-sports athletes?

3.2 Research method

At the beginning of research, authors consider between two different types of approaches: inductive and deductive. In an inductive approach, researchers gather a large amount of data to collect patterns after analyzing then begin to implement theory to explain these patterns. In fact, in this approach, researchers collect and observe groups of particular experiences and then structure a general set of clauses to explain those experiences. Deductive approach, in the other hand, would start from the theory that researchers are interested in, collecting data to test the practical issues of topic. In general, the researcher would study what others previously did about the chosen topic, study also the related theory and tests assumptions pop-up in those theories.

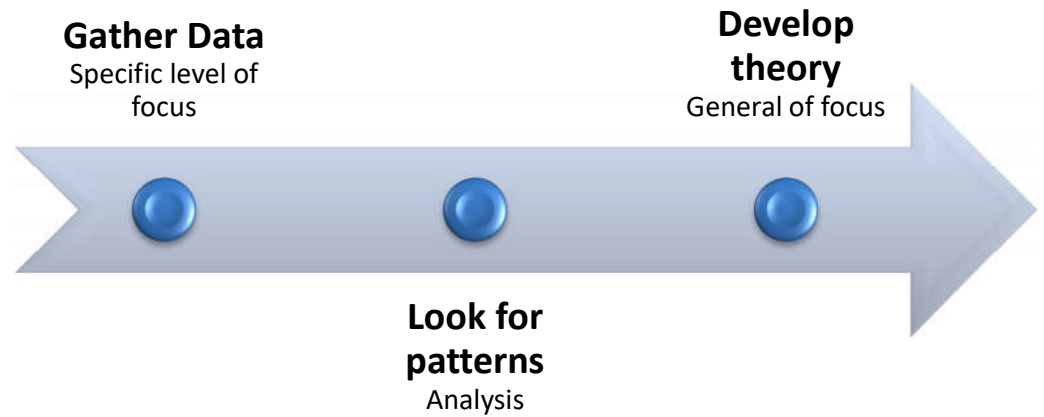


Figure 2- Inductive Research

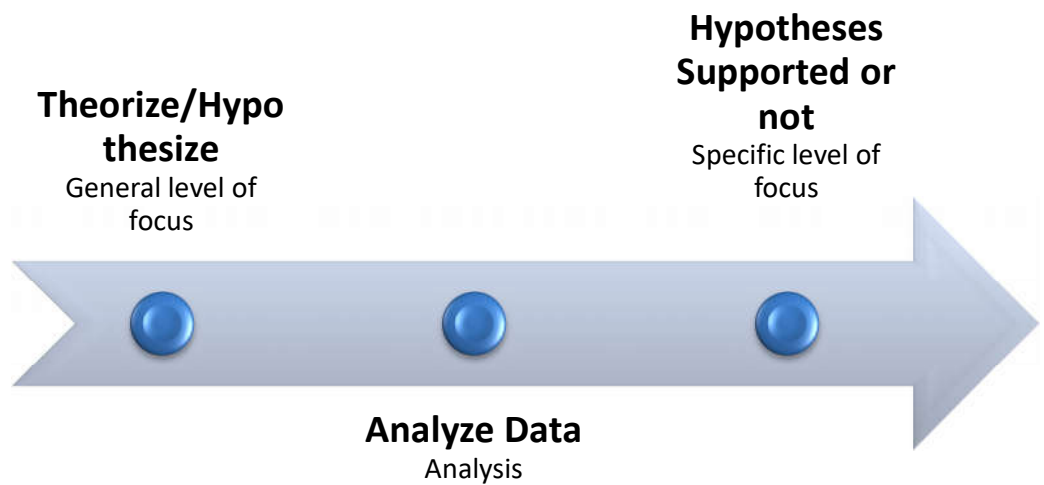


Figure 3 - Deductive Research

In this research, the authors have decided to use the inductive approach. Starting from interviews data, the researchers try to figure out the characteristics of a particular Finish e-sports organization as well as the individual involving in professional scene. Thereby, re-

searchers aim to provide some basic idea about e-sports industry in Finland and also get familiar with professional athletes and their passion in this career.

In demand to focus on Finish e-sports community, researchers apply a qualitative research approach. Due to five features of qualitative research represent by Robert K. Yin, 2011, qualitative approach is an ideal method to study the routine and habitual of people under real world condition. Instead of using statistical analysis, the qualitative approach uses content or holistic analysis to explain and comprehend research findings.

3.3 Data Collecting Method:

In qualitative research, there are four potential data collection activities: interviewing, observing, collecting and examining; and feeling (Robert K. Yin, 2011).

Due to the goal of this study, qualitative interview is chosen as the method to collect data. This method is suitable for catching people's explanation of some behavior or action. Qualitative interviews are semi-structured and during these interviews, the researchers may not give exactly the same way or same order to every participant. In fact, the main goal is to collect from the participant about their opinions related to the topic and more importantly given by their own words to emphasis what they think is important.

3.4 Data Analysing Method

Narrative is the using method to analysis data in this study. Basically, this is the method using interviews or documents and observations in some cases to inllustrate the habitual of participants.

Through examining opinions and experiences from participant, a general picture will be inllustrated. About analysis strategy, narra-

tive method classifies data from participant's stories into general patterns related to original topic.

3.5 Basic concepts


eSports value chain participants			
PARTICIPANTS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	
PUBLISHERS	The various games in which competitive gamers compete, ranging from shooters to multi-player online battle arena.	Titles: League of Legends, (Riot Games), World of Tanks (Wargaming), SMITE (Hi-Rez Studios), Call of Duty (Activision Blizzard), Dota 2 (Valve).	AUDIENCE 2015E 134,287,236 eSports viewers worldwide 
TEAMS	Professional teams that compete in tournaments. Members practice up to 8 hours a day and receive earnings through endorsement deals or by becoming a professional for a particular game.	Teams: NewBee, Evil Geniuses, Natus Vincere, Invictus Gaming, Fnatic.	
LEAGUES	Organizers: Host both of- and online competitions, and generate revenue through corporate sponsorship, membership fees, merchandise and ticket sales. eSports Betting: Facilitate real-money betting on outcome of eSports events.	Organizers: Major League Gaming, ESL (Turtle Beach). eSports betting: Alphadraft, Vulcan	
PLATFORMS	Channels: Facilitate the (live) broadcast of competitions and pro-player videos. Examples: Twitch (Amazon), Azubu, YouTube. Tournament infrastructure: Offer necessary platform to host both amateur and professional tournaments.	Channels: Twitch (Amazon), Azubu, YouTube, MobCrush, Hitbox. Infrastructure: Xfire, Battlefy	
BRANDS	Brand holders and advertisers that pay teams, league organizers and publishers in exchange for displaying their logos, products, or naming a competition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Consumer Packaged Goods: Coca-Cola, Red Bull ★ Automotive: Nissan, Volkswagen ★ Technology: Razer, Intel, NVIDIA ★ Consumer Electronics: Logitech, Samsung, HTC 	

Figure 4 – e-sports terms and definitions

The table above gives the basic ideas about factors that participating in e-sports industry. In the throne of the kingdom, publishers are gaming companies publishing the games for players to compete in. Those publishers can easily modify the competitive rule by releasing the new patches for game. There are a lot of popular and challenging titles in many types that used for competition such as League of Legends (Riot Games), World of Tanks (Wargaming), SMITE (Hi-Rez Studios), Dota2 (Valve), etc.

Teams, however, are the basic factors that build up a structure for an e-sports game. They are professional teams who compete in tournaments and league and usually belong to a big gaming organization. The members have salary based on the goal that they could achieve in tournaments. For that reason, Professional gamers must work really hard and disciplined in 8 hours per day for winning titles. Most of the time they play game together, practicing online with random opponents to shape their skills, also think about the strategies to win the game more effectively. Many big gaming organizations are holding teams earning grands of titles in many games like Newbee, Evil Genius, Natus Vincere, Invitus Gaming... for example.

Like some classical sports such as football, basketball, baseball, there are some big organizations that host tournaments for gamers. They name them as a *League*. The revenue for prizes can generate through sponsorship, member fees, profit from merchandise and ticket at event. The size of prizes for gaming tournament are growing very fast in recent years and even reach the amount of other classic sport like baseball or basketball for instance. Beside this, some business organizes legal betting in real money or digital items in game by guessing results of e-sports events.

The audiences of e-sports nowadays are serviced very well with their joys. For example, every big e-sports events are broadcasted live by many channels in various languages. The commentators casting effectively in channels to delivery information related to the match to the audience and also rocking the air when every highlights coming. More than that, there are a lot of channels that publish pro players game plays where the audiences could reach their idols experiences by watching. The channels have reputation in broadcasting could be mentioned such as Twitch (Amazon), Azubu, Youtube, etc.

Because of successes of e-sports industry in recent years, various brand holders decided to invest their money onto teams, leagues organizers and publishers in order to display their logos, advertise their products or even naming a competition. The brands getting involved are in many fields, contributing a huge number 577 million dollars could be mentioned such as Coca-cola, Nissan, Volkswagen, Intel, et cetera.

4 INTERVIEWEE STORIES

4.1 Professional e-sports gamers.

4.1.1 Player A

Player A is a 27 year old Finnish who is originally from Lahti. He started playing early as a child. As he remembered, his first e-sports touch was with StarCraft and Unreal Tournament when he was between 12 and 15. After getting to know with e-sports for a while, he just realized that he wanted to get better at a game and found out it just felt good to practice hard and meet up in real life with some friends at LAN parties. Player A did not put so much thought in competing in the cyber world due to the fact that the fastest connection at the time was the almighty 56k modem so tournaments were not actually held there and information about them was scarce.

When being asked of the reason for getting deeper involvement with this career, player A stated that he had the urge for making a name out of himself to get more recognition. Therefore he tried to find some deals with sponsors. It is said that most sponsors in this field are Energy drink and Computer companies. Depending on the game, players also have to belong to a clan or guild, which is a group of people fighting under the same banner. They need a leader in that roster and some people even travel to places like Korea to get expert training. This happens quite a lot in the professional StarCraft scene, for instance.

As a professional gamer, player A spends most of his time dedicating to improve his physical skills and strategic mind set. However, he also has other hobbies as ways to escape stressful game times, which are playing cards or board games, doing some woodwork with his dad, or going to metal rock concert with his friends. Player

A confessed that he is not really an athletic type so he does not jog or go to gym or play other kinds of physical sports.

Being a pro-gamer as a full-time job means it is hard to get approval from others. However, player A has maintained quite great relationship with his relatives. "Gaming is a way of life which is more than just a hobby", he often says this in order to express his desire and ambition in this so called "way of life". And he is satisfied that his relatives and close friends acknowledge it to some degree. In the future, his dream is to win more tournaments, get famous and win huge chunks of cash, and last but not least, to get his name written in history books of e-sports.

4.1.2 Player B

Player B is a foreigner currently living in Finland. He is now 19 years old. He got to know e-sports at first by playing counter strike 1.6 with his friends. They were playing a lot at that time since there were many competitors in their junior high school, competitive matches raised between classes, making it a huge trend. Player B believed that he was one of the top players among at that time. After getting in high school, he got more involved in e-sports by playing Dota2 as his team usually matched with other schools' teams. The team was formed by classmates. Thus, they mostly played for fun, although sometimes the challenge became serious and they played for money. In addition, he was good at Starcraft II as well, and this is nowadays his main focus.

It was a huge challenge for player B to explain to his parents of what he was doing. In many countries, gaming is not considered as a real career. Therefore, parents want to their children to focus on other trending careers such as doctor or lawyer, and playing video game is just one type of entertainment which is time-wasted. However, getting monthly earnings from playing for a professional gaming or-

ganization somehow convince player B's parents of his passion as well as his future dreams.

In addition to his gaming life, player B also does computer programming. He said that getting job as a programmer is always one of his available options. He noted that playing guitar and drawing were also hobbies of his.

As a pro-gamer, his dream has always been to win a major league. He is now concentrating mostly in StarCraft II and training hard for the upcoming leagues. Also, his goal is to become one of Finland's top players.

4.1.3 Player C

According to player C, gaming, first of all, was his personal interest. He remembered the time when he was in high school, his favorite sport was soccer. One day he broke his toe and had to stay out of the field for two weeks. During these two weeks, player C had to avoid playing soccer. Therefore he started to try playing video game instead since his friends tried to bring him to Dota2. He got addicted quickly to this new hobby. He played more than just one games such as Counter Strike, Call of Duty.

Additionally, when he grew older, his physical strength did not allow him to play much of physical sports, meanwhile he started playing video games more and more. Being a part of this professional gaming organization is player C's pride. He said that he was a type of person with competitive attitude. Consequently this would be the best job that he could think of at the moment. He loves to use his time playing Call of Duty with his teammates, working/training and having fun at the same time is not what everybody has a chance to experience, he said.

Till this day, player C is still spending most of his time per day in front of his computer. Also, soccer is still one of his best likings. Therefore one of his hobbies is watching football matches with his brother or friends. As he said, playing professional competitive games is similar to other sports. In order to be successful, one must have both talent and dedication. In fact, dedication means hard working. Hence, player C is still trying to improve his skills every day. He noted that he was not still a top player at this moment. However being top player is his dream so he will train at his hardest to get there.

4.1.4 Player D

Player D, the next interviewee, is a 26 year old Finnish player currently lives in Helsinki. He is now in second year of business administration degree but in general, his motivation against school is trouble because of his ambition toward e-sports career. Normally, he started playing gaming quite early since he was kid but at the beginning, he simply want to have fun with friends and like he said, video game is a sweet part in his childhood. Till ten years ago, he started to get familiar with Dota, one of the most well-known MOBA (Multiplayer online battle arena) at that time. After that, MOBA has become the greatest passion of his life. With his mates, they formed a team full of Fins, practice and participate in some local LAN competitions, yet they just archived few minor prize to courage their efforts. The great chance came when he was scouted and get hired by a Finnish team three years ago. After short training session, he participated in the first official completion with his team and he also shared his feeling when the first time he played on the stage, thrilling and eager to be the winner. Although at that tournament, his team did not become the champion but that still was a remarkable moment in his career.

About his goal in his career, it is obviously to achieve more and more prizes not only in major tournaments but also in premier tournaments like The International, the biggest achievement for every Dota player, he says. He also shares that his biggest dream is giving his contribution to make Finland become an empire to compare with big country in e-sport industry like Russia, Sweden and China.

According to player D, the most difficult thing when involved in professional scene is keeping balance between gaming and the other relationships. He usually practices for six to seven hours and when a tournament is coming, the practice time extends to ten hours per day. He says that he tries his best to arrange his spare time carefully to stay healthy and also keep him close to his relatives. He goes to gym or biking at least half an hour every day and play floorball with friends in weekends to strengthen his stamina to keep his body and spirit ready for gaming. He also emphasizes that the support of his family and his girlfriend are very important to him so he tries to gain time with them as much as possible. His family knows e-sports is everything for him and supports without any condition. His girlfriend supports his gaming career as well and as he says, it boosts his morale to challenge obstacles.

4.2 E-sports team manager

The interviewee is manager A of a multi e-sports organization located in Finland. During ten years full of activities, his teams have earned a lot of international achievements in e-sport industry and through his explanation, a full view about an e-sports organization model with its operation would be presented. His journey started in 2006 when ten comrades, who have huge passion in the Battlefield 2 (very well-known game in e-sports community at that time), decided to form a team to participate in professional scene. With desire to dominate the Battlefield 2 community, they practiced in intense and strict schedule to improve their personal skills in demand to adapt the

pressure in professional tournament. Starting from the amateur group without any experiences in professional competition, they climbed step by step in glory ladder and became one of top tier teams in Finnish Battlefield 2 community.

In 2008, being encouraged with the trend to recognize e-sport as an official sport genre, the history of team has changed to another phase when deciding to evolve into a multi-gaming organization. According to manager A, becoming a multi-gaming organization is a necessary step to get rapidly growing, from attracting investment in sponsorships to expand the market of team into many popular games such as Fifa, Halo or Startcraft II. In general, his organization scout and recruit talents in amateur level, who have huge passion to become professional gamers and provide them a passionate and professional atmosphere to become successful in e-sport career. He says his biggest dream is presenting new talents to Finnish e-sports community, supporting them in mental and financial aspects so that they could mainly focus on their performances.

When he was asked about the operations of his teams, he explained briefly some functions of a particular e-sports organization. In general, manager A is the owner of his organization, who has responsible in many processes of company. For instance, he has rights to keep connecting with fan community of his teams by sharing activity feeds on Facebook or Twitter. In his opinion, fans have a very important part in the success of his company and it is necessary to help them follow the steps of their idols easily and he always encourages his players to keep in touch with fans via their individual social page and twitch channel. He also has responsible to attract sponsors contact for company. As reported by manager A, sponsors, which his organization has already contacted with, are some coporations located in Finland that are interested in taking parts in professional e-sport scene and support his teams in many sides. Some IT and game companies like Sony Playstation Suomi, Tentacle Networks or Burn-

Controller provide peripherals (mouse, keyboard and game-pad) and gaming infrastructure for teams while non-IT coporation like Sportsnutrition and Esportclothing through advertise their business logoes on teams jersey will support in money for salary and travel cost. For ensuring the financial status of company, manager A also shares about mechadise selling plan that his organization has already launched. The top-selling in their shop is the team jersey of season 2016 and they also sell the photograh with signature of some key players in affordable price. In his opinion, selling mechadise would become one of the main revenue beside sponsorship and tournament prize.

When speaking about player managerment aspect, manager A introduced his vice-manger, who has responsible in human resource for his organization. The vice-manager, who also presented in the company since the beginning, describes his role in the company. Basically, his position is a connection between the players and the administration department. His main duty is recruiting new player so that he usually watches news and ranking board to scout new rising stars or even freelance elite teams in some popular games the company already involve in, approach and offer them the ideal contact if the administration board agree to do so. He continues speaks about the relationship between him and the players. He describes his role as a guardian who support and protect the players from any factors effect to their gaming performances. At the lower level, according to manager A, his organization currently has four separated teams in four recent popular games: Fifa, Startcraft 2, Halo and Call of Duty. In addition, each team has a coach, who has responsible in game strategy and skill training. Coaches and vice-president together design the traning schedule to meet each team potential.

5 INTERVIEWS IN NUTSHELL

This chapter describes the motivation for playing competitive video games of Finnish players in general and the thesis's interviewees in particular. Also, it summarizes the common expectation of these players for the development of E-sports in Finland.

In addition, by analysing the interview of manager A and his Vice-manager, a full picture of a particular e-sport organization and its functions are illustrated.

5.1 Professional athletes aspect

The common thing between the interviewees is that they did not do very well in other physical sports or having socialization problems. However, there are more than just one way getting to know e-sports, millions of people are playing video games in every single minute. In the era of high technology and fast internet connection, gaming companies do not simply ignore this chance to approach gamers, and people from all over the world, ranging from young age of six or seven to elder ones find it really interesting exploring new games or loyally spending most of their playing time with their most favorite games, normally they are popular shooting games such as Counter Strike or Call of Duty, and MOBA games such as Defense of the Ancient (DotA) or League of Legends (LoL). It is very tempting that people who are not professional players are still spending up to five or more hours for the game. It is not true to say that playing game is a way to get relaxed, in fact it requires lots of muscular action from fingers and it demands our brains to work hard in order to keep focusing or thinking up strategies. More or less, gaming has become a big subculture and motivation is what dragging every player to this cyber world.

People see images, videos from Youtube, streams from Twitch.tv or other channels of those who are top notch in a game. They are

amazed by those people's skill sets, strategic ways of thinking, even for the way they appear in public, under their organizations' uniforms or tags. The winning trophies, the supporting audiences in the arena, the joy of gamers who are watched by thousands or millions people from the internet, those things make ESport become not any less hot than any other popular traditional sports like football, basketball or ice hockey. Sponsor companies use this opportunity as a tool for marketing their products thanks to the rise of social media and digital marketing. Studies show that during huge tournaments, the number of active players in that specific game increase more dramatically comparing to other circumstance. Of all the mentioned interviewees, none has denied that one way of getting motivated in this gaming life is to watch and be inspired by other players. This somehow explains why this kind of business is expanding fast, gaming is no longer for single player but rather an interactive stimulating environment.

Player C mentioned that most people believed they were naturally gifted in their games, but ones cannot always win even when they are on top. Therefore people are thrilled to play more when they taste defeats, irony people also play much more while experiencing victories, this explain the attraction of playing competitive video games. In every game's systems, there are ranks between players to determine each player's skill sets, the common goal for every players is to improve their rank, this leads to the non-stop playing habits since ones can always have possibility to achieve higher rank, in addition, even though they might achieve the highest rank in a game, continuing to practice becomes a must in order not to get dropped. The interviewees of this study all have been top players in their games before they even joined their organizations. Players from this high class usually get inspired by world's top players, thus they normally dream of getting themselves recognized by cyber world and truly take advantage of their talents to become a professional gamer. The interviewees claimed that in spite of the similarity in culture between Finland and Sweden, Sweden has become a big kingdom for

gaming industry as well as gamers. The approaches of video games are quite same between these two countries. Children have opportunity to get familiar with computer at young ages so playing video games has become a norm there. However, Sweden has already brought eSports into school programs. According to Swedish website Aftonbladet, several high schools in Stockholm has started eSports programs for 2015-2016 school year. Swedish students now have chance to spend their time practicing eSports rather than normal sports, mainly focusing on Counter Strike, Global Offensive and Defense of the Ancient (Tobias Lundgren, August 2015, CS:GO will be the main game in Swedish eSports highschool, aftonbladet.se). The interviewees from this thesis believe that Finland needs more encouragement like that. Professional gaming organizations is one way to encourage players to get involved more seriously with this career. As of now, most gamers in Finland nowadays are usually self-inspired by watching plays from Youtube and Twitch. Last year in Dreamhack 2015 (took place in Stockholm, Sweden), a newcomer whose player tag is "Ersee" won the second place in Hearthstone (Blizzard's strategic card games), earning 7500 dollars of the winning prize. "Ersee" was a normal Finnish player who joined team Mana-Light (from United Kingdom) not long before he took part in Dreamhack tournament. Same situation happens in other games as wells, most of Finnish top players have been recruited in overseas organization. The interviewees said that having more organization and competitive tournaments would definitely encourage normal Finnish players to improve themselves and have more chance to dedicate for their home country.

It is obvious that there are not so many noticeable tournaments or competitions going on in Finland at this moment. According to the interviewees, in every popular video games (especially the competitive ones such as Dota2, League of Legends, Heroes of the Storm, HearthStone, StarCraft II), there are facebook group that Finnish players create for themselves. As same as players from all over the

world, Finnish players demand the place where they can make friends with people with same hobbies. The reason for that is because some players need to exchange information in forms of skills or techniques, while others just simply want to have to express their stories, game plays and after-match feelings to one another. This shows the characteristic of gaming trend during these days, which is every players are interested in interaction between gamers, this is true in both in-game and real-life interaction. Despite the lack of competitions, players from these kinds of group usually organize their own tournaments. Although they are small, the main goals are to keep the game interesting, help the players to get more interaction and prove their skills. According to player A, his company also takes these small scale tournaments into concern in order to scout for talented players. However, more accurate judgements will be made if there are more big scale competitions, then gaming organizations will not have so much hard time get to know outstanding players, in the other hand players have more opportunities to be recognized.

5.2 E-sport Organization aspects:

5.2.1 Main goal

Through the interview with manager A, two main goals of his company are described in both business aspect and contribution for Finnish e-sport community aspect. At first, e-sports basically is a business so there is demand to guarantee the revenue for the company. Moreover, he emphasizes his organization also is a place where provides the endless support for Finnish talents in e-sport. By ensuring the financial status and infrastructure for his players, he hopes his player will concentrate on developing their career without any significant obstacle and his dream is that Finland would become a remarkable empire in e-sports world in few years later.

5.2.2 Organization structure

E-sports organization has similar structure with the other classical sports company. Manager A is the owner who has the highest authority in the company. He has responsible in social media aspect and also looking for sponsorship for the organization. However, manager A does not work straight to players. In fact, his vice-manager and coaches staff work together to manage the human resource factor. The vice-manager in this organization acts like a scout part. His responsibility is searching for talents and good freelancer team to recruit new blood for company. The company currently has four different teams compete in four popular games and each team has a separated coach, who gives instructions and support in game strategy and individual skills. The training schedule and tracking personal performance form are proceed by coaches and the vice-manager as well

5.2.3 Organization Operation:

By analysing the opinion of manager A, in general, there are three main sources of revenue for an e-sports organization: tournament prize, sponsorship and merchandise selling.

Every year, e-sports organizations have to participate in many tournaments to pursuit tittles. Some tournaments belong to major series have tremendous prize pool and undoubtfully, winning prize become a significant revenue for e-sports company.

In addition, good performance in big tournament will attract the attention from big coporations, thus these coporations could offer various sponsorship contact for potential e-sports company. The method in sponsorship can be different. Some of IT and gaming companies offer to provide gaming peripherals like mouse, keyboard and game pad, while the other companies could support in financial aspect for salary, infrastructure cost or travel cost.

A successful e-sports organization always has a huge fans community. Fans are core element in success of e-sport organization, they

share their emotion for every joy and defeat moment of their idols and follow every step of their supporting team. In addition, e-sport organization can sell products related to their key player. It can be jersey or photograph with idol signature to fans. Selling photograph product and the other merchandises become the third stable revenue for an e-sport organization.

6 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, being a professional gamer requires natural gift and dedication. These people are not just playing for a good time. On the contrary, they put all their strength and thought into the training. Practising e-sports ranges from eight to ten hours per day, it depends on the organization's regulation or a player's discipline. Although esports is the future's billion dollars industry, having a career as a professional gamer is quite challenging since it is still not acknowledged by a part of society. Those players who are interviewed do have the same obstacle dealing with their family when they first got involved with this way of life. Thus, they have the common trait which is their desire to achieve goals. It is inspiring to see them working hard in order to reach objectives. This can be related to other physical sports as well, the athletes always strive for higher achievement, either it is a self-goal, or an expectation from their organization or the cyber society. In addition, players are not playing for only themselves. They also think and do things which help their community. These players from Finland have the similar ambition of making Finland a great country at e-sports. One of the ordinary methods that they have been doing is to manage the organized groups in social network to inspire other players and give others more understandings of this industry.

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